

COMING TOGETHER



SAMDHANA

• Newsletter •

#003-January 2023

Updates for November
and December 2022.
Looking forward to 2023



Investing in Samdhana's best internal assets4

Imparting Skills for Sustainability:
DGMI Partners' proposal writing training6

Youth Noken is back!8

Year-end Fellowship with Partners in Northern
Mindanao: Looking back, finding ways forward12

Training the Future Trainers16

Wrapping up the Year18

Secangkir Koppi19

Upcoming Evennts20



Investing in Samdhana's best internal assets

Knowing oneself better, trust-building and enhancing teamwork – these were some of the key lessons that 29 Samdhana staff from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Laos imbibed during the capacity development and teambuilding activities last December 12–14, 2022, at the Tagaytay retreat center in the Philippines.

The 3-day sessions were very helpful for the staff in refreshing and deepening their understanding of Samdhana's vision of uniting, healing and giving back; and in developing common bond and trust among the staff and management.

Some of the topics provided by the facilitator and resource person, Ms. Me-an Ignacio were on the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, Johari's Window, Edward De Bono's 6 Thinking Hats, Self and Time Management, Developing Trust, Delegation, Coaching, and Mentoring. The staff gained skills for improving feedback-giving, resolving conflicts, boosting team morale, and adjusting to organizational changes vis-à-vis their personal processes.

Sabcee Balais from the Philippines described the event as "interesting and helpful."

"I like the framework based on Ed Morato's Self Mastery Skills - as a very useful guide in assessing the individual strength, abilities, attitude and skills," said Sabcee.

Besides highlighting the importance of teamwork and relationships as a vital component of building the team, a session on safe space for giving feedback was also provided.

Southouthone Inthirath, from Laos said that “the activities were good, [with] a lot of learning sessions. Participants (were able to) share their ideas.” She added, “the Myers Briggs types test make us know ourselves [better].”

Meanwhile, Ita Natalia, from Indonesia, said that this event emphasized self-awareness. “For me personally, this is very good; it is very useful because, first of all, we know what our personalities are, and when we know our personalities,



we know whether our positioning is right or not to work in Samdhana,” said Ita.

She added, “There is one tool that we fill in to see what our performance is like, so every staff member who works at Samdhana can find out where his or her strengths are.”

This capacity building will be provided for other staff in the near future, as this first session was also a test run to see whether such inputs and process will be useful and appropriate. This is part of ongoing efforts of Samdhana to continuously improve the organization, as it looks forward to the next 20 years. ###



Imparting Skills for Sustainability

DGMI Partners' proposal writing training

The Dedicated Grant Mechanism – Indonesia (DGMI) project reached its completion in November 2022. At the end of the five-years implementation, the DGMI was able to support 63 CSOs and 232 IPLCs. These partners have been able to significantly achieve their various initiatives, while the project has directly contributed to increase the capabilities of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (MAKL) in ensuring rights and access to land, forests and natural resources, and increasing livelihood opportunities through sustainable management.

As the project closed, capacity building that could contribute to sustain the gains from the DGMI was still provided to selected Partners. A training on proposal writing and reporting was conducted in Jakarta from November 11–13, 2022. Seven partners attended this event.

The training covered basic theories, technical and practical skills, and tips on writing proposals and reports. Expert resource persons provided inputs and directly coached the participants throughout the training exercises.

The training intended to help address problematic areas for the Partner indigenous peoples and local groups, such as strategic planning. Participants also learned about the logical framework structure. The resource persons provided different kinds of information about funding sources, and guidance on how to analyze the characteristics of both national and international donors during this training.



Participants also underwent role-playing exercises to test their level of understanding of the topics. This proved very useful for building self-confidence of the participants when they will face the real-life situation.

At the end of the training, participants made a follow-up plan, or RTL, and a resource mobilization plan, to apply the new knowledge and skills they gained from the training.###



Youth Noken is back!

