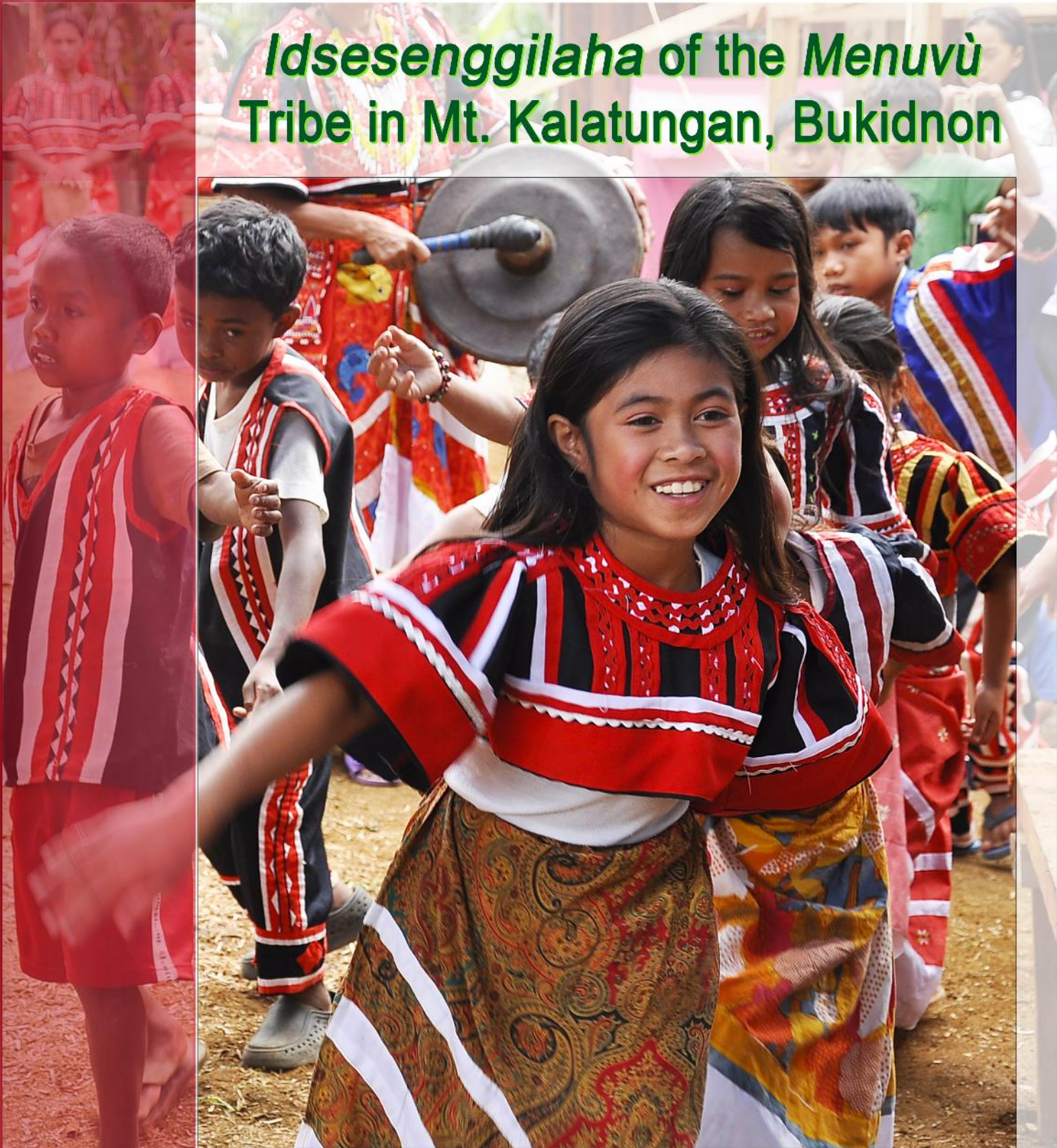


ICCA Registry Case Study:

Idsesenggilaha of the Menuvù Tribe in Mt. Kalatungan, Bukidnon



NewCAPP

ICCA Registry Case Study:

Idsesenggilaha of the *Menuvù* Tribe in Mt. Kalatungan, Bukidnon



I. Description of the ICCA

A. Biophysical Profile

A.1. Location

Name of ICCA: *Idsesenggilaha*
Country: Philippines
Longitude: 124.8023
Latitude: 7.955

The Ancestral Domain claim of the *Menuvù* includes six (6) barangays namely Nabaliwa, Bacusanon, Concepcion, Mendis, Pigtauranan all in Pangantucan; and Brgy Dominorog in Talakag, Bukidnon. It is composed of around 531 households or 2,652 individuals. Of which, around 85% are *Menuvù* while the other 15% are of the *Talaandig* Tribe and *Dumagats* or non-IP migrants. The Ancestral Domain covers approximately 13,242 hectares of the Mt Kalatungan Range found in Bukidnon, Mindanao, Philippines.

Results of the collaborative project DENR-USAID Philippine Environmental Governance (EcoGov) in 2004 showed that the ICCA is a compendium of three types of land cover – closed canopy forest, open canopy forest and brushland. This classification, interpreted using satellite imageries and ground-validated with the assistance of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Local Government Units (LGUs) (*DENR-USAID, 2004*), closely resembles that of the *Menuvù* community's description of the land cover/use within the ICCA.

During the 2011 participatory coding of the 3-dimensional map of their ancestral domain, the *Menuvù* community described the ICCA as having primary forest (3,202 hectares of untouched, closed canopy forest), secondary forest (32 hectares of forest areas once cleared for agriculture and those that have been logged-over) and grasslands (803 hectares of areas interspersed with brushes and cogon grass, covering landslide areas as well as mountain summits). The forests are principally montane (lower and upper mossy) dominated by Philippine Oaks locally called *ulayan*.

A.2. Biodiversity

The *Idsesenggilaba*, as does the whole Mt Kalatungan Range, harbor a diverse mix of flora and fauna being ascribed to its “numerous rivers and waterfalls, a lake and small wetland area, cliffs, caves and rock formations that ... provide habitats for wildlife” (*BirdLife International*, 2011).

It has also been assessed as an Important Bird Area (IBA) in year 2001 due to the presence of the threatened Philippine Eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) and Philippine Hawk-eagle (*Nisaetus philippensis*) (*BirdLife International*, 2011). Kalatungan fauna included in the 2011 IUCN Red List are seven threatened species of amphibians: the critically endangered Taurus frog (*Rana holtzi*); the Endangered *Pristimantis deinops*; and four Vulnerable species (*Tinkling froglet Crinia tinnula*, *Eleutherodactylus pentasyringos*, *Pelophryne guentheri*, *Pristimantis polemistes*). Five threatened mammals were also included: two are Endangered (*Flying Fox Acerodon jubatus*) and Mindanao Pygmy Fruit Bat (*Alionycteris paucidentata*) while three are Vulnerable (Philippine deer *Cervus mariannus*, Philippine warty pig *Sus philippinensis*, and white-collared or Mindanao fruit bat *Megaerops wetmorei*).

