

## **Feature article output for ENG 5 (Expository Writing)**

### **Tabbing Kolektib stages an advocacy play in UPLB**

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In celebration of the National Indigenous People's month, Tabbing Kolektib, an independent theatre guild founded and run by University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) alumni and students, staged *Kasaray Duma: Mga Supling ng Sigwa*, October 11-13 at the NCAS Auditorium, UPLB. Over 2,000 people got to watch this original theatre production written by Eljay Castro Deldoc, and directed and choreographed by Jeremy Reuel Dela Cruz.

In *Kasaray Duma: Mga Supling ng Sigwa*, the fictional tribe *Kasaray Duma* of *Sapang Kawayan* are forced to evacuate from their island by Mayor Dolor and NCIP representative Miss Ignacio for a construction of a sanitary landfill. The tribe was divided into two. The ones against the evacuation, lead by the eldest *Kasaray Duma*, *Pinak*, do not want to leave their ancestral land for they remain firm in stating their rights to their land. The ones in favor of the evacuation, lead by the tribe's chieftain, *Labang Biwas*, are confident because they claim to have a relocation site and financial subsistence waiting for them as told by the mayor. In the middle of the conflicts, the forgotten *amurikat* of the tribe, *Pakawakaw*, solemnly prays for the guidance of their ancestors for the awaited storm.

According to playwright Eljay Castro Deldoc, the vision for *Kasaray Duma* is an advocacy play that resonates the hardships experienced by our Indigenous People (IP). Its purpose is to inform; make our countrymen aware of the issues of land grabbing and discrimination to the marginalized sectors, specifically the IPs, and for the production to be a call to action; make the audiences realize the need to act upon the problems of our IPs.

### **Understanding land grabbing**

Land grabbing is connected to issues of power, economic investment, human rights, and land rights. It has always been a political issue with economic goals. After the Marcos dictatorship, a number of land related laws were passed, stating ancestral rights and protection to the Indigenous people. These laws are products of social movements and mass movements protesting against harassment and discrimination of IPs. But up to this time, amidst all the laws passed, land grabbing is still a prevalent issue in the Philippines.

### **Commercialization and capitalism**

But why is this still an issue? Why is the government still trying to take the lands of our IPs? In *Kasaray Duma*, the mayor said he will create a sanitary landfill on their island, but the truth was the mayor's father, the congressman, will construct a resort that will attract tourists. In reality, these types of commercialization and capitalism are happening. These kinds of establishments are generating money which not go in the funds of the government, but go in the pockets of the politicians.

### **Call to action**

Different types of protests have been occurring for the rights of our IPs. *Manilakbayan*, for example, is an annual caravan of indigenous people, travelling around Metro Manila to spread information about the Lumad's situation regarding their lands and human rights. In *Kasaray Duma's* case, theatre became a platform to raise awareness and it has been a form of protest.