LISA AKRAYO
Settler from Bohol and Surigao

Household economies dependent on open access

Lisa Akrayo bought the land they are now farming from a Manobo. "When we came here, this area was still thickly forested and the *lauan* trees (*Dipterocarpus* spp) were big. But today, there is no more *lauan*. People that came here from the barrio logged the forest and then we planted and milled the corn, sweet potato, cassava, and rice. Their farm is all part of the forest, but the farmland is ours."

"We came here from Surigao, because where we came from, there was no area to plant. It was all coconuts there and we only had a small area, so we transferred here. It wasn't so difficult to transfer. We never run out of rice here to eat. I would have been content with a small piece of land, but I have nine children. Corn does not grow well here, only rice. We plant upland rice and by November we'll be harvesting continuously. There is also much rattan here, we call it *arorog*. My children plant bananas and also coconut, but it seems we cannot plant much here. That's the source of livelihood, no longer the coconuts. So our livelihood comes from this small farm and the rattan, and some bananas. We have both the *latundan* and *lakatan* varieties. We planted the *latundan*. We also plant *falcatta* but we can't transport the logs as we have no buffalo. The children can't carry the logs. They are very heavy, so they'd rather farm than carry logs."

Lisa informs us that the cash she gets from selling the crops is only enough for her children's consumption. She gets loans from a woman named Marlyn, who also trades the rice and the rattan.

Lisa is 50 years old, and all her children are now married, except one who stays with her and who goes to a school three kilometers away. Her husband is a farmer who also helps in gathering the rattan. They came from Surigao del Sur, but Lisa originally came from Alburquerque, a town in Bohol. "I came to Mindanao as there was nothing to harvest in Alburquerque, and there were no forests. I was still a child when I left Bohol. I got married in Mindanao, and we settled in Tago in Surigao del Sur. We came here because somebody told us that the land is good and the rich were giving the land away. Our land in Surigao is only two hectares. We came here only because of the land. The ones doing the logging would arrive at midnight with the *sadam* (10-wheeler trucks associated with the war in Iraq) loaded with logs cut from here, not from the higher areas, as those were reserved for the watershed protection. There was plenty of money earned."

Her mother is the claimant who bought the land from the Lumad. Alvin Sanchez, a member of the municipal board (Sangguniang Bayan or SB), then bought the wood from their area at PhP1/board foot.

"People and buffalo hauled the wood. There was still some wood left during the election period (May 2007). The wood was wasted as it was left out under the sun and dried up. We sold it to members of Iglesia ni Kristo (a local church) for construction of their church at PhP12/board foot."

Lisa narrated what went on when their area was logged. "Alvin buys all the logs. He buys two to six logs for PhP1,000. This is very cheap. We could have negotiated if we were the ones who planted, but we weren't. They were all just growing here. Alvin paid Php1,000 for the cut trees, and had those all felled at the same time so that many can benefit. He asked us, so we let them fell the trees. Those were very big trees, around 80-90 feet tall. Alvin used chainsaws. My husband kept on checking, as he was concerned as some of the logs were rotting. We could not move them into the shade because they were very heavy. There were around 140 board feet. The ones they cut, the buffalos pulled out.

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"I don't know who the financiers are and I don't know where they are disposed. Nobody will move those logs if there's no money. The price is PhP 1.00 per board foot also for those who do the cutting and the helpers get PhP 0.30 per board foot."

"There is no more logging now, because it was stopped and the loggers were being caught, even in the big areas that Alvin worked in. During the last election, they confiscated and selected from the wood here. Alvin let this go, because he had no more money. He probably used up all his money during the elections. Alvin was going to bring them to Tanzan, a people's organization (PO), but that did not push through. Now he's gradually cutting them up as *dos por dos* (2" x 2" wood posts) and selling them as such, because a PO asked him to. I don't know how much Alvin makes."