Furthermore, participatory inventory of plants in Mt. Kalatungan revealed the presence of 342 species, many of which are endangered, endemic, economically and socially important to the locals. Five dominant endemic tree species are present, Katmon *Dillenia philippinensis*, White Lauan *Shorea contorta*, Red Lauan *Shorea negrosensis*, Bagtikan *Parashorea malaanonan*, and Bikal Baboi *Schizotachyum dielsianum* including the highly threatened *Almaciga* sp (*Amoroso*, 2010).

A.2.1 Biodiversity Conservation Priority Status

Being in one of the seventeen (17) megadiverse countries in the world, the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) of the DENR, the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UPCIDS) thru its Biodiversity Conservation Program and Conservation International Philippines (CI) worked with “more than 300 expert scientists and decision-makers from more than 100 local and international institutions” to develop a consensus on the most biologically important areas in the Philippines. Called the Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Priority-setting Program (PBCPP), it has aimed to provide “biological justification and recommendations of geographic areas in need of conservation.

Kalatungan Range¹ was identified as part of a Terrestrial Biodiversity Corridor, the Kitanglad-Ligwasan Corridor in the Greater Mindanao biogeographic region. It was also assigned with “Extremely High Critical” conservation priority. This means that it either has an extremely high biodiversity importance with very high socio-economic pressure, or it has a very high biodiversity importance but with extremely high socio-economic pressure. Either way, this basically means that the Kalatungan Range, which is the locus of the *Menurò* ICCA, is an important bio-diverse rich ecosystem under imminent danger from socio-economic pressures.

¹ The Kalatungan Mountain Range was assigned a Location Code of 130. In the category “Conservation Priority Areas for Terrestrial Mammals”, Kalatungan Mountain Range was not specifically located as such – it was included in the Bukidnon/Lanao del Sur location code 271.



IUCN's 2011 Red List includes the white-collared or Mindanao fruit bat (at left) as one of three vulnerable together with the Philippine deer and Philippine warty pig among five threatened mammal species within the Mt. Kalatungan range. Two other bats are now considered endangered based on the 2011 Red List: the flying fox and the Mindanao pygmy fruit bat.

DENR-13/PEF

B. The *Menuvù* and their *Idsesenggilaha*

The *Menuvù*'s perception of the *Keretungan* as sacred is essentially the core reason why the tribe nurtured a close and protective relationship with the environment. Its sanctity is explained in the tribe's belief that it is the abode of a variety of unseen spirits; the origin of their ancestors; source of knowledge; as their pharmacy; and as their source of livelihood. In this context, the area serves spiritual, historical and economic importance to the *Menuvù* tribe. It has been generous to them and so the tribe paid back with reverence and gratitude to the overseers of this generosity – the nature spirits they collectively call *Kedelisayan* and the Supreme Being they call *Megbenaya*. Use of the resources has always been governed by their beliefs and the practical knowledge of taking just enough at the right place, at the right time using the right method and with due permission and respect to the spirits. Otherwise, they might incur the wrath of the spirits and bring upon them punitive actions in the form of sickness, crop and hunting failure, and other disasters.

On their own, the *Menuvù* managed. They were well-acquainted with the difficulties of hunting, farming, fishing and gathering forest products for living but they were also well-guided by their tribe's knowledge and wisdom earned from the immeasurable time they have interacted with the local environment; thus, forging a unique and intimate – even sensitive – relationship with Nature and its unseen yet generous overseers. Passed on from generation to generation, this knowledge assured them that they lived well and their children's children will do so for a very long time.

B.1. Subsistence

The community depends on the environment for their source of water, food, medicine, shelter, materials for domestic use as well as for their livelihood activities. Essentially, the tribe depends on the *Idsesenggilaha* and the ancestral domain for survival.

The *Menuvù* remain mostly farmers. Because farming has been limited to the lower parts of the ancestral domain, which are outside the ICCA, what remained within the ICCA are some “emergency farms” planted with traditional crops and fruits. Cultivation in these farms is multi-cropped. The *Menuvù* practice intercropping of yams, sweet potato, corn, upland rice, beans, legumes, coffee, banana, abaca and other traditional crops. These emergency farms they call “*telau*” are visited very rarely. The *Menuvù* established the *telau* so that they have food sources in cases of famine or situations such as wars.

Agricultural production is supplemented with fishing, hunting, trapping, and gathering of forest products. The tribe has developed traditionally unique and practical mechanisms, techniques and equipment for these activities. These traditional practices are selective in the sense that they only get the adult animals that are, for example, not pregnant to make sure that the animal could produce more that the tribe could hunt in the future. For this they designed traps using weight and height estimates to ensure that only adults are caught. In collecting honey, the *Menuvù* only collect enough honey and leave some as food for the larvae. The *Menuvù* have also familiarized themselves with the times of year that is good for the said supplementary activities.

The *Menuvù* only get what they need, anything that is in excess is either saved for later or shared with the community. Unfortunately though, some members of the *Menuvù* community had abandoned what their ancestors have preserved for them – the indigenous beliefs, knowledge systems and practices – because of increasing pressure to meet the equally increasing complexity of wants and needs introduced by the mainstream society.

B.2. Cultural

The *Menuvù*'s lifeways is intertwined with its environment. In fact, *Menuvù* culture was shaped by its relationship with the environment and this relationship took thousands of years to develop. The ICCA and the ancestral domain are the venue of their cultural and spiritual activities.

The *Idsesenggilaha* has been managed as such since time immemorial because of its cultural/spiritual and economic importance to the *Menuvù*:

- The *Menuvù*'s identity as a tribe is intertwined with the *Idsesenggilaha*. It is where their history as a tribe began and it is also where their spirits will rest eternally.
- The *Idsesenggilaha* is the abode of the nature spirits and the resting place of their Supreme Being, *Megbevaya*.
- The *Idsesenggilaha* is the venue of their tribe's cultural and spiritual practices such as rituals, ceremonies, and other sacred activities. Conduct of these ensures their connection with the *Megbevaya* (Supreme Being) and the nature/guardian spirits who provides them with the guidance, knowledge and wisdom that they need in order to survive and to live well.
- The *Idsesenggilaha* is dotted with ritual areas. In these areas, use of resources is very limited, if not restricted. There are cases when the *Beylan* or spiritual masters live adjacent to these sacred areas to guard it and to ensure that the required rituals and ceremonies are performed. In such cases, a small traditional farm (described above) is established where the *Beylan* resides.
- The *Menuvù* consider the *Idsesenggilaha* as their school for it is the source of the *Menuvù*'s traditional knowledge – both specialized and communal. The *Menuvù*'s activities are scheduled based on their knowledge of the behavior of flora, fauna and the over-all environment as well as the appearance and positions of heavenly bodies in the sky and how these relate with each other as well as what these are reveal about the weather, among others. As examples, the stars guide their farming schedules while the moon serves as a basis of fishing and frog hunting. Flowering and fruiting seasons of forest trees are observed for honey collection and hunting/trapping of wild game. It is where they learn how to survive by living with and respecting the environment and the guardian/nature spirits that serve as the unseen caretakers of it.

