

Sustainable Conservation and Protection through Communication Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) in the case of Mt. Malindang Range Natural Park, an ASEAN Heritage Park (AHP) in the Philippines

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Abstract

Local communities have a major role in sustaining their natural resources by conserving, protecting, and rehabilitating protected areas, in the case of Mt. Malindang Range Natural Park (MNRP), an ASEAN Heritage Park in the Philippines. Through, Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA) activities, the local communities have shared their strong participation in the park's protection, conservation, and rehabilitation. This tangible action contributes to the sustainable management of the park. This study aims to determine the innovative CEPA strategies implemented in MMRNP by the Protected Management Office (PAMO) that contribute awareness and develop positive behavioral change among the local communities. A total of 64 FGDs were conducted in the barangays within the park. The case study data analysis is used to analyze the gathered data. Result of the study found that CEPA strategies in MMRNP as mentioned by FGD participants are barangay assemblies and meetings, environmental classes, distribution of materials posters, leaflets, stickers, and environmental billboards, the advertisements through television, radio spiels, and the website of MMRNP and the Dalaw Turo (Visit and Teach) program. Furthermore, the identified CEPA strategies in MMRNP contribute in sustaining the park's biological diversity. Hence, educating the local communities improved involvement and participation in managing protected like in the case of Mt. Malindang and other protected area in the Philippines.

Keywords: behavioral change, biological diversity, local communities, natural resources, sustainable management