"There's nobody to haul here; the operators like Alanrey and Eon are from Liguak. The owners of the logs are the ones who say how much board feet are to be cut. There are still cut logs inside the forest that can be loaded in three 10-wheeler trucks, waiting for financiers. I asked Eon to get the cut logs as they are rotting already. I don't know who the financiers are and I don't know where the logs are sent. Nobody will move those logs if there's no money. The price is PhP1.00 per board foot for those who do the cutting, and the helpers get PhP0.30 per board foot."

"During the last elections, we voted for Alvin as he is the only one we know. They said Alvin gave money to some people, but we did not get any, as he had no budget anymore. He was number two in the SB."

Lisa's house is at the end of the rough road, after which we entered some logged secondary forest being cleared in places for agriculture. Typical of the women subjected to a history of migration and responsibility for a large household, she manages the family's economy knowing the costs and changeable viability of the range of possible crops and resources at a given time. She remains practical and astute, knowledgeable of each transaction. Lisa was sitting on the bench of her little veranda decorated with posters of politicians. One of them was ironically a Secretary of the DENR running for the Senate, but unknown in the area. One of the last remaining areas of natural forest will go the same way as all forests in the area, until there is no more.

EVELYN CLAVANO

President, Secured Bank, Cagayan de Oro City

Logging epilogue

Evelyn "Bing" Clavano grew up in a family that ventured into logging in the 1960s and that used to operate a timber concession in Misamis Oriental. Her father, Pedro "Oloy" Roa, who headed the business, was also a political leader who occupied positions as governor, congressman, and as mayor. Up till today, the family maintains deep political links in Cagayan de Oro, largely coming from a history of involvement of her forebears in the Spanish era administration and the forces that fought the American occupation in the early 1900s.

"I have vivid memories of the forests around us when I was a young girl. From when I was eight until 10 years old, we regularly went to and enjoyed a nearby forest in Monigue, but as girls we weren't allowed to go into the deeper forest areas. Only the boys were allowed, so we stayed with our aunts. That was where we took a bath when we went out for outings and picnics. I visited the area in late 2006 and sadly, much has changed, and not for the better."

Bing recalls that the first sawmill emerged in the early 1960s. "It used to be that the trees cut were those beside the sawmill, then the cutting went deeper." Their business supplied timber to the Cagayan de Oro Timber Company, Inc or CATIMCO, who exported for both international and local markets. By 1971, the forest was thinning, and her father scouted around for other sources, including Indonesia. By the late 1970s, he started negotiations with Agusan and began operating in the early 1980s.

"Back in Monigue, a low period would provide a volume of 500 to 1,000 cubic meters per month. But the exports started in 1962-63, and the highest volumes were during the late 1960s. My father also entered politics in 1967, where he was governor of Misamis Oriental for two years, after which he was asked to run for Congress and got elected in 1969. Then martial law was proclaimed in 1972, and in 1977, he was appointed mayor of Cagayan de Oro."

Mr. Roa was a figure well-known for his philanthropy, giving away school buildings, churches, and constructing roads. He was also known as one of the trusted political leaders of then President Marcos in Mindanao. He lost in the elections after the EDSA people power event, after which he got sick and was diagnosed with cancer, and eventually passed away in May 1989. "Dad was called 'Man of the Masses' and because he was only a high school graduate, he could not be part of the elite," Bing says.

Bing also shared that her father received a conservationist award from DENR, "because he's not cutting all the trees. But people came in after the timber license agreement (TLA) expired in 1986 and cut. It was still an area with good timber stand."

Through all these events, Bing, who married and started a family in 1972, witnessed these political shifts in the landscape. Cagayan de Oro was quiet during martial law, but she was aware that "there were abuses on the sidelines and that people were killed."

"In a way, martial law also slowed logging down. We went into veneer production for the Butuan operations in Agusan after martial law, the wood coming from Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental. We logged and delivered them sawn, as CATIMCO was doing the exporting. Eventually, we pulled out of Butuan, when the TLA expired. We planted mahogany, and on the Bukidnon side, we planted *falcatta*."

Looking back, Bing can assuredly speak that their business contributed to the development of Northern Mindanao. "People were given

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livelihoods, and they were mostly inhabitants of the area. My grandfather started a gold mining business, and then Dad came in for the timber. Some families' lives were improved, although this was through a *padrino* system, which was de rigueur during those times. When we moved out later, one of the local heads went into some form of planting and went back to logging operations later. A handful never came back, some made it good."