B.3. Tourism

Being within Mt. Kalatungan Range Natural Park or MKaRNP, which is a government-designated protected area, the ICCA has been opened for tourism activities. It is known as one of the mountain climbing destinations in the Philippines, more so because Mt. Kalatungan holds the sixth highest peak in the Philippines. The Local Government is currently promoting the magnificent falls and lakes within the protected area as tourist spots for swimming and holding picnics.

The Local Government of Pangantukan is in-charge of tourism in the area. The *Menuvù* gets minimal benefit from the tourism economy in the area, which is employment priority given to them by the Local Government. The *Menuvù* are hired as porters and guides for the mountain climbers. The tribal guards are now more known as forest guards hired by the PAMB to secure the area and enforce protected area policies.



II. History and Activities

The concept of an ICCA, an *Idsesenggilaha* to the *Menuvù* has been in place ever since the beginning of the tribe. The time-immortality element of it hence requires a historical context that is not confined to the limits of written records and memories of one individual. The following is a compendium of memories and written records and previous researches on the plight of the *Menuvù* as one of the first peoples to have conservative relationships with nature amidst the vicissitude of land occupation, utilization and culture.

A. The ‘*Keretung*’ and the first man who built fire

The etymology of the word Manobo is controversial and many researchers have offered their own interpretations of its meaning. The Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) explained it as “person” or “people.” Garvan (1929), Barrows (1910) and Pastells (1906) seem to agree that it may have been originally “Mansuba” from “man” (person or people) and “suba” (river), hence meaning “river people” or “dweller of the river.” This was based on their early observation of the people who inhabited the shores of Agusan and its tributaries. Saleeby (1991) suggested “man” meaning “first, aboriginal” and “*tuvi*” meaning “to grow.” Accordingly, it could mean “the people that grow upon the island.” Junamarti (1892) contends that the term “Manobo” was originally a Maguindanao word meaning “mountain people.” In all cases, “Manobo” is the Spanish adopted term and was applied widely throughout Mindanao as a tribal designation (*Le Bar, 1975*). But, as shown by the story above, the *Menuvù* has their own meaning to their tribal designation – a meaning that is revealed in a story below that tells their peoples’ beginning.

What is known to many as the Kalatungan is known to the *Menuvù* as *Keretungan*. Its summit is called “*Apu*” for they believe that it is the abode of an *Elembiten* that serves as their tribe’s guardian spirit, their ultimate protector.

Before the great flood and before the people were called *Menuvù*, the whole mountain was called *Apu*. But when their world was submerged in water, only a small island, *Keretung* in their dialect, remained above the water. *Apu* Agbibilin and a pair of closely spaced trees were the only ones left on the island. The wind blew all the time and made the two trees rub against each other’s trunk causing a spark that developed into a small flame. From this, *Apu* Agbibilin was able to build fire. The smoke from the fire was seen by other survivors of the flood, each also taking refuge on peaks of the other mountains. They came to the *Keretung* to ask fire from *Apu* Agbibilin. The race that he sired was since called the *Menuvù*, which was an ascription of their ancestor *Apu* Agbibilin – “the first man who built fire.” Others call them the “people who came from where the fire was built.”

Discussions with the *Menuvù* elders reveal that after the Great Flood has subsided, the *Menuvù* travelled down the slopes until they reached the lowlands and met other peoples. The elders recalled that the tribe used to occupy the lowlands in the present-day municipality of Pangantucan, Bukidnon Province. The retreat further up the mountain slopes was the *Menuvù*’s response to external attempts to assimilate the tribe under successive foreign governments i.e. Spanish (1596-1900), Americans (1907-1942) and the Japanese (1942-1945); and then the centralized national government of the Philippines. Their displacement could also be attributed to the waves of assertive and technically advanced migrant settlers who came to occupy native territories which were made possible by government resettlement programs, the logging boom and rapid agricultural advancements. (*Cole, 1956*) (*Cairns, 2000*)

B. The Menuvù's journey back into the forefronts of the Apu

In the studies of Elkins (1978) and Thomas and Healy (1926), the Manobo came in trickles through Celebes or Borneo. These people were said to belong to the original stock of Proto-Philippine or Proto-Austronesian who came a thousands years ahead of the Ifugao. It is hypothesized that the Proto-Manobo were nomadic hunters and gatherers with a basic knowledge of slash-and-burn cultivation who had ventured deeper into Mindanao due to population growth. It was further inferred that this led to the breaking up of the main group into smaller kin groups. These had the same aim of exploiting the environment for sustenance until each has found their own niche where they would settle. The first Manobo settled in northern Mindanao: Camiguin, Cagayan, and some areas of Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental. The succeeding years has seen the visitations and great influence of Chinese traders and Islamic Groups (Cairns, 2000). By 1596, Jesuit missionaries were already in Northern Mindanao to Christianize them and bring the colony under Spain's control. But it was not until the 1880s that the Jesuits succeeded in partly overcoming both geographical (in the form of rugged mountain ranges, thickly forested areas and high plateaus) and cultural barriers between them and the natives. (Cole, 1956)

The Spaniards imposed their political and belief systems upon them. According to the Elders, the Spaniards persuaded some of their ancestors to gather in residential centers facilitate the distribution of food, goods and items. It was also for a more convenient conduct of religious instruction and better local governance. We know now through historical accounts and letters that it was the Jesuit who were responsible for such "vigorous program of resettlement and Christianization." But after the fall of Spain to the Americans in 1898, most of the natives reverted back to the old life. (Cole, 1956)

The Elders interviewed did not recount encounters with the Americans but in Malaybalay, American leaders Frederick Lewis and Manuel Fortich as Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, respectively, re-established old villages, organized new model towns, introduced plows and draft animals to assist grassland agriculture, schools were opened and local governments set up. These served as catalysts for cultural change among the natives. (Cole, 1956)

The Japanese came in the early 1940s during the Second World War and reached the uplands of Mt Kalatungan where the *Menuvù* resided. This once again forced the *Menuvù* to flee into the deeper parts of the *Keretungan* forests, where they continued to practice their culture, though somewhat limited in range due to fear of coming in contact with the invaders. Some *Menuvù* men were captured to be used as guides in the forest. After the war, in 1945, the *Menuvù* went back to their previous settlements.

