

‘Bangklase’ Educational Shipboard: A Private-Public Partnership for Educational Innovation and Environmental Advocacy

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The paper will present conceptual understanding of Private - Public Partnership (PPP) and study best results of how PPP can be an effective means for education, environmental advocacy, sustainability of the protected area, community development and conservation of biodiversity using the ‘Bangklase Educational Shipboard’ as a platform. Using these practices, the paper will then propose a PPP model for the Naujan Lake National Park (NLNP) that is likely to yield the best practice of the Province and for the country.

BANGKLASE: KLASE sa BANGKA, Ibang klase!

‘Bangklase’ as an Educational Shipboard, a nature-based and educational innovation of Divine Word College of Calapan (DWCC) in partnership with Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Community Environment and Natural Resources (CENRO) and the Local Government Units (LGU) of Oriental Mindoro. The first of a kind initiative launched last November 14, 2014 at the Naujan Lake, Brgy. Pasi of Oriental Mindoro, Philippines.

‘Bangklase’ is an educational shipboard aimed at conserving and preserving Naujan Lake National Park (NLNP) through environmental education, ecotourism development, and private-public partnership awareness campaign. It is a two-pronged strategy to promote the conservation of the lake as an alternative mode of learning biodiversity and likewise it will promote ecotourism that will generate employment of the local residents and additional revenues for the local government units. It is used as a “classroom” in the 8,125-hectare freshwater body and is 14 kilometers long, Naujan Lake in Oriental Mindoro Province.

An educational shipboard with maximum capacity of 150.

Naujan Lake Natural Park (NLNP)

Naujan Lake is considered as the country’s fifth largest lake and was designated as a “wetland of international importance” by the Geneva-based Ramsar Convention Bureau in 1999 due to its rich biodiversity and for being an area critical for breeding and migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. It is nestled within the 21,655-hectare NLNP, which was elevated into a national park status in 1968 by virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 335. Further, NLNP was included as one of the initial components of the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) pursuant to the NIPAS Act of 1992.

Former DENR Secretary Ramon J.P. Paje said Bangklase in NLNP “breathes new life to government efforts to inspire deeper and wider interest in Philippine environmentalism.” He continued, “under this innovative project and partnership with private institution, students are taught within the context of actual experience, an opportunity missed when taught in a conventional classroom setting.” In closing, he said ‘Bangklase’ reconnects people with the communal experience of being awed by Mother Nature, and learn the breathtaking varieties of life in Naujan Lake by heart.”

BANGKLASE as a Research Output

‘Bangklase’ is an upshot of a Grant-in-Aid CHED-UPLB-ZRC environmental research titled, “Management of Naujan Lake National Park: A Response to Sustainable Development” conducted by the DWCC Dean of Graduate School, Dr. Corazon S. Morilla in 2007.

According to Dr. Morilla, ‘Bangklase’ as a response to sustainable development offers an alternative learning for environmental education focusing on the need to manage earth resources for the benefit of the present and future generations.

As explicitly stated in the Philippine Environmental Policy (PD No. 1151), the advocacy on environmental conservation must gear efforts toward creating, developing, maintaining and improving conditions under which man and nature thrive in productive endeavors and ensure the attainment of a quality environment that is conducive to life of dignity and well-being.

BANGKLASE’s Prospects

Since Bangklase focuses on educating its passengers while navigating through the lake, its main market is the schools of Mindoro, which will conduct educational field trips in the Province and even outside-the- province fieldtrips with the routes of Pasi Port to Sitio Tigbao.

Moreover, Bangklase tours cater not only to schools but also to other institutions, groups or agencies that plan to engage in such activity.

The project is reflective of efforts in promoting information, education and communication campaign which will be milling with the environmental conservation for Naujan Lake.

Learning While Travelling

With its route from Barangay Pasi Port to Bambanin Dock in Victoria, Bangklase tour will also present facts and features of the Naujan Lake National Park (NLNP), including the different awards and recognitions the lake received and the different species of vascular plants and migratory birds that can be seen in the lake and the ways to conserve and preserve the lake and its inhabitants.

In line with this, the educational tour, along with the discussions, routed in seven destinations where eco-tourism sites are situated, participants were encouraged to explore and to see the actual biodiversity and wildlife found within the site.

‘BANGKLASE’ as a Two-Pronged Strategy

Bangklase would be beneficial to the local government units in providing a new paradigm in environmental concerns through education which will recognize values and clarify concepts in order to develop skills and attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate the interrelatedness among man, his culture and biophysical surroundings.

Besides, Bangklase would also be beneficial to the folks residing around the NLNP. It would generate employment for residents and serve as their source of income, by promoting their products to the passengers of Bangklase as well as the tourist standing of NLNP and additional revenues for the LGUs.’

‘Bangklase’ a Private-Public Partnership Testimony

‘Bangklase’ is a testimony of Private-Public Partnership initiative. It is a consolidated efforts and resources from private and public institutions. Divine Word College of Calapan, a primer Catholic Private Higher Educational Institution (administered by the SVD Fathers) in Oriental Mindoro puts on Environmental Protection in truthful to one of its core values, Social Responsibility. Engaging to such initiative would also spell out the congregation’s (SVD) characteristic dimension which is Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC).

Further, DWCC forged strong partnership with public institutions in railroading environmental advocacy. Public agencies such as DENR, CENRO, LGUs’ and Lake constituents are institutions and communities that are willing to collaborate to champion human, societal and environmental development.

During the launching, Atty. Minerva Aladaba Morada, Department of Tourism Director for MIMAROPA, commented that “ *this day doesn’t only mark the grand launching of Bangklase, but I would like to emphasize that this an opportunity for us to see the success of our people and our public and private partnership...rest- assured the public agencies are always available to collaborate with private institution like DWCC to bring in sound and worthwhile project for the people and the environment.* ”

Cayetano W. Paderanga, the former Socio-Economic Planning Secretary, in his words “*public-private partnerships seek to encourage greater participation of the private sector in the provision of basic public infrastructure through investments, construction, and operations and management. A partnership that will benefit the community and its members and the environment.*”

The program intends to provide the public with adequate, safe, efficient, reliable, and reasonably-priced infrastructure and development facilities while affording the private sector a level playing field, reasonable returns and appropriate sharing of risks. Government sees this as a reliable and solid strategy to efficiently deliver its services, create more job opportunities through a dynamic and solid community based program.

‘Bangklase’ a Sustainable Development Initiative

‘Bangklase’ comes as a Sustainable Development (SD) collaborative project. Sustainable Development is a process for meeting human development goals while maintaining the ability of natural systems to continue to provide the natural resources and ecosystem services upon which the economy and society depend.

Sustainable development is the organizing principle for sustaining finite resources necessary to provide for the needs of future generations of life on the planet. It is a process that envisions a

desirable future state for human societies in which living conditions and resource- use continue to meet human needs without undermining the “ integrity, stability and beauty” of natural biotic systems.

Conclusion

‘Bangklase Educational Shipboard’ made its success in its goal as an educational innovation and environmental advocacy through Private-Public Partnership. PPP have an essential role in putting value on a country’s natural resources and opportunity for collaboration. It emphasized a balanced community that promotes better economic sustainability, and quality performance among its recipients. Most especially, it helps in the conservation of the country’s biodiversity through sustainable development.

‘Bangklase Educational Shipboard’ as a PPP model, delivers solution and influence policy for environmental protection. It can be a response to overcoming institutional and organizational weaknesses for making sure that environmental management and protection can yield sustainable economic opportunities and contributes to social inclusion and poverty reduction particularly in the areas of the project locale.

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