

# MAPPING THAT MATTERS

When we involve the community and the Indigenous Peoples in making our maps, we also affirm their tenurial rights in a Protected Area.

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*A common denominator determines the history of peoples: territory or the absence of it — Datu Makapukaw Kinulintang, a Talaandig chieftain*

## Ancestral Domain

**T**HE MT. KITANGLAD RANGE COUNCIL OF ELDERS (CoE), REPRESENTING its indigenous inhabitants, had carried out their own community mapping activities. Kitanglad's indigenous peoples (IPs) include the Bukidnon, the Higaonon and the Talaandig tribes. They are all claiming as their ancestral domain the entire Kitanglad mountain range and its adjoining areas.

Kitanglad (40,176 has.) sits on the north-central portion of Bukidnon and comprises parts of the Municipalities of Talakag, Baungon, Lantapan, Libona, Manolo Fortich, Sumilao, Impasugong and the City of Malaybalay. Kitanglad encompasses 28 barangays and 47 sitios wherein the indigenous peoples (IPs) constitute at least 90 percent of the population.

The NIPAS Act (National Integrated Protected Areas Act, RA 7586) governs the Kitanglad mountain range. Kitanglad is also one of the ten sites under the Conservation of Priority Protected Areas Project (CPPAP), a biodiversity conservation project being funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and administered by the World Bank.

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Mt. Kitanglad's dual status as a PA and AD makes for a more pressing ADMP formulation. It would demonstrate the tribes' resource management capability based on its traditional knowledge of the land, as well as enhance the authority of the CoE in local governance and decision-making.

The IPs could articulate their traditional knowledge of the land and its resources through the 3D mapping. Their efforts would be useful in:

- Reconciling PA management priorities and strategies of both the IPs and the government;
- Recognizing local forest management initiatives even before CPPAP has started and while CPPAP is being implemented;
- Interfacing local forest management with PA management;
- Delineating traditional boundaries of customary land use and natural resource management systems as expressed in cultural zones; and
- Drawing up appropriate management norms that are culturally sensitive.

Anchored on a keen analysis of existing resources, and having grasped an opportunity to validate among themselves the cultural norms that govern the utilization of such resources, the whole exercise (of 3D mapping) could thus bolster the IPs' confidence in decision-making. Only then could they be able to negotiate or dialogue with the PAMB and other sectors. Only then will they have a basis to demand more responsive NIPAS-prescribed management zones.

The underlying premise is that effective PA management is not just the product of technical or scientific expertise, it is also the result of political control and decision-making processes. It all boils down to the nature of power relations among different stakeholders.

The IPs, as direct stakeholders, should therefore hold the substantial role in PA management. This role must go beyond mere participation, it must reach the level of authoritative

decision-making. This means ensuring that traditional governance is recognized in PA management, while seeing to it that accountability for decision-making over natural resources of the AD/PA itself is verifiable and evident.

### How?

As stated earlier, community mapping/3D mapping fits into a series of activities under KIN's culture-based organizing strategy, based on a framework drawn up by Datu Migketay Victorino Saway, a leader of the Talaandig tribe.

The IP organizing process started with identifying and profiling various cultural experts. This activity intended to determine the real practitioners of IP culture who may have been consigned to near anonymity.

Next, KIN facilitated tribal reorganizing — it meant reviving indigenous structures of governance and community life. These structures embrace such fields as economy, defense, history, health, education, music, arts, literature, and belief system/religion.

Along with reorganizing, KIN also encouraged and supported the holding of rituals for various purposes. (As an ongoing thrust, KIN is also documenting the indigenous knowledge system.)

Because of the need to intensify forest protection in Mt. Kitanglad, the revival of the tribe's defense system (pagalad)

had received early attention. The datu and the baes themselves picked out who among their constituents should compose the tribal guards. The tribal guards then went through a cultural reorientation under the tutelage of the cultural experts.

KIN sustained the momentum by holding a series of tribal congresses wherein the IPs themselves identified the critical issues and concerns affecting them as PA residents. In response to these, they also drew up plans while in congress. Their most significant act was filing a unified AD claim, which effectively superseded the earlier piecemeal claims of different tribal groups.

After putting these structures in place, KIN conducted a consultation where they discussed the rationale of formulating the PA Management Plan (MP) and then the plan's contents. KIN focused the MP's content on the NIPAS-defined management zones. They also inquired into whether the tribes had traditional zones of similar nature. The IPs' response was in the affirmative; it spurred the conduct of cultural zoning workshops around Kitanglad — the results of which were reflected in community maps.

As the cultural zoning workshops were about to wind up, KIN commenced preparations for a Kitanglad-wide 3D mapping activity. They sought techni-



A success indicator of CPPAP is the affirmation of the IPs' tenurial security. In accordance with Section 13 of the NIPAS Act, which provides that ancestral lands, customary rights and interests shall be accorded due recognition, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is mandated to delineate the lands being claimed by IPs as their ancestral domain (AD).

Recognition of the ancestral domain (AD) claims depends on how policy-makers – the Protected Areas Management Board (PAMB), the local government units and even the national government – view the effect of tenurial security in the efficient management of protected areas. This requires on the part of the policy-makers the realization that secure land tenure is essential for the population to be willing to invest in protecting and developing the land. (Rice, 1995).