As we spring back from the pandemic lockdowns, Youth Noken is back, bigger and broader! This year, the event was held in the Philippines and in Laos. For the Philippines, the second Youth Noken was held simultaneously online and face-to-face on November 12, 2022. This year's theme "Indigenous Youth: Unite, Help Each Other to Develop, Stabilize, and Strengthen Culture," was set by the Noken working committee composed of the community youth themselves. It aimed to give the various indigenous youth groups a platform to meet and to share their initiatives towards the development of their culture and communities.

Approximately 400 young people joined from the following tribes in these provinces: Calamian-Tagbanwa tribe in Calamianes, Palawan; Higaonon tribe in Misamis Oriental; Bukidnon Menuvu, and Higaonon-Talaandig tribes in Bukidnon; Badjao and Mamanwa tribes in Surigao del Norte; and the Teduray-Lambangian tribes in Maguindanao.

Eleven youth organizations prepared video presentations, spoken words, handicraft demonstrations, and traditional games, songs, and dances to express their respective cultural practices that they strive to live by.

They desired to share their experiences, that despite the challenges they face, such as discrimination and modernization that gradually eroded their traditions, they still want to live with their Indigenous identities. In particular, the Teduray-Lambangian tribes had been severely affected by recent flooding the month prior to the Youth Noken. However, they persevered to join the event as a way of showing that they are rising up against the issues and disasters they face as indigenous peoples.

Nokening in Laos

Huam Jai Assamak Association (HJA) and Don't Stop Dream Team (DSDT), non-profit and social enterprise organizations in Laos hosted the first Youth Noken from October 28 to 30. A diverse group of young people came together to meet new friends, exchange life stories, and learn lessons through structured activities and learning processes.



For example, 'My Community' mapping activity enabled the participants to share and learn about the communities from the different regions in Laos. They exchanged information about the special features of each locality, their similarities, and differences.

A cultural night was also part of the programme, where the participants presented their respective ethnic cultures and lifestyles. They discovered the different food cultures, marriage practices, and spiritual practices such as veneration of the sacred, repentance and other rituals.

The two Noken events in the Philippines and Laos were precursor to the Regional Youth Noken 2022, held on November 22 to 29, 2022. Young nokeners from Philippines, Myanmar, Laos, and other parts of Indonesia took the long journey of discovery to travel to Lembata, Indonesia. They visited at least four big indigenous or



masyarakat adat communities: Lamahora, Lamalera, Tapobali and Sapurindubour. It was also the first time for ALEGRA organization to host the Noken.

All 40 youth participants received warm welcome from all the villagers in every place they went. Philippine Nokeners said that they enjoyed hearing the many inspiring stories and their perspectives were broadened with the different lifestyles and cultures they witnessed. Bem Jamora, Community Facilitator in the Lifescape Programme in the Philippines, and a first-time nokener, took part in a team-building activity that was filled with playful, fun, and engaging games.

“The team building was fun, with rappelling & team games. It made us bond with the other nokeners. (I feel that we) extend our love as one, understanding each (other’s) differences and accepting each (other’s) weakness and strength,” said Bem.

“It’s a privilege to experience the culture and tradition of the Indonesian tribe from Lembata. Truly it ignited the fire within each heart to protect, preserve and continue the culture and traditions for future generations,” said Bem.

Whenever there is a meeting, a parting will follow. Before that separation, the menoken resulted in many agendas as the Nokeners committed to continue various initiatives in their communities, bringing with them the inspiration from their experience. For the Palawan and Cagayan de Oro teams, they will develop and share what they have learned from Lembata, in line with their tribal vision and mission.

Get a glimpse of the people, adventure and friendships experienced during the first face to face regional youth noken as captured through the personal appreciation of Bem Jamora, Samdhana Community Facilitator, [here](#)

A group of people, mostly women, are seated in a circle in a large hall with many windows. They appear to be engaged in a discussion or a meeting. Some are looking at their phones, while others are looking towards the center of the circle. The room has large windows with yellow curtains, and the atmosphere seems to be one of a formal yet open gathering.

