

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

Dissertation Summary

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## **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.

## **Chapter Summary**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction.**

The first chapter introduces the research background, research objectives, the research questions, significance and limitations of the research and outlines the study in brief. A brief introduction to the research destination is also included in this chapter.

### **Chapter 2: Research Methodology.**

Research methods being used to answer research questions are discussed in this chapter. Justification of selected methods and the importance of each method over available options are also explained in this chapter.

### **Chapter 3: Review of Literature.**

Historical incidents of sustainable development and its global recognition are discussed in this chapter. Importance of environmental integration and island sustainability related literature is introduced. Stakeholders consisting of community and the concept of community capacity development are also introduced in brief. Stakeholders of the sustainable development story of Puerto Princesa City engaged in each project is introduced in this chapter and a detailed explanation of them can be followed in chapters 4, 5 and 6. Community based forest management, mangrove forest management and sustainable tourism are also discussed concisely

in this chapter. A detailed literature of the world, the Philippines and of Puerto Princesa's condition will also be discussed in detail with case studies in the following chapters.

#### **Chapter 4: Community Based Sustainable Tourism in Association with Mangrove Forest Case Studies.**

In this chapter, case studies are introduced. The inputs are taken mainly from the following published papers by the author: "Community Based Mangrove Forest Management in Association with Sustainable Tourism in Puerto Princesa City of Island Palawan," "Love Affair with Nature - Performances of Sustainable Mangrove Plantation Project in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan Island, The Philippines" and "Sustainable Community Based Mangrove Plantation Projects: Three Case Studies from Palawan Island, the Philippines." The status of the world, the Philippines and Puerto Princesa mangrove forests is described. The community based sustainable tourism concept is introduced in association with mangrove forests.

#### **Chapter 5: Community Based Forest Management Case Studies.**

In this chapter, the Global and Philippines forestry shows a negative growing trend. Puerto Princesa provides very unique and impressive examples for forestation, forest management and protection. Both qualitative and quantitative data, as described in this chapter, show that the forest cover has continued to grow for the last two decades. In Puerto Princesa, local citizens are well aware of the benefits of being environmentally sound and are proud of their achievements. Forestation and its management in the city has contributed lot to become "Cleanest and the Greenest City" in the Philippines, including the achievement of becoming the first carbon neutral city of the ASEAN region.

#### **Chapter 6: Livelihood and Capacity Development Case Studies.**

Livelihood activities are globally used as a tool or mechanism to combat poverty. These activities are directly contributing to economic and social development. Throughout chapter 4 and this current chapter, various ongoing livelihood activities of the Puerto Princesa city are introduced. Women empowerment, capacity development, increased social standards, increased economic gains and increased educational opportunities are common in these activities. The unique features of Puerto Princesa livelihood activities are that they directly or indirectly

contribute in protecting the environment. None of the ongoing activities are harming Mother Nature. In most of the cases, community involves in environmental development and throughout the last decade, the livelihoods are getting better and better as some of the locals shared their stories. Other unique features of Puerto Princesa livelihoods are that they are attached with various other income generation activities and local government supports continuously through various means to increase the potential of these activities.

### **Chapter 7: Results, Analysis and Discussions.**

The goals of Puerto Princesa City are introduced in this chapter. The target of development sectors and planning process are discussed in this chapter. Stakeholder's contribution, leadership and why the local community contributes in through planning and implementation, evaluation and maintenance of current projects are discussed with the viewpoints of key stakeholders involved in the sustainable development process. Status of community based sustainable tourism, mangrove forest cover and forest cover are introduced with relative data to show their continuous growth. The question of why people protect the environment is answered in this chapter with the voice of locals. Application of the globally recognized criteria and checklists such as 'European Environment Agency criteria for environmental integration' and 'checklist on sustainable development' are applied to Puerto Princesa City and it shows that the city follows globally accepted standards and also in practice it shows the model of true sustainable development.

### **Chapter 8: Conclusion and List of References.**

This chapter provides a summary of how the research has responded to the research objectives outlined in Chapter 1. These include implications and recommendations on community-based sustainable development. A number of suggestions for potential future studies to build on this research are mentioned.

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