After World War II, challenge to their cultural identity was aggravated by the progressive displacement from their ancestral lands due to the influx of migrants brought about by the Government resettlement program, the flourishing of the logging industry and the aggressive development of agricultural activities in Bukidnon.

Government resettlement program in the 1950s first through LASEDECO (Land Settlement and Development Corporation)² and then NARRA (National Resettlement Rehabilitation Administration)³ has brought Ilocano and Pampangeño from Luzon and Ilonggo and Cebuano from the Visayas Islands. Employment opportunities offered by the logging industry has also encouraged in-migration.



Aside from the inflow of migrants, the era of uncontrolled logging in Bukidnon between the late 1960s to early 1980s became the major cause of deforestation in the *Keretungan* lowland forest. Rough access roads were opened along the footslopes for the extraction of red lawaan (*Shorea sp.*), white lawaan, and wild pine (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) (Cairns, 2000). There were no efforts to restore the denuded areas and employment of the *Menuvù* was limited to being guides through the forest and guards of logging equipment and harvested logs.

Conversion of forests into agricultural areas became easy following the areas previously cleared by the logging companies – TIPI (Timber Industries of the Philippines, Inc) and EDE/DBI (Elias Dacudao Enterprises/ Dacudao Brothers, Inc). Conversion of forestlands into agricultural areas has become low cost and required little labor thanks to the logging companies and forest fires, which inadvertently cleared the area for both the migrants' and natives' agricultural purposes. During this time, agricultural activities intensified as government policies and external market conditions and developments during the 1970s-1980s stimulated the cultivation of cash crops such as vegetables, coffee, banana and other fruits, yellow corn, and sugarcane including abaca (*Musa textilis*, Manila hemp).

The *Menuvù*'s inherent congeniality and credulousness, as was their custom, made them vulnerable to deception. Ill-equipped for the sudden flood of migrants and settlers in their territories, the *Menuvù*, trusting and naive to the ways of the lowlanders, has instantly lost most of their lands for a few tins of sardines and bottles of alcohol. Their abaca and coffee were bought at very low prices or a few bottles of drink. Many were forced into debts by which they paid with their lands. This has relegated the *Menuvù* to being squatters on their own ancestral lands. They were forced to run into the safety of the uplands and its forests to avoid the complexity and competitiveness of the emerging society, but some stayed and were inevitably subjected to acculturation. Centuries later, many of the *Menuvù* have become strangers to their own traditions and the relationship that took immeasurable amount of time to be forged has either been forgotten, swept aside or passively dropped from their lives to be replaced by the new belief systems brought by the strangers.

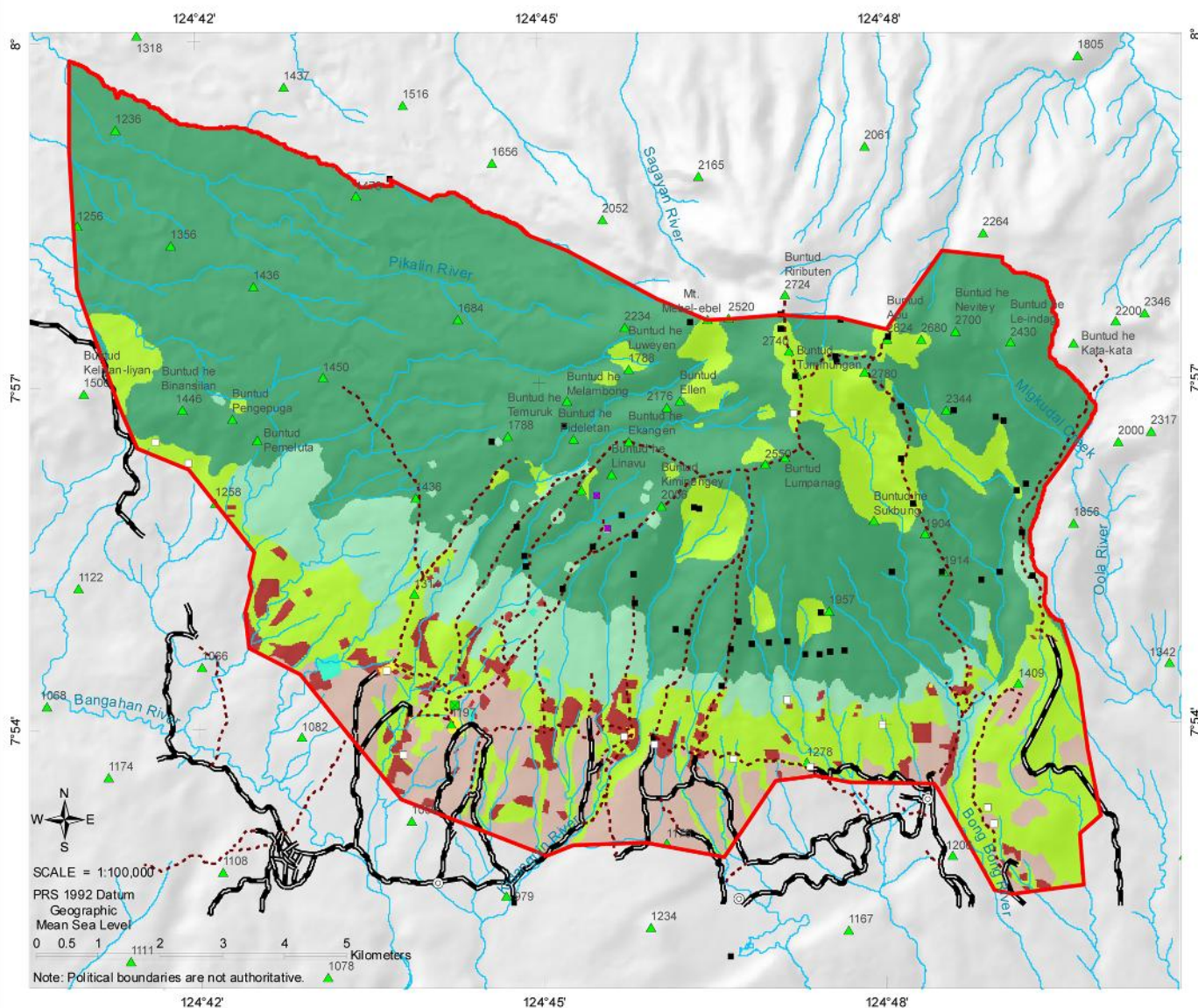
The change in the mother culture led to the change in the cultural landscape and, inevitably, in the associated biodiversity. The cultural venue of the practice of their beliefs significantly lessened and confined to an area that has also become, in the terms of experts, environmentally-critical and, thus, as what the Government saw fit, needed special protection by the experts also.