Year-end Fellowship with Partners in Northern Mindanao: Looking back, finding ways forward

The scent of Christmas already hung in the air. But the event at Cronin Hall of St. Augustine's Cathedral in Cagayan de Oro on December 20, 2022, wasn't a party; it was a fellowship that Samdhana Institute hosted for their partners, particularly communities and organizations in Cagayan de Oro, Misamis Oriental and Bukidnon. As Erwin Quiñones, deputy executive director of Samdhana explained, it aimed to draw lessons from recent experiences for the partnership to work better in 2023.

Many of the partners are from *Lumad* or indigenous communities. It's no surprise then that the gathering opened with a prayer by *Datu* Marcus, a Higaonon, invoking *Magbabaya* and the spirits for guidance. Placed on the table at which the *Datu* prayed are coins representing the participants, and other materials commonly used during rituals.

In the sharing of experiences that followed, it was also the *Lumad* partners who raised several concerns about their situation. For one,

they cited that they are still wanting in terms of engagement with the government to advance their rights and welfare.

Datu Benjie said that while there is unity and cooperation in the tribe, he would like to see the Lumad empowered enough to amplify their voice and create a space where they can talk to government agencies. He added the government should verify what's really happening in the community.

He said there should be efforts to enable them to meet together and do something [about their situation]. "Or, perhaps some of us here can help."

However, they also noted that there are problems that the community members themselves must address.

"There is misunderstanding in the community due to different viewpoints," according to Mikay, who attributed it to the influence of mainstream culture. She further lamented that indigenous peoples are at a disadvantage in terms of intellectual property rights.

Both *Datu* Benjie and Mikay expressed hopes for cooperation among the women, youth, and elders to realize their rights and progress in their community.

Karen, a "*basbasonon*," said that her status obliges her to be more patient and open-minded, as people view things from different perspectives. She added that her immersion in the community enabled her to know their tribe's commitment to the struggle for their rights to be recognized.

A "*basbasonon*" is someone, normally a young man or woman, who is being groomed to assume a leadership position in the tribe, as a *Datu* or *Bae*, or as a ritualist.

Observations that the mainstream media is not giving enough attention to the plight of the IPs, including the killings of a number of Lumad, also surfaced. Moreover, *Datu* Benjie bewailed what he perceived to be rampant disinformation and discrimination against them in the social media.



“It’s important that the media relay the correct information to our communities,” Datu Brunz said.

Bae Rose and a representative from Group of Women Advocates for Peace in the Archipelago (GWAPA) said that one way to address this concern is to train the youth in community journalism. In addition, they cited the need to document events in the community and “consolidate our stories.”

Nonetheless, Bae Rose emphasized that the partnership has been fruitful in terms of learning. She noted that Samdhana has expanded to non-IP communities and organizations.

The opportunities available and the priorities that Samdhana will work on in the coming year aligns with the problems and concerns raised. Erwin informed that a young IP lawyer is leading the plan to put up a legal center for the IPs. He added that a partner, the Legal Rights Center, is exploring the possibility of a workshop on using the TikTok app for advocacy and sharing positive messages related to problems in the community.

It wasn’t all about problems, though, as the sharing also included positive experiences.

For instance, Sir Bong of the Social Action Center of the Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro shared his insight about the “sacred life” being practiced by the Lumad. “Translating the Gospel into something that would relate it to the beliefs of the Lumad remains a huge challenge,” he said.

Helen R. Maape, President of Babaye sa Baybay, a women’s organization, enthused how she learned about dressmaking by overcoming her doubts. “I trusted my own talent. I also saw the value of teamwork and having good relations with colleagues,” she said.

