

## COURSE REPORT

# RAINFORESTATION TRAINING OF LUZON LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS

August 11-13, 2017

Visayas State University, Baybay City, Leyte, Philippines

### A field training organized by:

Environmental Leadership & Training Initiative (ELTI)

Visayas State University Institute of Tropical Ecology & Environmental Management (VSU-ITEEM)

Rain Forest Restoration Initiative (RFRI)



Participants and training organizers at VSU.

**Background:** It is estimated that the Philippines has lost approximately one-third of its forest cover since the early 1990s and that primary forests now account for less than three percent of the country's total land area. This dramatic transformation in the country's landscapes has been driven over many decades primarily by legal and illegal logging, agricultural expansion, mining, and widespread fuel-wood collection by rural communities. Critical environmental goods and services have been lost, disasters such as landslides and flash floods attributed to deforestation have become more common, and the livelihoods of many rural and



Dr. Marlito Bande discussing Rainforestation agroforestry systems.

indigenous communities have been compromised. To counter these problems, national and local reforestation projects have been implemented throughout the country, starting as early as the 1960s, but most of them have used monocultures of fast-growing exotic tree species, which do relatively little to enhance the provisioning of ecosystem services.

Starting in the 1990s, Visayas State University (VSU) and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ, now GIZ) started to develop an agro-forestry system known as Rainforestation Farming, which uses native species to rehabilitate degraded landscapes, restore key ecosystem services and functions, while providing forest-dependent communities with an alternative source of livelihood. Subject to extensive research and experimentation, Rainforestation Farming has been refined into a cost-effective and widely applicable method for reforestation. Since then, other approaches, known simply as Rainforestation, have also been developed to rehabilitate areas, including land slide areas, critical watersheds, and denuded portions of protected areas, where income generation plays a less important role.

Although the Philippines Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has endorsed Rainforestation as an official reforestation strategy at the national level, dissemination of this approach to the provinces has been limited and technical capacity remains far from adequate. In order to overcome these hurdles, ELTI and VSU offer a variety of field-based courses on Rainforestation aimed at ramping up and scaling out the adoption of this conservation strategy throughout the country. This particular training was held at Visayas States University for representatives from three Local Government Units (LGUs) from the island of Luzon.

**Objectives:** The courses were designed to develop and strengthen the capabilities of local government authorities to design, implement, and monitor Rainforestation initiatives. The course was structured to provide participants with a solid understanding of the importance and value of forest ecosystems and restoration activities, the theory and principles underlying Rainforestation, its application in various land tenure and management regimes, and the process and practice of establishing a Rainforestation project.



Lyra Chu giving a presentation on Philippine biodiversity.



Mr. Jimmy Pogosa providing an orientation at the VSU Rainforestation demo site.



Participants transferring wildlings to polybags.

## Program

### Day 1

The participants arrived at VSU in the late afternoon and were given two introductory presentations by visiting Rainforestation practitioners. The first presentation, "*Sharing of Innovations and Experiences of LGU Rainforestation Projects*" by Hon. Eufrazio Maratas, the Mayor of Pilar, outlined his eight years of implementing Rainforestation. The second presentation, "*Local-Scale Drivers of Tree Survival in Haribon Restoration Sites*" by Mr. Thaddeus Martinez of Haribon Foundation then highlighted Haribon's Rainforestation Organizations and Advocates (ROAD) to 2020 program which aims to restore one million hectares of forest by 2020.

### Day 2

The training officially started with a formal Opening Program, including a prayer, the Philippines National Anthem, a Welcome Message by Dr. Humberto Montes, Jr. (VSU-ITEEM Director), and an inspirational message by Dr. Edgardo Tulin (President of VSU). The training then continued with a presentation on Philippine biodiversity by Ms. Lyra Chu (ELTI Philippines Program Assistant), which also highlighted the status of the Philippines as a biodiversity hotspot, the 12 primary forest formations found throughout the country, and the economic value of the ecosystem services provided by Philippine forests. This was followed by a presentation by Ms. Angelita Orias, "*Diffusion of the Rainforestation Technology in the Philippines,*" which described the drivers of deforestation, the origins and main objectives of Rainforestation, and the process of Rainforestation site establishment. Engr. Jimmy Pogosa (Lecturer at VSU-ITEEM) then gave a presentation that covered nursery establishment, fruiting phenology, seed treatment, bagging wildling collection, and development of a recovery chamber.

After lunch, participants visited the VSU-ITEEM nursery where they were divided into three separate



Participants preparing potting medium.



Participants asking a question of Cienda community members.



Mr. Maning Posas describing the benefits of Rainforestation.

groups based on their city of origin. One group went to the VSU agroecology site where they learned about several different approaches to integrating economically valuable crops, like abaca and cacao, with local forest trees. The second group visited the original Rainforestation demonstration site where they learned about the development of the site. The third group visited the VSU-ITEEM research area where they learned about the results of different research projects that highlighted important lessons learned on the physiological needs of different native trees. Each group rotated around each of the three stations and then joined together for a hands-on portion of the training where they learned to mix potting media, fill polybags, plant wildlings, and set up a recovery chamber.

### Day 3

Participants visited three demonstration sites and met with the site implementers. They first visited the Cienda-San Vicente Farmer's Association where they had an orientation by the leadership of the first People's Organization to develop a Rainforestation site. Next they visited a Rainforestation site in Patag, where another People's Organization had developed a timber stand on privately held land. Finally, participants visited a privately owned Rainforestation site in Marcos and learned about site development and the economic benefits gained from implementing Rainforestation from Maning Posas, the owner of the site. After lunch at the VSU Faculty of Forestry & Environmental Sciences, participants presented their action plans, which outlined what they hoped to achieve within six to twelve months of returning home. Dr. David Neidel (ELTI Asia Program Coordinator) then gave a presentation about the ELTI Leadership Program and distributed training evaluations. Dr. Dennis Peque (Dean of the College of Forestry & Environmental Sciences) formally closed the training, and then assisted David Neidel in the distribution of training certificates.



Participants during their site visit to Cienda.

**Participants:** The training had 18 participants. There were five participants from each of the three LGUs in Luzon (Antipolo, Rizal; Infanta, Quezon; and Rosario, Batangas). There were also two participants from Pilar, Camotes, one from Dumaguete, Negros Oriental, and one from VSU, whose participation had been requested by active Rainforestation training alumni.

**Follow-up:** ELTI, VSU-ITEEM, and RFRI will monitor the progress of training alumni in order to see if they need any additional follow-up assistance. Several groups expressed interest in applying for Leadership Program funding in order to get assistance in conducting a biodiversity survey or identifying mother trees.

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