2 LASADEC was a National Government Agency purposely organized to administer the land distribution to all settlers particularly from the Visayas.

3 NARRA (National Resettlement Rehabilitation Administration) replaced LASADEC under President Magsaysay's term.

PRESENT LAND USE (2012) Ancestral Domain Claim of the Upakat Te Meginged Te Keretungan He Ebpengimbetasan in Pangantuncan, Bukidnon



Legend: UMKE of Balmar Ancestral Domain Claim = 13,242 has

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| UMKE Ancestral Domain Claim | Municipality | Primary forest |
| Road | Barangay | Secondary forest |
| Trail | Sitio | Reforestation |
| — River | Landmarks | Grassland |
| ▲ Mountain peak | Tribal hall | Traditional agriculture |
| | Sacred place | Sugarcane plantation |
| | ▲ Mountain peak | Residential |

	Land uses (2012)	Area, hectares	Percent, %
Katulan	Primary forest	7,760	59
Meribpesen	Grassland	2,816	21
Lati	Secondary forest	1,212	9
Tevuan	Sugarcane plantation	1,069	8
Pemuleey	Traditional agriculture	350	3
Inged	Residential	20	0.2
Reforestation	Reforestation	16	0.1
	Total	13,242	



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A detailed topographic map of Bontomatene District, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The map features a color-coded elevation system ranging from green (low) to brown (high). Major rivers shown include the Pikatan River, Bangahan River, and Oola River. Numerous settlements are labeled, such as Buntud he Binansilan, Buntud he Melambeng, and Buntud he Ekanen. A scale bar indicates distances up to 5 kilometers. A compass rose shows North, South, East, and West. The map includes coordinate markings along its edges.



Land cover in the ICCA (2012)	Hectares	Percent
Grassland	803	19.9
Primary forest	3,202	79.3
Secondary forest	32	0.79
TOTAL	4,038	

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C. The Menuvù ICCA within a government-designated natural park

In May 2000, the Kalatungan Mountain Range was placed under a state-defined management regime through Presidential Proclamation No. 305. As such, it forms part of the initial component of the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) and was officially called Mt. Kalatungan Range Natural Park (MKaRNP), which covers 21,248 hectares. The Philippine Law, thru Republic Act 7586 or the NIPAS Act of 1992, defines a Natural Park as “a relatively large area not materially altered by human activity where extractive resource uses are not allowed and maintained to protect outstanding natural and scenic areas of national or international significance for scientific, educational and recreational use.” Pursuant to the NIPAS Act, a “special development area” called a buffer zone covering 13,892 hectares was also established around MKaRNP “in order to avoid or minimize harm to the protected area.” Combined, the protected area and the buffer zone reach a total of 35, 139 hectares (DENR, 2012). Albeit it has a Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) to facilitate a collaborative management between stakeholders, it still lacks a specific law to officially declare it a full-pledged protected area.

The *Idsesenggilaba*, as part of Mt. Kalatungan, is part of the major watershed of Northern Mindanao and as such, it supplies lowland communities with water for domestic, agricultural irrigation and industrial uses. It also contributes to the hydroelectric power supplied by the National Power Corporation or NAPOCOR via the First Bukidnon Electric Cooperative (FIBECO) to 12 municipalities and two cities in Mindanao. As one of the remaining vestiges of pristine primary forests, it is a host to rich biodiversity, serves as a carbon pool and could prevent massive floods if aptly protected and its forests regenerated. Being one of the highest peaks in the Philippines and boasting numerous waterfalls and enchanting sites, the area is a recreational haven for the adventure-minded.

The MKaRNP is without a doubt an environmentally-critical area that sustains and helps maintain ecological balance and provides environmental services as a watershed and as a carbon pool. But for eleven (11) Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs), the mountain range is their ancestral domain. It is their school and playground. They depend on it for their medicines, food, housing materials and other needs. It is sacred; it is home to the spirits who take care of everything and everyone in the tribe. Just as they were entitled to utilize the resources of these lands, the responsibility to carry on its protection and conservation was as well entrusted to them. The *Menuvù* are among these communities. For some 2,600 individuals of the said tribe, it is an integral part of their identity as a people as it is included in their creation stories and the tribe's history.

The whole 13,200-hectare *Menuvù* ancestral domain lies within the bounds of MKaRNP and its buffer zone. And approximately 4,000 hectares of this is an area respected, revered and protected by the *Menuvù* because of its social, cultural, spiritual and economic importance to the tribe. It is their belief that any activity that disfavours the spirits in the area will incur punishment, even death. Hence, it is also feared. All this is encapsulated in a deep *Menuvù* term – *Idsesenggilaba*. The result is the preservation of one of the remaining forests of the Philippines. It is this fact that suggests the efficacy of traditional resource management systems in conserving the bounty of nature, considered as divine endowments by the *Menuvù*.

Its declaration as a protected area has, however, initially caused divisiveness among the tribe. The establishment of the protected area and its management board was thought of as ill-conceived because proper and genuine consultation among the tribes was not conducted prior to the declaration. Some members of the tribe contend that there has been an intrusion into their ancestral lands and a blatant show of disrespect to their culture, a violation of their sacred areas. Also, interviewed tribal leaders relayed that the map used by DENR reflected an area void of settlements – this is either a result of an erroneous survey, an honest mistake, or a blatant lie to fast-track its declaration. This has further angered the community, and threatened their security of tenure and livelihood. This has also caused uproar among other ICCs in and around Mt Kalatungan, namely the Talaandig in Portulin and Miarayon, Bukidnon.



Not everyone welcomed the development and conservation activities by the PAMB, the LGU, and the DENR. The community was wary about the intent and sincerity of those activities primarily because they felt that they are not being given the respect due to them and the nature spirits. The local government at that time was alleged by the community to have picked and appointed “Tribal Dealers” to represent the ICC and to “smooth-out” the process instead of choosing to communicate with the real Tribal Leaders and Elders. This has all the more boxed the community out of the decision-making circle. Consequently, this has made the distances – between the conflicting community members and the local government as well as the DENR – even farther apart such that it seemed impossible go across and settle differences.

It was only in 2007 when the tribe had an official representative in the PAMB, with effort from the newly installed Protected Area Supervisor (PASu) Vergilino Alima. PASu Alima reportedly went to the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) in Malaybalay to help him identify the true *Menuvî* leader in the area. The NCIP identified Datu Ampuan Jeodoro Sulda earning him a seat in the Executive Committee of the PAMB and assuring his tribe a say in the activities that are to be conducted in the ancestral domain, especially within their ICCA. The year after, in 2008, UMKE constructed a 3-dimensional model of their ancestral domain with the help of Philippine Association For Intercultural Development, Inc (PAFID), and in 2011, the information coded on the said map was updated.



