



(Left) The anti-contextual tower that symbolizes protection to the area, (Above) The School of Indigenous Knowledge proposed to continue local dialect and (Right) Site Development Plan



The project covers the development of the Lake Agco area located at the foot of Mt. Apo in Kidapawan City, Cotabato, Philippines. Challenges include (1) preservation of the natural environment especially of the forest which is essential in sustaining the geothermal reserve of the area; (2) conservation of decaying Obo Manobo's culture and (3) facilitating varying and contradicting interests of various entities.

With the identified challenges, a new concept of development was applied. An eco-cultural tourism development was proposed, deviating from the idea of eco-tourism only or cultural only. This solution might have answered the three (3) main challenges identified making the proposed project environmental, cultural and economic.

The design intent focuses mainly on the five-point framework and translated in architectural design, environmental planning and eco-cultural tourism. These agenda shall manifest the attributes of progression without any decay and dismay to the indigenous people and the natural environment. The five-point framework comprises of protect, educate, develop, conserve and promote.

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(Right) Tourist Center, Forest Walk and Picnic Grove, (Above) Tourist center with museums and (left) Souvenir shops where they can sell locally-made products



Protecting the natural environment and sustaining the ethnic culture are the main design challenges that led to the proposal. To utilize and preserve the geothermal reserve, there is a need of proper control and education throughout the vicinity, that the people shall recognize the importance of our natural resources, as a gift and a responsibility.

The design language shall speak for the culture and history of the Obo Monobo Tribe, wherein as a part of the design translation and proposal, the materials, design language and vernacular architecture are essential parts of the design process, such as bamboo, thatch, rattan, abaca hemp and other sustainable and indigenous materials in the vicinity, to both promote the materials, educate the audience to its aesthetic and innate architectural tradition and lessen the carbon footprint.

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(Right) Cabanas and Wellness Center, (Above) Mahomanoy Resort using local and indigenous materials and (Left) Lake Agco viewing deck for appreciation of the lake.



The Lake Agco area is under jurisdiction of several entities which include Obo Manobo Ethnic Group, Energy Development Corporation and Kidapawan City.

The Lake Agco area has been identified as the main tourist destination in Kidapawan City. There have been several development proposals but were rejected by either of the entities having jurisdiction in the area. As Planner and designer, the new approach in preparing the master development plan was to make it consensus driven where all the entities are consulted to provide a more holistic approach and solution. Obo Manobo Ethnic Group's desire to sustain the culture, private sector's intent to preserve the forest cover and Local Government Unit's plan to develop the area as prime tourist spot, were all considered and integrated into one design.

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The Obo Manobo village has been recreated. Residences can showcase their arts, crafts, cuisine and culture to tourists. Building designs is of Obo Manobo architecture



The Lake Agco area is also the home of the Obo Manobo Tribe in Kidapawan City. Importance of culture and traditions decline after the area was opened to be developed as primary tourist destination of the City. While the tribe and their people fight for economic stability and urbanization, the culture is also deteriorating and is facing the risk of it being gone.

As planner and designer, the cultural appreciation and design innovation is instilled with the design solution on what are the key elements to provide innovative answers. Empowering the Indigenous people and raising awareness to the people visiting the area are the key aspects in developing the design. The design intent is to incorporate experiential learning, visual appreciation and preserving the local traditions. Addressing the social issues in the process will result to boost in the local economy through bringing the own "brand" of products and events to the tourists.

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