

# LAPU=LAPU

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT BULLETIN



Sudtonggan is a Philippine village (*sitio*) that has only recently been “discovered.” For perhaps a thousand years it has been there, on the Gabi River, in the interior of Mactan Island near Cebu in the central Philippines. Though it is within the boundaries of Lapu-Lapu City, Mactan Island’s largest settlement, civilization has yet to come to Sudtonggan. The glide path of Mactan International Airport, the busiest domestic airport in the Philippines, is directly over the village. The name means “remote, swampy place,” and even many of the eighty thousand residents of Mactan Island have been unaware of the existence of Sudtonggan.

Admittedly, one would have to search to find it. The bumpy dirt road leading from Lapu-Lapu City to Sudtonggan dead-ends there. A bridge across the river to the neighboring municipality of Cordova has never been completed. The village consists of clusters of homes built up on stilts over the ground which is covered with black, craggy boulders. Fishing, probably the oldest occupation of the villagers, is now only a minor enterprise. Agriculture is also minimal, because there are only tiny spaces between the rocks where crops can be planted. Small home industries, such as the rope-weaving for which the village is known, handicrafts, and rock-cutting provide sporadic income shared by the extended families. Most production for use outside the village is sold through brokers who pay by the piece. It is a survival existence, and in financial emergencies people sell a piece of land to outside speculators and become tenants. The land does not appear well suited to either agriculture or industry, however, so day-to-day existence continues as it has for centuries.



The village is accessible to Lapu-Lapu City, but most residents stay in the community. Transportation costs money, and it is a two-hour walk into the city. Part-time jobs are available in Cebu City, across the island’s only bridge, but commuting costs are half the average wages. There is no electricity in the village, and the water is supplied from contaminated open wells, resulting in chronic disease. Residents have preferred to treat their own illnesses rather than pay for expensive medical care in the city. A school is available in nearby Suba-Masulog. But children are needed as part of the family labor force, and the footpath across the rocks is difficult and dangerous; thus attendance is minimal. Most skills are passed on within families by apprenticeship, and marriage at the age of 14 or 15 discourages hope for extended training or schooling.

The history of Mactan Island provides clues to understanding the loyalty of the villagers to their isolated and poverty-stricken community. Originally populated by independent and self-reliant groups of sea-nomadic peoples who traded with China and Arabia, Mactan Island and its neighbors were part of a vast Malay Empire. During the sixteenth century, Europeans came seeking the rich trade route between China and the spice islands of Indonesia. One of them was Ferdinand Magellan, sailing for Charles V of Spain.

Some island chiefs collaborated with Magellan in his attempts to conquer the islands, but the Spanish met their match on Mactan Island. Chief Lapu-Lapu resolutely met them at the shoreline not with tribute and homage, but with weapons skillfully formed of native materials. An observer with Magellan recorded the resounding defeat, including Magellan’s death.

The Spanish did not return to these islands until some forty years later, when a settlement was created on Cebu Island. Spain ruled the islands for three centuries, but Mactan Island did not give in. When Spanish encampments mysteriously burned, Mactan Islanders were suspected, and the Spanish set out to win either by persuasion or force. They discovered and burned deserted coastal villages and found only three or four hundred “Indians” under the supervision of Cebu. They abandoned Mactan as a dismal and unwholesome place.

## SUDTONGGAN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

First Eight Week Report  
June 20—August 15, 1976

### A. COMMUNITY SERVICES

#### *Sudtonggan Health Clinic*

This program began during the week following the consultation as a nurse from Marigundon Health Center agreed to come once a week on Wednesdays. Two weeks later a family in the community offered their two-room house for the Health Clinic. They move out during the day while one room is used as a reception room and one as a check-up room. This enables the Clinic to be open six days a week. A core of volunteer aides from the community mans the clinic. Another private nurse volunteered to begin health education classes once a week. The attendance has been 30 to 40, in sessions dealing with nutrition and pre-natal care. A doctor has also volunteered her time one day a week for the clinic. ₱12,000 (approximately \$2,000) worth of medicine has been donated to the clinic through Opon Emergency Hospital and Doctora Gambito, and the hospital has been helpful in providing reduced costs for emergency cases in Sudtonggan families who cannot afford medicines. On August 1st the major breakthrough for the clinic happened as Cebu Velez Hospital assigned two full-time post-graduate doctors to Sudtonggan daily, five days a week. They are in the clinic in the mornings and do field work, preventive medical care, health training and visitation in the afternoons. Medical files have been compiled on every family in the community. The Department of Health has also held an immunization day for T.B. in Sudtonggan.

