



TREE GROWING and WATER SYSTEM TURNOVER

Sitio Panlablaba, Brgy. Awang, Opol, Misamis Oriental.
July 28, 2022



"Pahina" in the local language means collective volunteer work. This is how the organization, *Panaghiusa sa mga Higaonon sa Awang* (PAHINA) has worked for the last two years to get to where they are now: currently there are 4,000 seedlings of lawaan, narra, chestnut tree and other local species that have been planted over the years since 2020, and they successfully completed their community water system in April 2022.

PAHINA members are the *Higaonon* women, men and youth in Sitio Panlablaba, Brgy. Awang, Opol, Misamis Oriental. They are part of the Dulangan Unified Ancestral Domain. The *Higaonon* community in Panlablaba aims to bring back their forests that were destroyed due to chromite mining in the area some decades ago.

On 28th of July 2022, PAHINA conducted another tree planting activity, and they were supported and joined by the Misamis Oriental Electric Service Cooperative (MORESCO), the Knights of Columbus of the St. Francis Xavier Parish, volunteers from the Agro-Ecology Desk of the Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro (CDO), JCI Cagayan de Oro (Oro Jaycees), and the Youth Apostolate (for Laudato Si) of Our Mother of Perpetual Help Parish in Barra, Opol. More than 200 seedlings were additionally planted with the eager help of the volunteers.



At the same time, they witnessed the turn-over of the community water system, a project supported by the Global Greengrants Fund, as facilitated by Samdhana Institute. The mothers and women in Panlablaba had longed for accessible and potable water for many years. Rosemarie Delada, the President of the women's group *Kababayen-an Sa*

Panlablaba (KASAP), shared how they used to bring their weekly laundry down to the river, despite the heavy load and difficult, slippery and uphill roads, and how these drained so much of their time and energy. They also could not rely on the river for drinking water since it is an open source.



Fortunately, there remains an underground water source in the nearby mountain within the domain. This water source is also in the heart of the conservation area that is being re-planted. Samdhana facilitated the technical assessment for developing the water source and assisted KASAP and PAHINA in their planning activities to undertake the water system project. The organizations identified their policies and also set their commitment in continuing the tree-growing to ensure their water source.

For the members of PAHINA, it is a right fulfilled to have access to water, and a continuing responsibility to care for their ancestral domain.

Through capacity development and fundraising, Samdhana continues to work with the *Higaonon* community, especially with the youth and women, to support community-led tree-growing and conservation activities.

#yestheycaan!

#KatutuboKalikasanAtKatatagan

During the turn-over program, the Vice-Mayor of Opol Municipality, Vox Daroy attended, together with the Local Government Officials of Brgy. Awang, and the leaders of the Dulangan Unified Ancestral Domain, led by the IP Mandatory Representative Jeffrey Pusan. They recognized the efforts of the women and youth, and the shared concern to restore the environment and the need to take action on the worsening climate.

