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# NGOs in sustainable coastal development

Aquaculture Department, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center

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**Areal extent of mangroves in the ASEAN region**

	Area (ha) (1988)	% of world's mangroves
Brunei Darussalam	18,418	<0.1
Indonesia	4,251,011	20.5
Malaysia	628,671	3.0
Philippines	149,400	1.1
Singapore	500	-
Thailand	<u>287,308</u>	<u>1.4</u>
TOTAL	5,335,308	26.1

**Estimated coastal population in the ASEAN region**

	Total population	Coastal population
Brunei Darussalam	221,900 (1985)	200,000 (90%)
Indonesia	166.4 million (1986)	102 million (60%)
Philippines	58 million (1987)	50.5 million (87%)
Singapore	2.6 million (1986)	2.6 million (100%)

Source: **MANAGING ASEAN'S COASTAL RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**, Chua T.E. and L.F. Scura, eds., 1991, ICLARM, Manila, Philippines.

## ***NGOs in Sustainable Coastal Development***

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the Philippines were perceived as vehicles for delivery of services where government was unable to or to compensate for failures of development programs. Although some NGOs' roles have evolved into community development work, a majority still viewed the problem of natural resources and environmental sustainability as separate and distinct from their concerns. Leaving environmental concerns primarily to government, they have at best been contractors for government restoration programs such as reforestation and artificial reef installations. The situation has changed rapidly in the past year, as the effects of resource destruction and degradation impacted severely on rural water supply for crop irrigation, the availability of fish and marine products in municipal waters, and the quality of water systems and the soil.

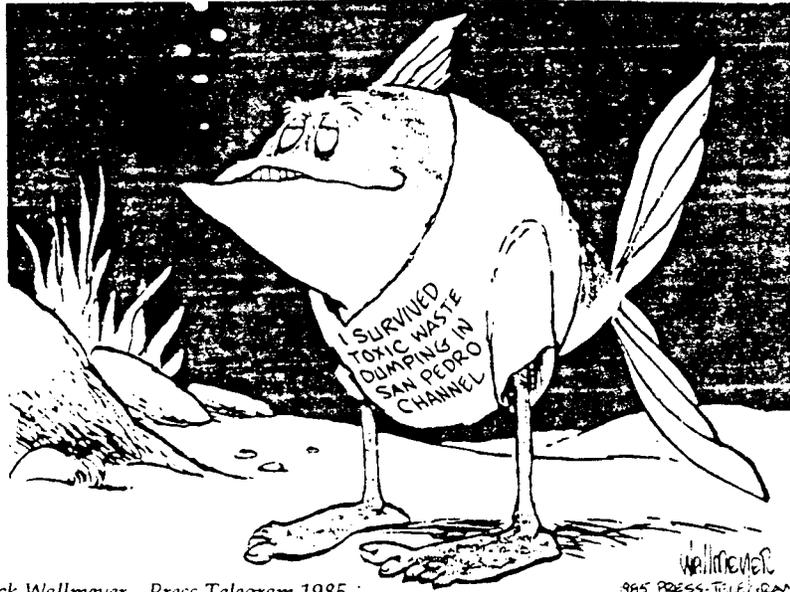
In the 1990 consultation of about 150 provincial NGOs, conducted by the Association of Foundations, the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas, and the National Confederation of Cooperatives, the NGOs expressed indignation and alarm over the state of the natural support systems in their respective areas. They voiced the need for more provincial and regional data on natural resources and their exploiters, a mechanism for pressuring government into adopting and enforcing ecological policies, and technical

assistance for biochemical analyses of the ecological effects of development projects, both government and private. Today, in the Philippines, the NGOs are in the forefront of struggle.

The evolution of environmental concerns is perhaps best exemplified by the organizational transformation of Haribon, the largest and leading environmental NGO in the Philippines. Starting as a bird-watching society in 1972, it went on to espouse wildlife conservation with its Philippine eagle and tamaraw preservation project in 1978. It became a corporate science foundation for the conservation of natural resources and indigenous culture in 1984. In 1989, it assumed the role of convenor of the largest Philippine coalition of NGOs, people's organizations and church groups under a program framework of sustainable development now known as the Green Forum-Philippines.

The Philippine public's environmental consciousness shows a similar evolutionary trajectory: from nature appreciation and site beautification in the 1960s; to wildlife species and habitat preservation in the 1970s; to natural and cultural resources conservation in the early 1980s; and moving on to sustainable development in the late 1980s. (It must be mentioned, however, that certain academic groups were already into ecosystem investigation and planning in the early 1970s at sites identified by the Caliraya Foundation and the University of the Philippines at Los Baños.)

The process is paralleled by the expanding role of NGOs: from their early predominantly relief and welfare service orientation to project proponent and if ASEAN can wake up to the fact that power is not mere territory nor physical production but information and values, the end to the environmental crisis is in sight; we can explore our true potentials and be truly rich. Since ASEAN was established in Bali in the mid-1970s, it has been noted that economic complementation projects have been having difficulty taking off. Perhaps, the ASEAN NGOs can come together and succeed where the governments have failed. Within the specific framework of sustainable development, they can help set up an ASEAN academy of life sciences, to start with, and perhaps, use it as a basis for a more concrete transnational advocacy. There is a wealth of possibilities NGOs can explore as they network beyond the confines of governments and narrow development paths.



Dick Wallmeyer - Press Telegram 1985

Source: *The Role and Involvement of Nongovernmental Organizations in the Sustainable Development of Coastal Resources* by Maximo T. Kalaw, Jr. in **MANAGING ASEAN'S COASTAL RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**, Chua T.E. and L.F. Scura, eds., 1991, ICLARM, Manila, Philippines.