Young volunteers like Reah, Shine, and Jebesa likewise shared their experience and learning from engaging in Samdhana’s activities with community partners such as the tree-growing and fundraising. They admitted their initial reluctance, which they eventually overcame because they appreciated the bigger goals and the efforts of community members.

The fellowship concluded with suggestions on how to perform better in 2023. These included expanding the agro-eco program by bringing it to the youth and the Department of Education, music training for the youth, improved marketing of farm produce (for example, by creating a community market app), paralegal training, and a communication program that would address problems with the mainstream media. Partner AgroEco Philippines Cluster 3 provided roselle wine for toasting the year that was and the year ahead, and also gifted the other partners with free certified organic seeds, like corn, *adlai* (Job’s tears), and other vegetables. ###



Training the Future Trainers

Young Indigenous people from various regions in Indonesia joined the “Good Facilitator Training for Indigenous Youth” in Yogyakarta from 15 – 17 December. Around 20 youth, whose organizations had received support from Samdhana Institute before, such as BASTI from Bali, Barisan Pemuda Adat Nusantara (BPAN), Sanggar Seni Alegria Lembata in NTT, and Komunitas Menoken Jayapura in Papua attended this event.

Social and behavioral changes are more genuine when these are being experienced. Thus, to support and encourage the next generation to become change agents in their communities, the training focused on participatory facilitation methods. It introduced the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools and taught the participants to adopt the lens for identifying the gender equity, disabilities, and social inclusion (GEDSI) needs and concerns.

They underwent sessions and corresponding learning activities on the topics: introduction to GEDSI, management of youth issues in indigenous and local communities, facilitation of change processes, and evaluation.

The participatory training methods allowed all to exchange knowledge, share experiences, and interpret learning as critical

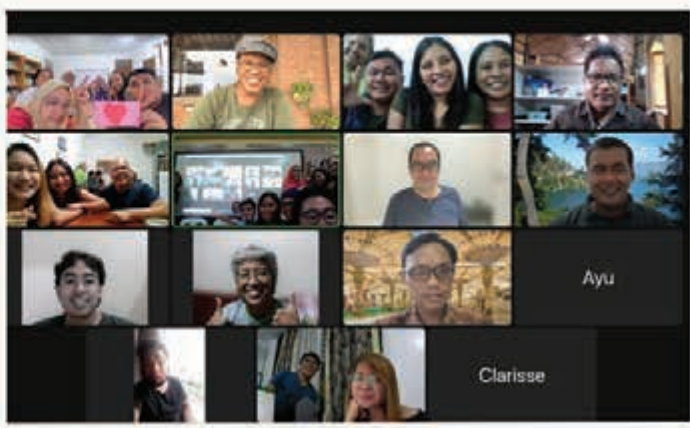
reflection. In the training, participants also got the opportunity to present their work in various forms as a form of self-expression, and they practiced providing constructive criticism for each group's presentation.

The discussions brought up many issues about how to provide effective assistance to the community in every stage of the process, starting from identifying threats, vulnerabilities, and potentials. It was very helpful for the young participants who are just in the beginning stages of their engagement.

“Why bring them in? Because they are young people who are involved in their communities as facilitators”, said Nurul Hidayah, Capacity Development Coordinator in Samdhana.



Lastly, after receiving inputs both in theory and in practice, each of the participants designed a RTL (Follow-Up Plan) according to the activities to be carried out in their respective places or communities. Gender equality, disability, social inclusion (GEDSI), the Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (PMEL) framework, and creativity were among the frameworks and tools they applied to craft their plans. ###



Wrapping up the Year

Samdhana's institutional year-end assessment activities were conducted in a hybrid manner in December 2022. For the first time, after the two-years COVID-19 pandemic, most of the staff were able to gather and interact in person. For the last leg of the year-end assessment process, the senior team members of Samdhana were together in Tagaytay (Philippines) and the rest of the staff joined from at least six locations across the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand. As we have been able to do in the last two years, surely technology keeps us connected, but coming together in person still brings a unique value for all.

