

# ‘My Lake Lanao’ project concludes in Iligan City

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On February 2, more than 80 college and high school students, environmental activists, academic researchers, NGO leaders, local government officials, and community leaders gathered in Iligan City for the concluding summit of the “My Lake Lanao: A clean Lanao for a peaceful Mindanao” Project (MLLP). Participants showcased the conservation and livelihood projects implemented in barangays on the shores of Lake Lanao in Lanao del Sur province as part of a \$113,000 grant funded by the US Embassy in the Philippines.



A vermicomposting facility established in Marawi City as part of the My Lake Lanao project (Credit: US Embassy in PH)

MLLP was implemented by the development organization ABAG sa Kalambuan (ABAG) in close collaboration with the College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS) of the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT).

The project leveraged the expertise of academic researchers, government officials, and environmental experts as well as the energy of student associations and community organizations to create community-driven responses to the environmental degradation of Lake Lanao and to develop sustainable livelihood opportunities for the communities.

Over the course of a year, partners worked in 10 lake shore barangays to implement sustainable conservation projects and livelihood interventions. Projects ranged from establishing vermicomposting and fish farming facilities to planting abaca and reforesting the shores and upland areas of Lake Lanao.

In addition to the conservation and livelihood projects, the My Lake team also responded to the challenge raised by Tomaro Alisood, a seventy-year-old Maranao fisherman and program participant, who asked “Paano mamahalin ulit ng mga taong Lake Lanao?” [How will the people love Lake Lanao again?] Participants conducted community awareness campaigns to increase recognition of the critical role Lake Lanao plays in the spiritual, cultural, social, political, and economic life of Lanao del Sur and Mindanao. MLLP participants led seminars on solid waste management and recycling in their partner barangays.

Through a video message, the US Embassy’s Deputy Chief of Mission Michael Klecheski said, “There are a lot of things we at the US Embassy find really admirable about the My Lake Lanao project. [One of the things] we really like is that this project found the proper balance between protection of the environment and promoting livelihoods for the people around the Lake.”

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