



2021

Living Sustainably Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

Since 1999, the Interfacing Development Interventions for Sustainability (IDIS) Inc. continuously advocate for the protection and management of life sustaining watersheds from ridge-to-reef in Davao City and in South Central Mindanao. Until COVID-19 pandemic happened. Local and national governments issued guidelines and policies which limited movements, transportations and public activities. Agencies and organizations including the civil society organizations have to innovate and be more creative in continuing their work. Employees and workers have to adapt and most work were shifted to online.

The year 2020, should have been a good start of a new decade instead brought tough challenges for all of us. We were met with countless natural calamities, personal and family problems, topped with a pandemic that we never expected nor even prepared for. However, this global health crisis also made us realize the importance of saving money, staying at home, caring for the safety of our colleagues and family members and doing our best to cope and thrive in these most difficult times. It also challenged us to be resilient and more creative in finding ways to be able to adapt to the new normal. No matter how difficult 2020 has been, IDIS has managed to find ways to continue doing its mission and goals.

This 2021, we are given another beginning, another fresh start. May this new year help us sustain the good habits we have started as we continuously adapt to the new normal. May it also provide more opportunities for all of us to live a sustainable life consciously. We can start by doing simple changes in our lives that may drastically impact and improve our environment: wearing of washable or reusable face masks, using eco-bags instead of single-use plastics, growing our own food in our backyards, opting to walk or cycle, and many more sustainable options. These simple habits will give us a healthier and greener environment, for us, and for the generations to come.





Sustainable Mobility

Study shows that cycling has various health benefits. It increases cardiovascular fitness, improves joint mobility, decreases body fat levels, and many more. Cycling is also good on mental health as it reduces anxiety and depression.

Since public transportations are limited due to physical distancing, many people opted to ride bicycles as their mode of transportation. It saves them time especially during rush hours and makes them safer in acquiring the virus on public transportation. On top of it, cycling does not emit harmful vehicle emission. Opting to ride your bike instead of your car is the simplest ways to lower your environmental footprint.

In Davao City, bicycle has become an emergency transportation alternative for most Dabawenyos during the pandemic. However, bicycle safety infrastructure and facilities were not prepared to cater mass bicycle users. Hence, IDIS lobbied for the installation of bicycles lanes and amendment of the Bicycle Ordinance as well as the Traffic Code of Davao to address the safety needs of cyclist beyond this pandemic.

Photo credits: Shem Torre Longakit

JAN

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January – National Zero Waste Month
01 New Year's Day

February – 02 World Wetlands Day
12 Chinese New Year
25 Edsa People Power Anniversary



Zero Waste Living

Single-use plastics are one of the worst enemies of the environment. Most of the plastics end up in landfills, our oceans and waterways, and the environment. Since it can take up to thousands of years to decompose, it contaminates our land and water, destroying ecosystems and endangering critical habitats.

Last August 2020, IDIS conducted a clean-up drive at Panigan-Tamugan Watershed and collected almost two thousand pieces of plastic wastes. Most of the wastes were plastic bottles and plastic wrappers.

To manage our plastic wastes, you can upcycle plastic food packages and make into other useful products. Just like what the Lunhaw Awardee Elena Mabano of Toril is doing. She makes bracelets, necklaces, bags, and even rosaries out of collected plastic packaging. What a good way to help our environment.

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March – 03 World Wildlife Day
14 International Day of Action for Rivers
21 International Day of Forests

22 World Water Day

April – 01 Maundy Thursday
02 Good Friday
03 Black Saturday

09 Araw ng Kagitingan

Eco-Friendly Alternatives

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, plastic drinking bottles and plastic straws are the most common single-use plastics found in the environment. Most plastic straws are also not biodegradable and cannot be broken down naturally by bacteria and other decomposers into non-toxic materials. Straws are particularly prone to ending up in waterways, and ultimately the oceans, due to beach littering, wind that transports the lightweight objects from trash cans and trash collection facilities, and barges, boats, and aquatic transport vehicles.