#### *Sudtonggan Nutrition Center*

130 children in the Early Learning Center (ELC) receive one full meal and two large snacks a day, five days a week, from the Sudtonggan Nutrition Center. All the children in the ELC have been weighed and their malnutrition level charted using the categories of CARE; none were found to be of normal weight. The Nutrition Center provides meals for community workdays every Saturday. The kitchen in the ELC building was reconstructed and serves as the center's location. At present, 22 bags of food have been provided through CARE and the community, particularly the fishermen, has been donating food for the Nutrition Center. The children in the six-month to three-year age group who are not in the ELC have also been weighed and several extreme cases of malnutrition were found. The average was much worse than in the older ELC age group. Two of these cases have been referred to the Malnutrition Ward at the Opon Hospital. Nutrition classes have begun with more than forty attending. The signs of improved vigor can already be seen among the ELC children due to the daily food program.

#### *Sudtonggan Utilities Project*

Road improvement has begun through the Barangay (local government) Road Improvement Fund. The fund was used to repair the major pot-holes and breaks in the main road to Sudtonggan. One well has been cleaned and a new washing area created by the residents of Purok (stake) 3. The first septic tank hole has been dug and is ready for completion for

the first public toilet. The major event was the installation of the first public outdoor light in the village square. This light has been on every night from 6:30 to 11:00 p.m. and has increased the use of the square at night. The small generator used has also provided electricity for the sound system for the community dances.

### B. COMMUNITY EDUCATION

#### *Early Learning Center*

The Early Learning Center (ELC) which was started before the consult on a half-day basis now operates for a full day. 130 children attend with twelve volunteer community aides and two junior staff. One of the first activities was a trip to Opon Emergency Hospital. The ELC now has a full-time 8 to 5 curriculum. It is located in a building donated by the community leadership and an extension building of two classrooms has been built. The ELC has regularly received donations of slippers and clothing for each child from the Department of Social Welfare and the Cebu Shipyard Wives Association, as well as funds. A parents meeting rekindled support and donations for the Center. Teachers meetings have begun to meet the needs and problems of the staff. The Volunteer Community Aides have begun on-the-job training and new interest has been sparked. The community parents noted that the ELC children have in many cases surpassed the Grade Three children in reading the alphabet, counting, and speaking in English. This program has radically changed the mental and physical health of the children.

#### *Village Schooling Institute*

The Department of Education and Culture in the Philippines has granted the request of the community for a Grade One extension class. The Grade One class began August 10, with fifty children ages 7 to 13, and a teacher assigned, supervised, and salaried by the DEC. The Adult Education and Literacy Class started on July 28 with one afternoon and two evening classes on Wednesdays and Fridays. There has been great interest in the classes with an average attendance of 75, ages 14 to 67 years.

#### *Functional Skills Academy*

The possibility of skills training with the Cebu Shipyard and Engineering Works is being pursued. Field training has been ongoing in the Fishing, Animal Husbandry, and Agricultural Programs.

### C. COMMUNITY FORMATION

#### *Sudtonggan Community Center*

On June 20 the first Community Assembly was held to symbolize the beginning of the Sudtonggan Human Development Project. This was attended by over 120 adults. The next Tuesday night the village met again to form the 5 guilds of the project which have been meeting weekly since then. The guilds are Health, Education, Improvements, Agriculture and Commerce. Attendance at these meetings averages around 100. These guilds are the planning and implementing forces behind the project. The meetings begin with all 5 groups coming together for singing, reports on the

past week and a global report from one of the other projects. Then the guilds move to 5 different locations and do the planning for the next week. On July 11 a second community assembly distributed the Sudtonggan Human Development Consultation documents in the Visayan language to each family in the community. Sudtonggan has been gridded into 5 puroks (stakes). A large map with the grid lines is part of the decor in the guild meeting room. Three puroks have held meetings and one purok has already implemented a corporate well-cleaning project. A purok center has been located for each purok. The youth development program started with a meeting of the youth and has resulted in youth volunteer workdays. The youth leveled the basketball court and fenced in the Early Learning Center grounds. In the arena of cultural life 4 community dances have been held, and residents have written 3 new songs about the project. A movie night was held with more than 800 watching movies on the world food problem, nutrition, family planning and the moon landing. A community bulletin board has been created. All 152 family households have been surveyed and a rough analysis completed. One of the significant results of this program has been the volunteer effort extended by the people of Sudtonggan in regular community workdays to implement their plans.

