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**APPLICATION OF THE ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT OF THE
BAGO-KANKANA-EY COMMUNITY ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Abstract:

The work towards sustainable development demands that actors take the responsibility of its process and impacts according to our particular conditions. Being highly dependent on its ecosystem, the Bago-Kankana-ey Community cannot wait to reach a state of economical stability before worrying about the environment. Every effort made to promote a development in accordance with the natural limitations – even if small – is a step towards a better future.

For the past centuries, this ancient society has experienced an increasing contact with the outside world, which though not entirely negative, has introduced economical practices alien to their own, causing a deterioration of their habitat and their ancestral knowledge. The emergence of new needs along with a certain degree of inattention from the national authorities has caused a prioritization of income-generating practices that overlook the value of their ancestral forest areas.

Starting from the hypothesis that the ancestral ecological behavior of the Bago-Kankana-ey people can be used in favor of local development, this paper suggests a methodology to measure the sustainability of their ancestral practices. Their Ecological Footprint is quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed in order to find out which aspects would help them to overcome their poverty, at the same time, preserve their cultural heritage.

This analysis is utilized to question the widespread clichés about development and growth, and to identify new notions of progress, in which this and other ancestral cultures have a stake.

Their attachment to the land, their respect for the ancestors and the natural environment, as well as the strong sense of community have created their body of ancestral knowledge. This, until now, manifests in the management of natural resources and ways of land use in Bakun, the homeland of the Bago-Kankana-ey. Their crop and rice terraces, the system of *swidden* farming, their *muyong* or woodlot and their different *puloks*, or sub-villages are components of this ancestral knowledge, that are measured and analyzed with the Ecological Footprint method.

The Ecological Footprint (EF) analysis calculates the demand on land of all activities in Bakun based on consumption categories (food, built environment, transportation, energy consumption, and consumer goods). The final outcome is that the EF per capita in Bakun yields 1,507 global hectares, representing 87% of its total biocapacity.

In spite of the influences from outside, the factors that determine the environmental behavior of the community still have their roots in their ancestral knowledge, their communal values and their attachment to the land. Their activities consume more resources from forestlands, followed by pasturelands and croplands.

The consumption of food in general demands more resource land in croplands and pasture areas, whereas the built environment sector demands land almost exclusively from the forest, either in way of resource land, as land necessary for production of energy or land for CO₂ sequestration.

In general, the land category providing for most of the demands in Bakun is the forestland, but cropland and pasturelands are the categories presenting more deficits in relation to the biocapacity of Bakun.

According to this study, the community can reach a state of sustainable development, if these critical areas identified are prioritized. However, if current consumption patterns remain unaltered, they can lead to environmental depletion, and further loss of the Bago-Kankana-ey culture.

The last part of the study suggests that croplands, pasturelands, and forestlands can become the future areas of intervention in relation to local development, based on concepts of protection of the environment and the generation of environmental income.