#yeswecan

Secangkir Koppi

In case you missed the previous episodes, here is the playlist of the Secangkir Koppi podcast from last year. Topics covered is the role of indigenous youth. Some indigenous youth from all over the archipelago share their thoughts on what indigenous youth can do to protect their village and all of their ancestral heritage. This includes people from Baga Raksa Alas Mertajati (BRASTI) in Bali, Kainkain Karkara Byak in Biak Papua, the Indigenous Youth Front of the Archipelago (BPAN), and the Menoken Jayapura Community.



[SECANGKIR KOPPI]-Bincang seputar Peran Pemuda Adat bersama Maya (BRASTI, Buleleng, Bali)

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/5jEixLkI5ufQLHyJ25N7Y4>



[SECANGKIR KOPPI] – Bincang seputar Peran Pemuda Adat bersama Israel Papare (Kainkain Karkara Byak, Biak, Ppaua)

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/2WqPq67rHJvIngLUEHACOc>



[SECANGKIR KOPPI] – Bincang seputar Peran Pemuda Adat bersama Sisilia Wulu (Pendamping Komunitas Ndora Kabupaten Nagakeo)

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/06Rhb28HoGlqCKeNgn5oX4>



[SECANGKIR KOPPI] - Bincang seputar Peran Pemuda Adat bersama Lusua (Komunitas Menoken Jayapura)

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/5iX4zWs6FfrMqbkySgZRz6>



[SECANGKIR KOPPI] - Bincang seputar Peran Pemuda Adat bersama Rama (BPAN)

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/0ovvPKwYREFwRDRPI1MwxS>

Listen to our podcast episodes online:



<https://open.spotify.com/show/1soGaDhKP8HRShd70iZxjF>

Upcoming Events:

Samdhana is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2023!

We are celebrating with the theme “Listening and Co-creating” with Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities and Partners. For this special milestone, we will be collaborating with partners to listen and reflect how our shared work has been for the last 20 years, and listening to the youth, persons with disabilities, to indigenous and local women, and to others to imagine and co-create what the next 20 years of the social and environmental movement in Southeast Asia will be.

Please look out for future announcement of the events for Samdhana@20

“Listening to Stories Past, for the Future: Nurturing Indigenous Peoples’ Intergenerational Spirit to Protect the Earth”

Samdhana will be hosting a session during the International Funders for Indigenous Peoples (IFIP) Global Conference 2023 on February 22-24 at Merida, Mexico. Session participants will hear stories directly from the youth and indigenous leaders and understand the dynamics and challenges of intergenerational relationships in Indigenous communities, vis-à-vis leadership, governance and culture, from community partners in Southeast Asia. Panelists for this session are from Barisan Pemuda Adat Nusantara (BPAN) in Indonesia, Save Our Schools Network in the Philippines and Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact in Thailand and Myanmar.

“Indigenous Peoples Can!”: Presentation of DGMI Final Report and Lessons Learned

On February 21-24, Samdhana, together with the DGMI Project movers and Partners will be sharing their experiences and stories. This year, the Dedicated Grant Mechanism – Indonesia (DGMI) project reached its completion in November. At the end of the five-years implementation, the DGMI was able to support 63 CSOs. Partners’ stories will showcase local innovations in managing their lands and resources for climate change adaptation and mitigation,

livelihoods, and resource governance. We look forward to reflecting on the various lessons learned throughout the DGMI journey.

Launching of 20.20.20 Campaign

In the spirit of Samdhana's 20th year, we are launching our fundraising campaign to support at least 20 Indigenous and local communities to re-plant and grow at least 20 thousand trees in 20 hectares, in Northern Mindanao. We aim to raise PhP 1 million pesos for 20.20.20 activity! Tree sponsors will receive a certificate with the GPS coordinates of the seedlings where these are planted. Check the tree-growing initiatives that had been started: [here](#).



An Asian Center for Social and Environmental Renewal

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