#### *Community Improvement Association*

The focus of this program has been on the environmental design of a community and village square by transforming the existing basketball court. The Improvement Guild planned and implemented a series of volunteer workdays which 1) moved the stone stage from the middle of the basketball court across the road, 2) built a larger cement stage, 3) leveled the basketball court and built new backboards to replace the old ones, 4) painted the chapel "Sudtonggan Green," 5) painted the temporary Health Clinic, 6) created three long bamboo benches with backrests around the basketball court, 7) created a large background for the community stage with the community symbol painted on it, and 8) built a park with gravel and benches under the trees next to the stage which serves as a Health Clinic waiting room, tricycle stop and community "lounge." Donations of paint and materials were obtained from several hardware stores in Cebu. This has radically affected the village—youth from surrounding villages now come to Sudtonggan basketball games every Sunday, there is a gathering place to relax and talk, and villagers are showing great pride in being from Sudtonggan. Two houses have been rehabilitated, one for the temporary Health Clinic and one for the Village Schooling Institute. A two classroom building has been constructed for the Early Learning Center, and the project office, community meeting hall and project staff residents' housing have been constructed. Tools for construction have been donated to the community and are maintained and shared creating a common pool of equipment.

### **D. COMMUNITY AGRICULTURE**

#### *Land Food Project*

The Agriculture Guild held workdays on which a plot of land was prepared for an ampalaya vineyard. Seeds were obtained and a small nursery started which was transplanted to the garden. Several families began backyard gardens when they

observed the seeds growing in the nursery. Also, marginal land plots have been prepared to begin experiments with vegetable farming on the rocks. Caves containing bird manure called "guano", which is a high grade crop fertilizer, have been discovered. Through the mayor, the city of Lapu-Lapu has donated seeds for expanding the family backyard gardens.

#### *Sea Food Project*

Four cooperative fishing expeditions have been held involving all twelve small boats and three pump-boats. Part of the catch was donated to the Nutrition Center and the fishing fund. Dr. Divinagracia has begun training a group of fishermen in new methods and techniques of fishing. A shrimp fry nursery near the river was initiated.

#### *Animal Husbandry Project*

General Milling Company donated 102 bantex broiler chickens and provided a 60-day loan of three sacks of starter feed. The agriculture guild held a volunteer workday to build the chicken coop and assigned members to feed and care for the broilers on a two-hour rotation basis.

### **E. COMMUNITY COMMERCE**

#### *Fiscal Services Association*

A five-day, seven-session seminar on cooperatives was held, sponsored by the Department of Local Government and Community Development and was attended by 45 community residents (the largest such seminar ever held). About 20 residents are participating in a corporate savings venture. The sari-sari store owners are receiving assistance in bookkeeping, secretarial, and legal requirements of business. A medical emergency fund has been started to handle cases where people cannot pay medical costs.

#### *Sudtonggan Trading Company*

The major accomplishment has been a weekly bulk-buying trip in which sari-sari store owners in Sudtonggan pool together in a trip to Cebu where they buy goods in bulk at discount prices. The first trip saved ₱150, primarily on corn, and the savings were passed on the community through lower prices. Corn is now available in Sudtonggan at some of the lowest prices on the island. On succeeding trips the amount saved was increased to ₱175 and then over ₱200. A market has been found which will increase the income on fish sold by local fishpond owners. The first rope product, a hammock, was sold. Marketing agents for other craft products who can handle export of handicrafts have been located and samples of rope were sent to San Francisco, and an order has been received.

#### *Sudtonggan Industrial Complex*

The craft makers visited five places in Cebu to study methods and possibilities of marketing their crafts and they now meet weekly in a guild workshop session. Mehitable, a large rattan furniture exporting company, was visited to explore the possibilities for developing that skill among Sudtonggan carpenters. A saw has been obtained to cut rocks to form construction blocks. The machinery to polish and refine the rock has been set up and the Rock Industry is ready to begin.