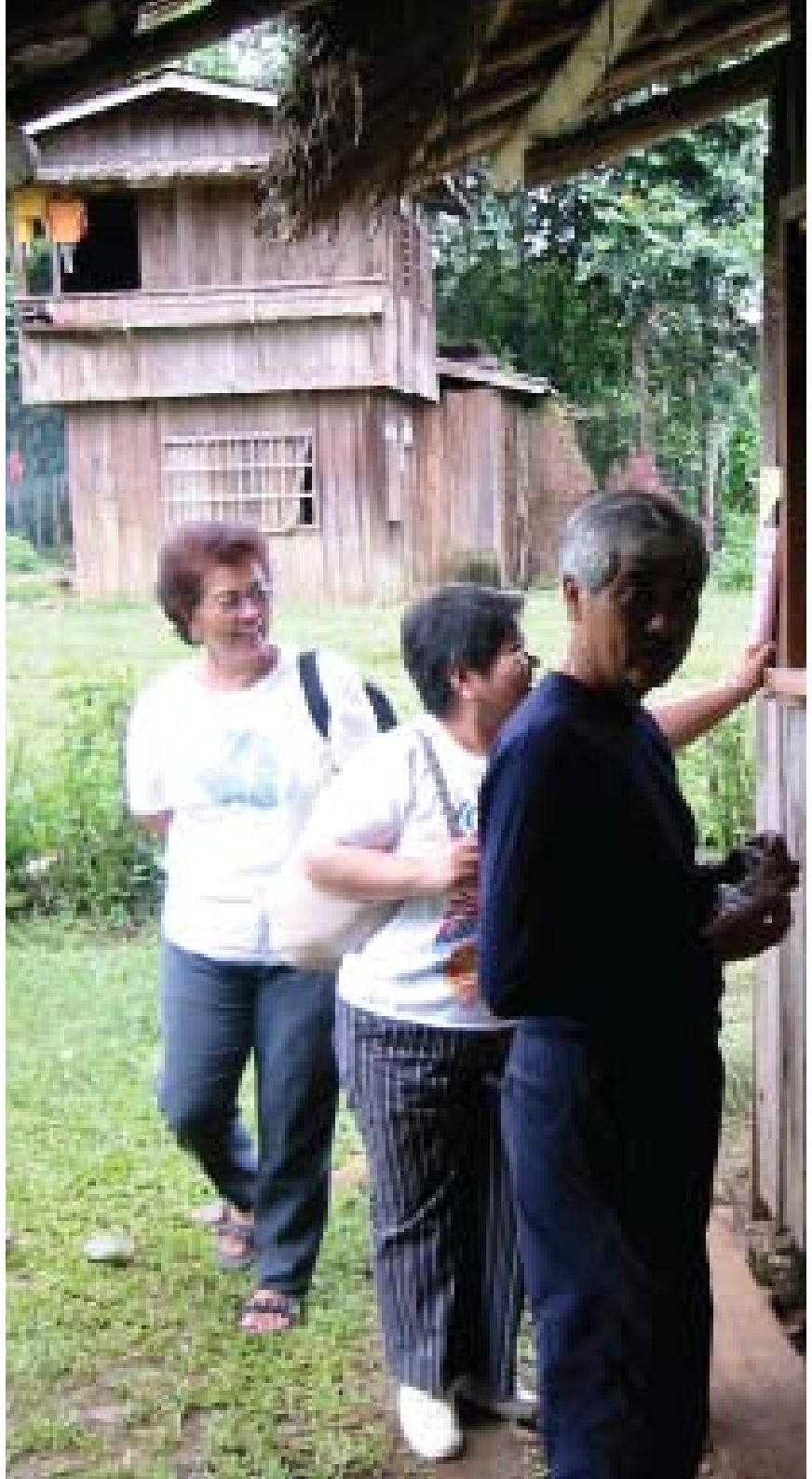
Compared with other places in the country, Bing recalls that change was very slow in Cagayan de Oro. Things started to pick up when the Pryce Plaza Hotel and the Limketkai mall were constructed. "People saw the potentials of development and also the other businesses in the area."