When community leader Datu Ampuan was invited to speak about their *Idsesenggilaba* in the May 2011 ICCA Symposium organized by the New Conservation Areas in the Philippines Project (NewCAPP) of the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau under the DENR, an opportunity was given to the PAMB, DENR, LGU and the *Menuvî* community for the betterment of conservation efforts in the MKaRNP and strengthening coordinative relationships between them. Full documentation and mapping of the ICCA and the ancestral domain, identifying environmentally critical areas using slope, elevation, land cover and land use GIS data, has been accomplished. An initial Inventory of Natural Resources within the ICCA has also been conducted and specifically targeted floral species for the determination of carbon-sequestration capacity of the forest and the floral biodiversity index. The *Menuvî* community has also formulated a Community Conservation Plan (CCP), which is being studied by the Local Government of Pangantucan for integration into the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) as well as the MKaRNP PAMB for integration also into the General Management Plan for the park.



On 08 February 2012, the *Menuvù* formally declared their ICCA through a 7-night ritual called *Gulugundu* and has enjoined the attendees' participation in the declaration of the ICCA's existence in the respective fields/places of the participants. The tribe's message was clear and simple: the *Idsesenggilaba* (ICCA) has stayed bountiful and useful because the tribe has been in a mutually protective and conservative relationship with it since time immemorial and their custom requires that anyone wishing to enter the area should obtain permission from the *Ebmegurangen* – the Council of Elders – and follow their rules, regulations and policies. This was witnessed and participated in by representatives from DENR; United Nations Development Program (UNDP); UNDP-GEF (Global Environment Facility); PAFID (Philippine Association For Intercultural Development); Presidential Adviser for Environmental Protection; and the Municipal Government of Pangantucan. This has raised hope for the *Menuvù* that their indigenous ways of keeping the *Idsesenggilaba* intact will be recognized, respected and compensated with due support from all stakeholders including the ones who shared a mutual feeling of distrust in the past.

III. Conservation

The *Idsesenggilaba* has been managed using indigenous and traditional resource management and governance systems, which are guided by their spiritual beliefs. The primary objective here is really to conserve certain species of plants or animals or the rich biodiversity in the area. Those mentioned are actually welcome bonuses of ensuring the continuity of the tribe for generations. By protecting, conserving, managing the *Idsesenggilaba* and its resources the *Menuvù* actually:

- preserve the venue of their tribe's rituals and sacred activities to ensure connection with the *Megbevaya* (Supreme Being) and the nature/guardian spirits;
- preserve their culture by protecting the ICCA as it is the venue of its practice and the source of its communal and specialized traditional knowledge to ensure continuity of culture and traditional knowledge; and
- protect the source of their tribe's material needs (ICCA as source of their livelihood, medicines, food, materials for traditional house, equipment, etc.) and manage its use to ensure its sustainability for the next generations.

When the DENR assigned the Kalatungan Range as a protected area in 2000, the ICCA of the *Menuvù* was inevitably included. Since the help of the local indigenous communities was enjoined by the PAMB, the objectives have included biodiversity/species conservation specifically that of the Philippine Monkey-eating Eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*).

The DENR's National Greening Program (NGP) is also being implemented in the MKaRNP. The NGP encourages community participation in the restoration thru reforestation of the denuded parts of the natural park.



IV. Management and Governance

C.1. Spiritual Governance and Contemporary Structures supporting it

Mt. Keretungan is the abode of the *Elembiten* (invoked spirits) that work as a hierarchy of Spiritual Beings or *Kedelisayan* that protect and nurture the tribe. Traditional knowledge and justice system descended from the *Balaan* or God through this Spiritual Hierarchy of Beings.

The *Ebmegurangen* (Elders) explain that no ordinary human being created the laws of living in the sacred environment. These laws were revealed to the *Datu* and *Beylan* (Spiritual Master and Healer) by the *Ebmegurangen* and *Kedelisayan* (Nature Spirits).

Traditional governance systems are very spiritually grounded and are in place. At the community level, the tribal leaders (*Datu* and *Bai*), spiritual masters (*Beylan*) and Ancestral Guards (*Begani*). The *Datu* lays down the final decision but not without advice from the *Beylan*. The *Begani* are the tribe's warriors or soldiers who enforce customary laws, go to tribal or clan wars, and follow the *Datu's* orders.

Nowadays, traditional leadership remains but the Ancestral Domain is represented by its indigenous peoples' organization known as the UMKE or *Upakat te Meg-inged te Keretungan be Ebpengimbetsan*. However, Philippine or mainstream governance system overlap with some of the functions/jurisdiction of the tribal leaders, causing confusion among the constituents.

Also, because the area is located within the Mt. Kalatungan Range Natural Park, the forested regions are specifically jointly managed by the community with the Mt. Kalatungan PAMB, which is a multi-stakeholder body comprised of LGUs, Tribal leaders, DENR, Region X, Community Environment and Natural Resources Offices (CENRO), and occasionally taps non-government organizations for certain goals. A General Management Plan (GMP) has been prepared and being updated to fortify coordinative efforts for the conservation and protection of the MKaRNP.

C.2. Threats

Since the ICCA governance system is deeply rooted in traditional knowledge and belief systems, the *Menuvù* considers anything that threatens their culture as a threat to the *Idsesenggilaba* and the richly diverse life that thrives in it. The elders identified these as the influence of mainstream society lifeways on the community especially to the newer generations of *Menuvù*; education that undermines traditional knowledge; and culture-insensitive laws and policies by the government. Logging and mining are not seen as major threats as of the moment. Large-scale commercial logging has been stopped mainly because hardwoods have become scarce in the area after the boom of the logging industry starting 1960s. Small-scale logging mostly by migrants remains a problem, though minor, in some parts of the sacred forest.

1. Erosion of traditional knowledge/cultural change – Since the ICCA governance system is deeply rooted in traditional knowledge and belief systems, the *Menuvù* community considers anything that threatens their culture as a threat to the *Idsesenggilaba* and the richly diverse life that thrives in it. This is due primarily to the influence of mainstream society. Western education and foreign religion also undermines traditional knowledge and practices.

2. Global Climate Change – Climate change is already impacting traditional knowledge and practices of the *Menuvù* especially traditional livelihood activities. The *Menuvù* observes the environment for signs that guide them in their farming, hunting and fishing activities. However, sudden changes in the weather are disrupting these activities. For example, the appearance and position of a group of stars or constellation in the night sky can tell the *Menuvù* if it is going to rain anytime soon or when the hot/dry season is coming. They use this knowledge to schedule their planting and harvesting season. Nowadays, however, even if the constellations are consistent in their patterns, the weather is not. Sudden downpours lead to crop failure and compromises food security.