The villagers today have another explanation for that event. They say that Lapu-Lapu, still alive but very old, had retreated into the area of limestone caves and tropical swamps around Sudtonggan to hide from the Spaniards. Perhaps he even emerged from time to time to harass them. The people of Sudtonggan say the spirit of Lapu-Lapu still lives among the rocks.

Since 1967, the Institute of Cultural Affairs has been working throughout the Philippines with people concerned about local community development. In 1970, the ICA was invited to make resident personnel available, and since 1973, staff located in Manila, Lapu-Lapu City, and Davao have been conducting training programs in community development methods. As a result of these efforts, a group began to conduct research into a possible site for a demonstration of rapid socio-economic development in the Philippines. The *sitio* of Sudtonggan was finally chosen, because of its defined location, traditional sense of identity, and obvious social and economic need. Following consultation with Sudtonggan residents and the mayor of Lapu-Lapu City, ICA staff members were invited to take residence in Sudtonggan and to prepare for a Human Development Consultation, held in May, 1976.

Approximately 150 consultants participated in the week-long research and planning session in the village. Over half were from the community itself, one fourth from other communities in the Philippines, and the other one fourth from nine other nations. Visiting consultants represented both private and public sector experience and attended at their own expense. Outside consultant expertise included such arenas as banking, education, medicine, agriculture, animal husbandry, industrial development and communications. Expertise from within the village included rope-making, farming, fishing, rock-cutting, handicrafts, furniture design, carpentry, lato (an edible seaweed) gathering, and construction. Some five hundred other community residents were interviewed in their homes about their hopes and proposals for the future of the village. The recommendations of the consultation are summarized in fourteen broad programs of social self-reliance, economic self-sufficiency, and community formation (see back page). Even before the consultation, the villagers demonstrated eagerness to move creatively into the

future by constructing a new facility for the meeting, providing the use of land, and building a new road to the consultation site.

Since the consultation activity within the village has intensified. A school for early learning has begun with nearly all the children of preschool age enrolled, and twelve community teachers in training. A medical clinic now operates, regularly staffed with volunteer doctors and nurses. The small merchants are beginning cooperative buying to lower the cost of food for the whole village. A new strain of chickens has been imported to increase the supply of meat.



Sudtonggan is no longer an unknown village. Already the road from the city has been improved. The people of Sudtonggan, like their ancient hero, Lapu-Lapu, stand undefeated in the face of the new enemies of near-starvation, isolation, and poverty. A new demonstration of self-reliance and resourcefulness is emerging in the community. Sudtonggan, the most unlikely of places, is a sign of possibility of building local community for all of Mactan Island, and for all the nearly thirty-five thousand small communities of the Republic of the Philippines.

The government of the Philippines is implementing a "New Society" nationwide by encouraging local community development. The people of Sudtonggan, proud of their heritage and hopeful once again for their future, are proving that it is indeed possible for a nation of seven thousand islands to become that new reality, and are beginning to revitalize the economic and social development that will allow them to be full participants in the future of their nation and the world.

ONE TOWARD SOCIAL SELF-RELIANCE		TWO TOWARD COMMUNITY FORMATION C	THREE TOWARD ECONOMIC SELF-DEPENDENCE	
COMMUNITY SERVICES A	COMMUNITY EDUCATION B		COMMUNITY AGRICULTURE D	COMMUNITY COMMERCE E
SUDTONGGAN HEALTH CLINIC  I	EARLY LEARNING CENTER  IV	SUDTONGGAN COMMUNITY CENTER  VII	LAND FOOD PROJECT  IX	FISCAL SERVICES ASSOCIATION  XII
SUDTONGGAN NUTRITION CENTER  II	VILLAGE SCHOOLING INSTITUTE  V		SEA FOOD PROJECT  X	SUDTONGGAN TRADING COMPANY  XIII
SUDTONGGAN UTILITIES PROJECT  III	FUNCTIONAL SKILLS ACADEMY  VI	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ASSOCIATION  VIII	ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PROJECT  XI	SUDTONGGAN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX  XIV

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