Bing is now the president of Secured Bank that opened in January 1971, and where "I started off as hired help," she smiles. The idea to put up the bank came from a grand-uncle, and a group of people in Cagayan de Oro, including her father, who provided the financial support. The bank services schoolteachers, salaried government staff, and the target clients are the masses who access loans. "It can be viewed as a very slow service, because there's no aggressiveness to explore new initiatives and there is reluctance to really grow," Bing explains.

Returning to the concerns of the present environment and expansion of Cagayan de Oro City, she says "right now, I am concerned about the logging business, because if this continues the water resources will be gone. Water is very important, especially near the Monigue side. Most water comes from the springs and if there is no forest, there will be no infiltration, no springs."

"I'd like to do something about Monigue, have it preserved or improved, so that in later years, people can see the need to preserve. Many are moving in, clearing and settling, doing *kaingin*. Our resthouse is still there, but it is expensive to maintain, and I do not even go there anymore."

A community-based forest management (CBFM) agreement was awarded in January 1998 to the Monigue Community Forest Development Association for an area covering 1,000 hectares and 35 households. Bing heard that there is small-scale copper mining going on in the area and that Taiwanese and Chinese investors have moved in.



The past that does not fit the future

WENDY CLAVANO
Remote Sensing Scientist

Wendy is the daughter of Evelyn Clavano (one of the featured interviewees) who shared memories of her life and family. She now lives in Canada working as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Alberta, serving as a remote sensing scientist using ground penetrating radar to map glacier bed topography and monitor ice thickness in an area in the Arctic. Where she prowls now is metaphorically poles apart from her family origins in forestry, working with the environment at the "icy edge" but with obvious implications for tropical islands.

It was a happy life, romping around logs cut into lumber or shaved for plywood. Those were the summers in Butuan in the mid-1980s. We shuttled between Manapa and Taguibo, the plywood and timber plants in opposite directions from the city. Who decided where and why on which day, I have no recollection and cannot think of any reason to be in either place, except that Dad would have a house in one place at one time and somehow not the other. We would play gin rummy surrounded by automatic rifles in the guard sheds, bicycle around with a dog named Kobayashi, and roast ears of corn until they charred and eat them. We would fish with bamboo poles along the creek behind the log shaver. We drove the little *chop-chop*[1] around. Imported whole vehicles are heavily taxed but auto parts are not quite so, so people would chop the whole to pass the parts through customs to reassemble later, hence the name. Honda scooters ran empty more than once a day as we rode around the plants while all the huge equipment stopped as we crossed the roads.

A charmed life, one might call it. Nothing was uncomfortable except that Mum's longing for Dad was rubbing off on us and we would ply the roads being built by the Koreans, sometimes with eight-hour delays on that 200-kilometer stretch, skipping Friday afternoon school to have an extended weekend.

Only through parallel lives do I look in hindsight at my early life and the experience changes as I see more of the world and live more of another life. There was an in-between life that was an attempt to figure out how one might become a next-generation Roa. Though it was worthwhile, it was short-lived because it seemed pursuing it would hardly make a difference.

Never mind on which hauling truck we hitched a ride between Manapa and Taguibo. Who and how was it decided which raw logs went where? What was good timber and what was good plywood material? Where did all the logging "waste" go? What happened to all those little bits and pieces of lovely hardwood? The sawdust was burnt, given up to the wind. when did the idea of chipboard come along anyway? When did people start scrounging around for those blocks to use for furniture legs and bedknobs?