Arriving at this realization, however, appears to be an uphill struggle given the legal, perceptual, political and cultural barriers and issues that need to be resolved. At

this juncture, what with the tedious process of reconciling laws that affect the ancestral domain issue, the most that the IPs could do is initiate actions toward strengthening their collective capacity to manage the resources with due regards to park objectives. They have to demonstrate the compatibility of AD with PA management.

Studies have shown that ancestral domain and park protection can go hand in hand. The government and community could forge a contractual agreement wherein the latter would perform protection work in exchange for a commensurate development program. (Carisn, 1995) Such commitment, however, could only be had if they feel that they have patent authority to manage the land and its resources (Rice, 1995)

The Kitanglad IPs, through their Council of Elders (CoE), have proven their commitment to take an active role in PA management. In this respect, they are using a two-pronged approach: maximizing established legal mechanisms and firming up indigenous structures and practices.

On the other hand, the Kitanglad Integrated NGOs (KIN), Host NGO of CPPAP-MKRNP, is seeking to reinforce IP initiative by adopting a culture-based organizing strategy. Community mapping is one of the activities lined up under this strategy.

Both the IP/CoE and KIN initiatives are aspiring to strengthen the legitimacy of the IPs' claim to their ancestral domain.

### Why Community Mapping?

In general, community mapping/3D mapping is a major boost in the joint initiatives of IPs and CPPAP to shape the framework of the Ancestral Domain Management Plan (ADMP) of Mt. Kitanglad.

The partnership between the IPs and the PAMB must be worked out in concrete terms, that is, through a resource management plan — ADMP (ancestral domain management plan) for the IPs and the PA (protected area) Management Plan for the PAMB. Its implementation could also become the basis for evaluating the performance of the IPs and other stakeholders.



cal assistance from the Mangyan Mission, after first securing CoE permission to hold such endeavor.

### Results and Lessons Learned

The culture-based approach to organizing is designed for the long term management and protection of the ancestral domain of the IPs of Mt. Kitanglad. Among others, it would affirm their tenurial rights based on their ability to articulate existing land use and resource use practices, revive cultural practices that complement conservation efforts, and establish the Council of Elders' authority as a governing body parallel to the Protected Area Management Board. In attaining these goals, the 3D mapping is an essential tool.

At this stage, given the current realities, affirmation of tenurial rights of the IPs would not yet mean legal recognition of the AD claim. But even as the AD claim is not yet being legally recognized, the IPs can already get involved in PA management and forest protection.

The CoE has set entry requirements for Mt. Kitanglad visitors and re-

searchers in addition to the rules approved by the PAMB. In cases involving illegal activities, they would intercede if the violators are local residents who depend on the forest for survival. They would conduct cleansing ritual, oblige the violators to restore damaged areas, and make them sign a Memorandum of Agreement where they would promise not to commit any further violation.

Moreover, the CoE has also revived the tribal guards who, in turn, have played a key role in forest protection. During the 1997-1998 El Nino dry spell, they took the lead in putting out more than 300 fire incidents around Kitanglad. (Kitanglad Updates, January to June 1998)

The tribal guards first gained prominence in 1995, when they confiscated plant specimens taken by a National Museum team in Lantapan because the latter had not obtained prior permission from the tribe.

On November 3, 1999 the IPs of Kitanglad made history when they proclaimed ownership of all medicinal plants and resources in the mountain

range. The IPs warned that violators of the proclamation would be penalized in accordance with customary laws. The proclamation was preceded by a Kitanglad-wide documentation of the uses of medicinal plants which the IPs declared should be recognized as their intellectual property. (Philippine Daily Inquirer, November 5, 1999).

In the cultural zoning workshops, the input of the tribal leaders had surpassed the management zones defined by the NIPAS Act. The leaders bared a long list of terms on land use, as well as historical and religious landmarks, that they would normally not disclose to outsiders.

Among the common cultural zones documented and identified on community maps are: 1) prohibited or restricted areas; 2) sacred or worship areas; 3) livelihood areas; 4) resource use areas; 5) dangerous areas; 6) tribal guards special areas; and 7) natural areas.

After eliciting the names for cultural zones and their corresponding land use, a mapping exercise facilitated by KIN's senior organizer

## Kitanglad Cultural Zones

**Prohibited areas** are known as igbando, ibabanduwa, ibobowala, igbalaw or inalaw. **Sacred or worship areas** are generally called lalaw, with specific names depending on its purpose, to wit: tulungdanon (ritual areas), pangapuga (altar), pangampuay (where offerings are given to spirits who bring illnesses to humans), panalikuta (where hunting dogs are given blessings) and panungdana (worship area).

**Livelihood areas** include the following: pangasuha (for hunting wild pigs by using dogs), tangkal (wild pig sanctuary), talauwa (granary of agricultural produce), panlaisa (for hunting wild animals by traps), unayan (farmlot), kalukalan (for honey bee collection), pangilawa (water bodies where there are aquatic animals).

**Resource use areas** are known as pamigtawa (for rattan extraction) and pangahara (for timber extraction).

There are three names for dangerous areas. These are manugpong, panlaaga and bila, said to be **havens of bad spirits**.

**Special areas for tribal guards** are called ilian (headquarters) and pambatala (checkpoint).

**Natural areas** include kaulo hu dal-og (water source) tugdonan or salebseb (spring), kahulugan (falls), liyang (cave) and kalasan (forest).