3. Tourism access – Being the fourth highest peak in the country, Mt. Kalatungan remains one of the tourist destinations in Bukidnon particularly of mountain climbers. The LGU is also investing in the promotion of eco-tourism in the Mt. Kalatungan, inclusive of the ICCA of course. Though this is seen to benefit the local and indigenous communities as another source of income, the increasing number of climbers has also brought in garbage irresponsibly disposed in the *Menuvù*'s sacred forest. Tourists/climbers also unintentionally disrespect the tribe's sacred forest e.g by making excessive noise that disturbs the animals and the spirits that live in the area.

4. Conflict with neighboring communities/associated communities – This conflict is mainly due to ancestral domain boundaries that are yet to be settled between some associated communities. There is also an on-going conflict between some of the tribal leaders due to unresolved, sometimes personal, issues. If not settled, this may cause a rift between communities and sabotage coordinative and collaborative partnership relations and compromise the strengthening efforts towards biodiversity conservation and ICCA recognition and support.

5. Sugarcane plantations – Bukidnon's landscape is dominated by sugarcane in terms of physical distribution. Within the bounds of the *Menuvù* ancestral domain, approximately 36% of the agricultural area is dedicated to sugarcane plantations. These plantations are, however, not owned by the *Menuvù*. Their lands are rented for a meager amount and then most of them work as seasonal laborers on their own lands. According to the *Menuvù*, this has pushed them further towards poverty because they do not earn enough at P150 a day and yet work covers much of their day from morning to late afternoon. Cumulatively, work in the said plantations consume half of their year. Because of this, the laborers could not dedicate much time for their own farms leading to its eventual abandonment. Traditional agricultural practices are, hence, also abandoned. This has already changed the cultural landscape and is threatening to cause changes or even loses of the associated biodiversity. Pesticides and fertilizers used for the sugarcane plantations also caused nutrient depletion of the soil making it unsuitable for traditional crops. Pests and insects also destroy these crops planted in traditional farms near sugarcane plantations. There are no sugarcane plantations inside the ICCA but its projected expansion makes the fact too close for comfort. Also, as it affects the economic aspect of the associated communities, the people might opt to obtain supplemental and easy money from the ICCA putting timber and wild animals in danger for poaching.

6. Development: Napier Grass Plantations for Biofuel Industries – Napier grass (*Pennisetum purpureum*) is an invasive perennial grass that grows wild in sub-tropical Africa. It is known as a forage crop but has been found to have high productivity as a biofuel, making it a target crop for biofuel production in the Philippines. However, the Philippines has limited favorable areas available. The areas with the most potential for napier based biofuel production are hilly areas with marginal, eroded/degraded soils. Some companies, though, has turned their attention to lands within IP territories. A portion of the *Menuvù* ancestral domain has become one of its targets.



Residents of Barangay Dominorog, an associated community, are being enticed by a company called SECURA International to sign contracts for cultivating on their lands napier grass, which will later be bought from them by the company. Interviews with the locals revealed that a processing plant will be built in the area, giving rise to concerns about waste disposal and its effects on the environment. This has divided the people in the ancestral domain and has somehow affected their participation in ICCA initiatives. The greatest danger however this poses is the influx of migrants in the ancestral domain threatening land and culture security for the *Menuvù* and the potential encroachment of napier plantations into the *Idsesenggilaha*. Even though the residents in that area assured that they will leave patches of forest and will exclude the ICCA in the plantations, fragmentation of the forest will certainly weaken its resilience and negatively affect biodiversity in the surrounding areas, which will eventually affect the ICCA.

7. Extraction (hunting, mining, logging, fishing) – Logging and mining are not seen as that major a threat as of the moment. Large-scale commercial logging has been stopped mainly because hardwoods have become scarce in the area after the boom of the logging industry starting 1960s. Small-scale logging mostly by migrants remains a problem in some parts of the sacred forest. Part of the MKaRNP is declared as a mineral reservation, leaving the ICCA still exposed to threats from mining operations.

V. What's Next and Lesson Learned

The *Menuvù* community within the ancestral domain has developed a Community Conservation Plan (CCP) primarily to sustain and improve protection and conservation efforts for the ICCA as well as the improvement of the well-being of the *Menuvù* community. The said CCP outlines the necessary activities to support or achieve their seven (7) main objectives (*Box 1*). Any activity or support should abide by the policies that they developed for the ICCA and the whole ancestral domain, as well. Principles behind the policies are shown in *Box 2 (next page)*.

These will serve as a guide not only for the *Menuvù* but also for those who are willing to aid them in sustaining conservation initiatives by strengthening the cultural foundation of such initiatives and providing support for livelihood activities. The *Menuvù* recognizes that this endeavor is not for the soloist, nor for the faint-hearted. For this to work, linkages and relationships with support groups and the local government are to be nurtured as well.

Box 1. Objectives enshrined in the CCP for the Idsesenggilaha

- 1. To achieve recognition and respect of our rights as an Indigenous Community and our capability to manage our Ancestral Domain.*
- 2. To strengthen the Begani (Cultural Guards) as the guardians and protectors of the Ancestral Domain and the Idsesenggilaha.*
- 3. To gain access to livelihood support to improve economic conditions of the communities within the Ancestral Domain and, at the same time, decrease pressure on the environment.*
- 4. To strengthen ownership of the Ancestral Domain by achieving a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT).*
- 5. To strengthen the Menuvù culture and traditions.*
- 6. To strengthen UMKE as the IPO that advocates for the recognition of their rights as IPs and promotes the traditional systems of environmental conservation.*
- 7. To build and strengthen the capability of the Menuvù community.*

Box 2. Guiding Principles behind the Policies for the ICCA

A. ICCA Management

- Idsesenggilaha is managed by the Council of Elders and Tribal Leaders*
- Being a gift from Megbevaya, the land is nurtured and respected. It is not for sale nor will we allow anyone to take it away from us, for this land is not ours alone but most especially shared with our past and future tribesmen. We will ensure that the future generations of Menuvù could still reap benefits from the land.*

B. Utilization of Resources within the Ancestral Domain and Idsesenggilaha

- All resources within the Ancestral Domain are owned by all Menuvù who still live by our culture.*
- It is therefore the right of all culture-led Menuvù to benefit from the resources in our Ancestral Domain.*
- Use of all resources within the Ancestral Domain and the Idsesenggilaha is subject to customary laws and traditional practices.*

FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT FORM

A Global Registry for Understanding Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCA)

