

2.1 Reflections by teachers in the Bendum Community on the youth visit to the area

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The tradition of the Bendum Datu and Bai (men and women leaders) is found on six values that they have continued to outline for the youth: Love for the Creator; Love and Care for Creation; Mutual Protection for Life; Mutual Recognition; Mutual Help and Support and Visiting and Notifying (Buntula daw Sayuda). This last value is about visiting other communities, knowing their circumstance and sharing with them your village situation and events. This is seen when there is sharing of correct information and thinking of correct response in order to live peacefully. This is the context in which the youth of Bendum went out to other youth, shared with them their desire for widespread peace and invited them to join as a whole group of youth in Bendum.

When the teachers in Apu Palamguan Cultural Education Center became hosts to the many visitors and watched their own youth engage others in peace.

"The objectives of the Buntula daw Sayuda is to have venue for the youth to express their sentiments and aspirations about the peace and order situation in Upper Pulangi and to know the history of Upper Pulangi as a zone of peace in olden times and to know what are their responsibilities and vision for the area. The design of the activity and the games had developed the confidence of the youth in relating with one another. It united the youth in Upper Pulangi. The walk for peace enabled the youth to express their desires for peace. I was amazed by how the youth interacted with one other and how they respected one another because I never experienced it during my time as a youth." Leonera S. Cabale

"We listened to the tribal elders about the history of Upper Pulangi as a Peace Zone. It helped me understand about the history Pulangi and thus helped me in teaching because as it deepened my understanding of the Pulangiyan talugan. It is not easy to discuss about peace. The youth in Upper Pulangi learned that our place was known as the bearer of peace before. Knowing that they learned the history of Pulangi is an achievement. The Pulangiyan values of before, serve as our basis in moving toward achieving peace in Upper Pulangi." Zarmin Garcia

"The gathering fostered peace in the neighboring communities and the youth were empowered, not limited to just the arts or science but they too can be socially and politically involved in the peace movement. I felt rejuvenated and hopeful seeing leaders of their calibre, they can make a difference. Unity is not that far. So goes with peace." Rjay Sta. Teresa

"I learned that peace begin in oneself. It is good that the peace the forefathers of the Pulangiyan sought will be sustained. I realized that peace is really important in a community. We cannot do things if there is no peace. Peace is essential in a community. So I am now trying to be an agent of peace. As a group facilitator my self confidence in dealing with other people was developed. Having a peaceful community is our responsibility. It is needed and living with peace in our hearts and minds is one way of disseminating the real essence of peace." Rey Cantago

"The story of the elders was most revealing about why Pulangi became the sanctuary of peace. I learned the importance of Pulangi River to the residents and that unity among people is needed to attain peace. My aspiration for peace was expressed. Meeting the youth of Upper Pulangi and hearing their sentiments gave me hope for the potential unity in achieving peace within the area. It also gave us the idea that even if you are living in the middle of the forest does not mean that you are already a member of an armed group. As a teacher, it is a challenge for me to teach the children the importance of Buntula daw Sayuda as a value. The friendship that was established is good sign for partnership in the peace process. The openness of the participants in sharing the situation in their respective communities shows sign of unity. The youth will be informed and empowered as leaders in the future. As future leaders, through Buntula daw Sayuda they are guided on what road to take that will sustain Upper Pulangi as a Sanctuary of Peace." Maura D. Lipanda

"I learned that that the Pulangiyan did not engage in tribal war instead they took care of the orphans and widows. The datos from Pulangi were well respected by other datos from neighboring talugan. They were invited in settling conflicts because they were believed to be prudent. It strengthened the relationship between family and community members. It gave a vision to the youth as future leaders in Upper Pulangi. The two-night stay of the participants in Bendum gave them opportunity to see the forest in the area. The cooperation of the Bendum residents and the consent of parents in

sending their youth to attend the activity is a manifestation that there is unity in achieving peace in Upper Pulangi. The activity taught us the value of helping and journeying together to have a peaceful living. It is one way of living what the Pulangiyan ancestors had lived for." Loreta Ablando

"I learned the value of respect, sharing of ideas and talents and the recognition of the potentials of other youth in Upper Pulangi in the peace process. It should be done regularly to awaken the youth of their rights and responsibilities in their respective communities." Mercy Salilong