

The Mindanao RiOasis Project

Recovering a River; Reviving the Culture

Project Proposal

- I. **Project Overview.** The Mindanao RiOasis Project aims to unite young Filipino Muslim leaders from different tribes to recover the second largest river of the Philippines from a destruction of its riverbank that caused a great flood happened last 2011 destroying numerous of households, the Rio Grande de Mindanao. The river plays an important role with the commencement of their culture. The project will hopefully implant an environmental awareness to the local people with its clean drive and tree planting activity. Its highlight is the product exhibition to the Ginakit Festival from its green livelihood workshop, a green livelihood for the Rio's people. The livelihood workshop will hopefully lessen the probability of flood in the area. The Mindanao RiOasis Project will revive the culture of its people and recover the river where people can appreciate its beauty and significance.

- II. **Background and Rationale.** Before the coming of the Christian migrants from Luzon and the Visayas which had accelerated the growth of settlements and subsequently gave rise to bustling municipalities, this area named Cotabato was inhabited by various ethnic groups namely: the Manobos, the Bagobos and the Muslims sometime in 1500 A.D. These various tribes are believed to be descendants of Indonesian immigrants owing to their similarity in physical structure and language.

The Moro province was governed by military governors, the last being General John J. Pershing, who was succeeded in December 1913 by the first civilian governor, Frank W. Carpenter. The early Filipinos were pagans - worshippers of the sun, the moon and some animals like Kalupindo (Parrot). Mohammedanism or Islam was the first "imported" religion in Cotabato. It was first introduced in the later part of the 15th century by Shariff Kabunsuan, a legendary Muslim missionary who later ruled Cotabato with his descendants and established the Sultanate of Mindanao.

Shariff Kabunsuan and his descendants ruled Cotabato until the coming of the Americans in the early part of the twentieth century. One important feature established by the reign of Shariff Kabunsuan was the introduction of a system of government called Datuism. The system of government is until today still being practiced by some Mohammedans who revere the datu as the dispenser or lawgiver of death. This system developed Muslim culture and kept Muslim united in their struggles against foreigners. (<http://www.cotabatoprov.gov.ph>)

Today, Cotabato City has been holding an annual Festival in recognition of the coming of Shariff Kabungsuan which is *Ginakit Festival*. But then, a sudden incident happened that almost destroy the river itself and its people.

Rio Grande de Mindanao has been clogged on the year 2011 with water hyacinths, causing it to overflow after days of heavy rain. Floodwaters submerged at least 37 villages in Cotabato City alone and displaced some 6,000 families (*Wikipedia*). Some 66,000 people from 14 of the City's 26 villages have displaced by flood caused by days of heavy rain that showed no signs of abating (www.interaksyon.com).

Last 2011, DENR-ARMM and City Government of Cotabato took an initiative on solving this problem. President Benigno Aquino III responded on the call of Cotabato City and Maguindanao flood problem. The President himself ordered public works and military personnel to clear the river up to 20 hectares of water lily growth (www.interaksyon.com). It been a year since the river last flooded. But the people are still afraid of the flood that can happen again.

III. The Project.

- a. **Project Location:** Rio Grande de Mindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, Philippines
- b. **Main Activities:** (1) Clean Drive and Tree Planting Activity; (2) Green Livelihood Workshop
- c. **Working Committees:** (1) Program/Event, (2) Finance, (3) Communications, (4) Documentation/Secretariat, and (5) Food
- d. **Resources Needed:** (1) Human Resource, (2) Seedlings, (3) Materials for Workshop, (4) Materials for Clean Drive and Tree Planting Activity, (5) Location of the Workshop, (6) Transportations
- e. **Budget Proposal:** (see separated document)
- f. **Target Partners, Collaborators and Recipients:** (1) United Voices for Peace Network Organization, (2) Student League for Academic Advancement and Progress, (3) Department of Tourism – ARMM, (4) Department of Environment and Natural Resources – ARMM, (5) Local Officials of Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, (6) City Government of Cotabato and (7) Residents and Students of Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao
- g. **Target Duration and Date:**

The project will **start on the month of May 2013** and will hopefully have a **final outcome on December of the same year**. Specifically, the target dates for the activities are:

 - a. **Clean Drive and Tree Planting Activity – August 2013**
 - b. **Green Livelihood Workshop – December 2013**

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This Project Proposal is open to any suggestions that would make the project better. Any revisions or additions to this proposal from the Project owner might take place in the future for the project's enhancement.