We, the undersigned, in representation of the community or indigenous peoples named here Menuvù Community in Mt. Keretungan, ([give name of community] referred to as "our ICCA Community") holder of the customary rights of Idsesenggilaha [give name of ICCA] (referred to as "our ICCA"), confirm that:

- Our ICCA Community wishes to contribute information to the ICCA Registry managed by UNEP-WCMC.
- This decision has been taken:
 - (a) On the basis of information provided to us about the ICCA Registry by way of the ICCA Registry Information Sheet (available at www.iccaregistry.org) which we have read and understood; and
 - (b) following a culturally appropriate process of discussion and consultation in accordance with our normal decision-making practices.
- Datu Ampuan Jeodoro S. Sulda [give name(s) of information-providers] are authorised to provide data and information to the ICCA Registry in accordance with this FPIC Form although we may nominate persons or entities to provide data and information to the ICCA Registry from time to time.
- We understand that participation in the ICCA Registry is entirely voluntary.
- We understand that we may withdraw our contribution to the ICCA Registry, or any part of it, at any time without explanation or consequences and that, if we do, we will be entitled to request our information be removed from Registry records and excluded from any future analyses.
- We are providing data and information to the ICCA Registry on the basis that we will retain all our intellectual property rights as recognised by law. There will be no transfer of ownership rights in any such intellectual property to UNEP-WCMC or any of its ICCA partners as a result of any contribution by us of data or information to the ICCA Registry.
- We are providing data and information to the ICCA Registry on the basis that it will not be put to commercial use by UNEP-WCMC, or any of its ICCA partners or any other third party.
- We are providing data and information to the ICCA Registry on the basis that sensitive information about personal identity as well as confidential information will not be disclosed, published or otherwise revealed to any other party whatsoever except with specific prior written authorization.
- We understand that if we have any questions about the operation of the ICCA Registry or the use of any data or information which we have provided, or if we have any complaints or concerns

relating to the ICCA Registry, we may contact the Registry Managers who will discuss our queries or concerns with a view to reaching agreement on an appropriate solution.

- We understand the purposes of the ICCA Registry and the possible uses of information. We understand that there are different levels of access to data and information provided to the ICCA Registry. Data and information may be openly available to the public through the World Database on Protected Areas (subject to the terms and conditions available at <http://www.protectedplanet.net/termsandconditions>) or available on a password protected basis, or available to ICCA Registry Managers only. We are providing data and information to the ICCA Registry on the basis that we may specify the level of access to be given to different types of information, as checked below.

Use of ICCA Information

Please tick the appropriate boxes if you consent to the provided data being shared in the following ways:

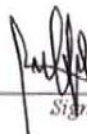
Type of Information	Available in WDPA*	Available in ICCA Registry	Available only to Registry Managers and others given prior permission	Only available to Registry Managers
General or descriptive information about ICCA(s) <i>(in particular, information about the area, the community/ies, and the presence of specific species, habitats and/or genetic material [plant/animal] as well as their utilisation)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Point data <i>(latitude and longitude of the central point of the ICCA)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Boundary data for the ICCA <i>(supplied as a GIS shapefile if available or as a map on paper, in a publication or on a website)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photos, videos and other media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional comments				

*Information used in the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) must adhere to the Terms and Conditions (<http://www.protectedplanet.net/termsandconditions>)

Menuvù Community in Mt Keretungan –

DATU AMPUAN JEODORO S. SULDA

Name of community (and signing representatives)



Signature

March 21, 2012


Date

A copy of this consent form will be left with the community and a copy will be kept with the Registry Managers at UNEP-WCMC. This form can be completed online at <http://www.iccaregistry.org/en/contribute>.

ICCA Registry www.iccregistry.org

ICCA Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas

HOME / ABOUT ICCAs / EXPLORE / PARTICIPATE / FAQs / CONTACT / LOGIN

Language: 



Recognising indigenous and community conservation

Welcome to the ICCA Registry

Learn about ICCAs (Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas), an important form of local conservation.

Participate in the ICCA Registry. Register your ICCA or submit a case study.

Explore interactive maps and ICCA case studies. Begin your journey with the world map.

Idsesenggilaha of the Menuvù Tribe, Philippines

Introduction

The ICCA Registry website is an online information platform for Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas, where communities themselves provide data, case studies, maps, photos and stories which result in useful statistics and analysis on featured ICCAs around the world. Participation in the ICCA Registry is a voluntary process, with **multiple benefits** for participating communities. The ICCA Registry is inclusive of a secure, current non-publicly accessible database on ICCAs and is a critical mechanism for understanding the conservation impact of communities.

ICCA Registry www.iccregistry.org/en/sites/27

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Idsesenggilaha of the Menuvù Tribe, Philippines



The community showing the 3D map of their ancestral domain © Glaisa Tabanao



A group of Ifyatan conducting a ritual asking for permission to document their IKOP and sacred places. © Glaisa Tabanao



Datu Ampuan giving a coin to UNDP Country Director Meyer as a symbol of giving him a task to spread the word about the Idsesenggilaha. © Glaisa Tabanao



Multimedia resources



Idsesenggilaha of the Menuvù Tribe in Mt Kalatungan, Bukidnon

A. Biophysical Profile

A.1. Location

The Ancestral Domain claim of the Menuvù includes six (6) barangays namely Nabaliwa, Baqusanon, Concepcion, Mendia, Pilaanan all in Pangasinan, and Brgy Domorong in Talaue, Guindanon II. It is composed of around 531 households or 2,352 individuals. Of which, around 95% are Menuvù while the other 5% are of the Talaandig Tribe and Dumagats or non-IP migrants. The Ancestral Domain covers approximately 13,242 hectares of this Mt Kalatungan Range found in Bukidnon, Mindanao, Philippines.

Results of the collaborative project DENR-USAID Philippine Environmental Governance (EcoGov) in 2004 showed that the ICCA is a compendium of three types of land cover – closed canopy forest, open canopy forest and brushland. This classification, interpreted using satellite images and ground-validated with the assistance of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Local Government Units (LGUs) (DENR-USAID, 2004), closely resembles that of the Menuvù community's description of the land coverages within the ICCA.

Resources

- [THREE-YEAR COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PLAN FOR THE IDSSENGGILAHA \(ICCA\)](#)
- [GUIDING POLICIES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE IDSSENGGILAHA \(ICCA\)](#)

Important Links

- [Philippine Association For Intercultural Development, Inc. \(PAFID\)](#)
- [New Conservation Areas in the Philippines Project](#)

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The New Conservation Areas in the Philippines Project (NewCAPP) is a five-year project of the Government of the Philippines with financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is being implemented by the Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

NewCAPP

**Expanding and Diversifying the National System of
Terrestrial Protected Areas in the Philippines Project
or New Conservation Areas in the Philippines Project**