The sensation of the smells and the discomfort of the numbing humid heat or the damp cold, depending on the whim of the weather, are all still very clear in my memory. The morning fog on the floodplain was always a treat. If it was not the radiance of the rising sun, it might as well be this, a nice white blanket. There is no order to these remembrances, the days, months and years are all jumbled up. Then the trek to the store; yes, at one point there was a store in Taguibo. That store was open monthly, I think. Whatever the frequency was, the logging employees would come around to stock up on supplies. Can of sardines, cigarettes, rice, soap, instant noodle packets, whatever it was that was available, were listed down on index cards to be deducted from their salaries. Most of the goods were sold out during these "raids," perhaps because they were cheaper and more convenient than planning a trip into town. How such a system could be more beneficial for the workers in general, I cannot tell. It just seems to me that spending ahead of one's pay is not such a wise system, in any society, in any culture, in any economic system.

During these store days, I remember women queuing up while their children ran about. In the sense of cultural structures and shared responsibilities, there does not seem to be anything disparate about the arrangement of having women take on this responsibility. The general opinion was that it is better to have the women take care of the shopping because this assured that the family was tended to first, ensuring that there were enough supplies to last until the next run. The workers' families were a captured market. In a business paradigm, there may be no such thing as an unjust markup: if there is a demand that can be met, then things are justified.

It is difficult to come off as not making any judgments, and I do not intend to. It is simply looking back and wondering how those workers lived their lives. I was never friends with any of the workers' children, except with those whose parents were close enough to ours. How this did not seem odd as a child either, I am not sure. We did our fair share of running about and getting dirty, but somehow never got as dirty as the other children did on a normal day. Perhaps this was how the line was drawn.

"Boomtown syndrome." Where does it say that although a boom can help a town grow, no person really benefits? People don't really benefit and households just spend as much as they can afford? What is Butuan like now? How are the workers from those plants faring in life after Taguibo or Manapa? What were their aspirations? Was education for their children part of the plan? How many managed to send their children through high school and college? How many of their children's lives are different from theirs? I am assuming of course, from a Westerner's perspective, that formal education is the route to socio-economic success. Formal education can be uprooting and alienating too. Ah, what of my

own path? Ideas are contorted in the head and certain cultural values are not settled in the heart; they can never be, given some situations. The language I speak, and unfortunately speak well, is not the one that occupies the majority of my gut. But without the logging and the political power that came along with it, where would I have found myself?

Like a gold rush, a log rush requires a lot of work, a whole lot of risk-taking and bloody work. Now, why were not these values passed along? Why were our lives, we the children of the wealthier, made to be cushy? How is it possible to make it so that 'my grandchildren will not have to go through what I went through?' These were one of Lolo Oloy's (Lolo = grandfather) famous words. No. I want an adventurous life and I certainly would like that sense of accomplishment that comes with having 'made oneself.' I feel that this is my birthright. Not the wealth that comes with it, although it has opened up the many options I have. Not the prestige of the name until after I have earned if for myself. And no, am I by no means to be denied that splendid work ethic.

Again, compared with a possible parallel life, why did the family not diversify? Perhaps they tried. Perhaps the businesses are diverse enough and I do not see it. The family seems to be doing alright, but I feel very little of the fuel is new and we are running on non-renewable resources. That old money cannot last forever unless it is reinvested in business, or education, or service. What is the use of aggrandizing one's self and one's kin without contributing to the society one is embedded in? No, this idea is not communist. It is capitalist: you cannot expect your business to continue to grow if you do not help increase the purchasing power of your customers. A widened rich-poor gap has the strongest backlash on the rich side. True, one can only fall as far as one can go high.

A strong sense of my life is rooted around those Butuan visits. During an earlier life, there were logs coming from the lands above the Cagayan River. The difference is that Lolo ran the operations

on the Cagayan side and my uncles on the Surigao-Agusan border. I think that the earlier period had less of a log rush feeling. It does not seem that the area logged was as large either. Lolo seemed to have more of an affinity to the land than the rest of the family did in Butuan. Even to his last days, Lolo reminds us to keep Munigi, not log it all and to make sure that we replant. At one point, we facilitated checkpoints on the highway at Kilometer 5 to check for illegal logs coming down into Cagayan. At this point a total log ban had been in effect all throughout the Philippines and only tree farms were allowed produce any logs. Was the checkpoint a government initiative or was it a private enterprise? Who am I to judge either way?