If you or your loved one is required to use a straw for medical purposes, or if you just prefer to consume your beverages with straws, there are many non-plastic straw options available. Simply replacing cheap and disposable plastic straws with reusable stainless steel, glass, bamboo, or biodegradable paper alternatives is an easy way to cut down on plastic pollution. You can also bring your personal tumblers on your favourite coffee shops and milk tea shops to save another plastic cup on landfills.

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May – Month of Ocean
 1 Labor Day
 10 World Migratory Day
 22 International Day of Biodiversity

June – Philippine Environment Month
 04–10 Philippine Eagle Week
 04–05 World Environment Day
 08 World Oceans Day

12 Independence Day
 16 World Sea Turtle Day
 25 National Arbor Day

Sustainable PPE Options

Since the start of this pandemic, we are advised to wear face masks on public places. Yet, disposable face masks pose environmental threat due to improper disposal of it and the plastic they contain. As the demand for PPEs such as face mask is increasing, this means that we are also witnessing a massive increase of disposable plastic waste adding another level to an already severe global waste issue. Unless you are in the frontlines; directly dealing with patients or looking after anyone who has COVID-19, experts state that you can avoid disposable mask and use reusable one instead.

While reusable face masks, or non-medical face masks, are not as effective at stopping the virus, there is a benefit to wearing one – they can help prevent you from spreading COVID-19 to others if you are asymptomatic. Wearing a reusable face mask is a very critical and positive action you can take for yourself, for others, and for the environment.

Photo credits: Ellaine Palmamento

JULY

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July – National Disaster Consciousness Month
26 International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem

August – 21 Ninoy Aquino Day
30 International World Whale Shark
30 National Heroes' Day



Urban Gardening

During the lockdown, many people diverted their attention in gardening – flower, fruits, and vegetables. This made most of us busy and it provided us an opportunity to grow our own food as access to groceries and markets is limited.

In urban setting, urban gardening is a growing practice as people place more importance on finding sustainable, safe, convenient, and reliable food sources. Urban gardening fits the urban set up as it does not demand big spaces like the traditional farming. It teaches us that limited space is not a reason to not grow our own food. There are techniques like vertical gardening, container gardening, rooftop gardening, and hydroponic gardening that utilize space well. It also helps you make the best use of space while growing all the food that you want.

In Davao City, Lunhaw Awardee Maxey Atog, made every space of his lot as a garden. He ventures different techniques of gardening such as container and hydroponic gardening. Most of his plants are lettuce and he supplies various restaurants in Davao City with it. He also has herbs like rosemary and peppermint, lemons, ornamental plants, and under the garden plot of his lettuce, there are catfishes and red tilapia.

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September – Lunhaw Month in Davao City
16 International Day of Preservation of Ozone Layer

18 World Water Monitoring Day
20 World Parks Day
24 World Rivers Day

October – National Tamaraw Month
16 World Food Day
24 International Day of Climate Action

20–26 International Lead Poisoning Prevention week



2021



Organic Living

If you are looking for a sign, this is it. Ditch that commercial food and switch into organic. Organic food is better for the environment and to animals because its farming methods are different from commercial ones, as the latter rely heavily on the use of pesticides and other chemicals and synthetic materials in the production line. These, unfortunately, end up polluting our waterways, which becomes a bad cycle for farming when used on crops.

Since organic agriculture is hugely dependent on renewable energy sources, such as solar energy, geothermal energy, and biomass energy, it helps in minimizing the effects of global warming and greenhouse gasses. Slowly eliminating the consumption of carbon-based fossil fuels and chemical fertilizers doesn't just create a major improvement in animal welfare but also in the surrounding environment.

There are lots of restaurants in Davao City that advocate for organic food. One of them is Huni Farm located at Brgy. Wangan, Calinan. It offers a relaxing green space, away from the city noise with affordable and tasty organic food. They also sell healthy freshly baked breads that you and your family can enjoy.

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November – Organic Agriculture Month
 Philippine Clean Air Month
 National Environmental Awareness Month
 01 All Saints' Day

02 All Souls' Day
 19–25 National Climate Change
 Consciousness Week
 30 Bonifacio Day

December – 08 Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary
 03 International Day of No Pesticides Use
 10 International Mountain Day
 24 Christmas Eve

25 Christmas Day
 30 Rizal Day
 31 New Year's Eve



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