

**miCommunity and Environment Centered Sustainable
Development: Case Studies from Puerto Princesa City of
Island Palawan, the Philippines.**

By

JAYAGODA Dimithri Devinda

61111605

September 2011 - September 2014

Dissertation Presented to the Higher Degree Committee

Of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Asia Pacific Studies

Abstract

Former mayor Edward Hagedorn and officials have set their vision to see the City of Puerto Princesa, on Palawan Island in the Philippines, as “a model city in sustainable development.” This dissertation discusses how people have committed to accomplish this vision and also how they have contributed to Puerto Princesa being recognized as the “City in the Forest” of the Philippines. The objective of this study is to identify the sustainable development model of Puerto Princesa City and to describe the sustainable development story of Puerto Princesa using case studies and to offer an exclusive approach to case study research that is practical and applicable in other parts of the Philippines and neighboring countries. Global recognition to the concept of sustainable development, its history and application in to island city is discussed throughout this dissertation.

This dissertation introduces the trend of the world, the Philippines and Puerto Princesa City’s mangrove and forest covers. Case studies of annual mangrove plantation and tree planting are discussed in detail. Community based sustainable tourism and livelihood activities are also discussed in the form of case studies. Based on the interviews and surveys, stakeholder’s contribution, leadership and the society of Puerto Princesa City is described. Puerto Princesa City’s tourism development story, why people protects the environment, the sustainable development story of Puerto Princesa City and the possibility of applying of the Puerto Princesa City’s

sustainable development model in other parts of the Philippines and neighboring countries are also described in detail.

This study is conducted in the form of a case study. Qualitative data are mostly used but at the same time quantitative data are also used to prove qualitative descriptions as a mixed methodology. Data gathering techniques used in this study are interviews, focus groups, surveys, photography, participatory observations, action research and desk research. The sustainability of projects has resulted in creation of the first carbon neutral city in Southeast Asia, despite the fact that Puerto Princesa is highly an urbanizing city in the Philippines. Local community, policy makers, academia and politicians of the city are in agreement that the community is fully aware of forestation, protection and environmental security in the city, primarily because of continuous community based economic, environmental and social development projects. Research findings further prove that mangroves and forest cover in Puerto Princesa has increased during the last two decades based on government records. Rich biodiversity, environmental protection, high rate of economic development are continuously attracting several visitors and local migrants to the city of Puerto Princesa.

Keywords: capacity development, community based forest management, environmental security livelihoods, leadership, sustainable development, sustainable tourism.