This is how I remember it. I am not sure they are my own stories. My recollections fuse with stories of stories. If this were a company, I would say you could consider it institutional memory and thus would be proprietary, but here it is. In any case, there must have been a sense for the well-being of the environment even when the land was not "ours." For so long as we have use rights to it, we are supposed to steward over it. But how have we done? What is our measure?

It is hard to think that everything was all in order. My living of that life could only have had one perspective: a child's. Some insight come with age and distance. No, I do not resent the childhood I had - at some point it is possible I could have though. Some days I wish I were much older then. I would like to believe that I could have said something or done something to be heard in the 1980s. A woman was a woman until a generation before me. We made a woman a little over my Mum's age president then. Special circumstances, granted, but surely, an idealist I remain.

Anyway, I remember many dole-out systems. Lolo also gave away coffins. There would be piles of these pillboxes just outside Kilometer 5. People would stop Lolo's bulletproof vehicle on the street to ask for financial help. He would always have a wad of crisp

Wendy participated in natural forest regeneration studies. Abandoned traditional swidden in Mananbulan, Bukidnon showed a very fast transition to ferns and emerging scrub in one year. Photo above taken November 1997, below March 1998.

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20-peso bills on hand. Somehow 20 pesos, even as a child, was for me an awfully small amount. That would only last you a day, maybe two. But what was it like? What is it like, life in Cagayan as a poorer person? What does logging have to do with it? Maybe it has everything to do with it. Lolo was one to "remember where he came from." This sense is harder to pass along to one's children.

People who did not 'make it' were either lazy or unlucky. But this applies to us spoiled brats too, three generations on, does it not?

These are memories of memories, none completely factual. This as much I know: I was a happy child with as much life available to me as I could live. Why leave it? Because there are no more trees to fell. Yes, surely I would have been in on the business of it all; this kid cannot be left out. Would I have made a difference for the industry or the family or the environment? I cannot tell. How does one change, if at all possible, a life so many ago? How could one have lived it another way? I do not ask out of disrespect or lack of appreciation; I ask to understand better. A whole load of who I am rests on this family's history, even three lives hence.

Lolo Oloy was a very engaging person and we had loads of fun with him, to think that he was supposed to be very busy. He did not like being weak: he whispered to me when he was sick in bed with cancer that I should go head on with life while I can. Mum takes a more positive view of Lolo, and perhaps it is a truer one. I think, however, that Lolo was not able to control all the forces surrounding him, nor stop the abuses of those sharing in the extent of his power.

Livelihoods were provided for those in the area as laborers, but most of the trusted hands who took higher positions were people from Cagayan de Oro or next of kin or college *barkada*. I am also not sure about providing livelihood. It would be like coming in to a forest or forest-fringe village anywhere in the Mindanao, staying there for 10 or 15 years, paying the Lumad to work for you as a logger and then leaving. Then what? Where do the Lumad go? What do they then do with a bald mountain? Would they have then assimilated into mainstream society? Should they have? Should they now? The uneasy questions pile up.

The economic improvement that Cagayan de Oro has seen in the last 20 years is strongly tied to the wider Philippine and Southeast Asian economies. It is difficult to say if northern Mindanao would have improved without the logging industry? Resource extraction can help build infrastructural capital, but did the logs from Mindanao contribute to Philippine infrastructure? Indirectly, perhaps? We have grown as a service economy but we have grown little in longer-term educational, economic and infrastructural capital building, I feel.

The Munigi question is difficult. We do not own the land there. Sure, we could watch over it but then what? We are not doing anything there right now, are we? This might be good. But having tens of thousands of fighting cocks get their exposure training there; I am not sure about the security of the water supply. That CBFM (community-based forest management) agreement I think we initiated or at least facilitated. It would have started effectively in 1998 and will run for 25 years, yes? Playing devil's advocate, here is my view: we are using the 35 households in Munigi, most of who are likely indebted politically or economically or both, to the family to set up that association to get use rights to the area. I am not sure how I feel about this. What do my cousins, those who share my generation, think about all this? What other different perspectives do they take? How else does one live with this history and what is there to look forward to?"