

Project Update: March 2006

Kinaiyahan Foundation (KFI), Inc., a non-profit, non-government organization based in Davao City, Philippines responded to the request of the local government unit of the Municipality of Asuncion, Davao del Norte, through its Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer (MENRO), Mr. Manuel Puyong, to help in the raising of environmental awareness of the youth in the area. The area has very little forest left. While official documents claim that there are still about 41,152 hectares of timberland left (roughly 21% of the area), the reality is that these areas have very few trees left. Consequently, the said municipality is frequently visited by flash floods. In addition to increasing environmental awareness of the youth in Asuncion, the project also aims to reforest at least fifty (50) hectares and conduct activities leading to the establishment of an arboretum in the said municipality.

For the past four (4) months, KFI has focused on holding consultations with local government units (municipal and barangay or village levels) including the Department of Education (Deped). KFI is pushing that since graduating students are required to plant at least ten (10) trees before they graduate, instead of planting these seedling at the end of the school year (to fulfil the school requirements), this should be done sometime at the beginning of the school year (either June or July). This will give time for the graduating student to parent or nurture the trees s/he planted.

KFI would like to instil in the minds of the young that it is not the number of trees that is most important but that the student is able to understand and appreciate the WHYS and HOWs of planting trees. In so doing, even after the school requirement is completed or the project is finished, they will still continue to plant trees.

In the raising of awareness of the students, KFI would like to stress the importance of the production of appropriate educational materials, to be more effective. Thus, we are attaching two of the educational materials that we have made.

After the series of consultations with concerned government units and agencies, KFI has also conducted two (2) training workshops in two schools in Asuncion. This coming April, 2006 the principals and/or school-in-charge will also undergo a training-orientation on Environmental Awareness-Building. This will be followed by a Youth Camp in May, 2006 which will be participated in by youth representatives from four (4) barangays: Buwan, Binansian, Camansian and Sonlon. Barangay (Village) Buwan has allotted a four-hectare area for tree- nursery and arboretum. One of the agreed tree-planting sites is the Saug River, which plays a very important role in the life of the rural dwellers of the Municipality of Asuncion. It provides them fish (yes, it has still fish but has decreased in terms of quantity and species due to siltation), place to swim, wash their clothes, source of water for their daily needs.