

Report on the 10th TU-RIPS Seminar on
**“Leveraging Ecotourism Governance for Local Economic Growth:
A Case Study of Laguna Province, Philippines,”**
held on December 15th, 2023

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Abstract

The 10th TU-RIPS Seminar, the fourth TU-RIPS seminar of this year, was held at Sendagaya Campus, Tsuda University on December 15th, 2023. Dr. Maria Kristina G. Alinsunurin, Associate Professor at College of Public Affairs, the University of the Philippines, Los Baños, the guest speaker for this seminar, gave a talk under the title of “Leveraging Ecotourism Governance for Local Economic Growth: A Case Study of Laguna Province, Philippines.” She explained the nexus of ecotourism, tourism development, and local economic growth along the lines of environment and society in Asia. We conducted this seminar in a hybrid format. About ten students and professors from Japan and the Philippines participated in real time. Dr. Naoko Shinkai, Director, Research Institute for Policy Studies, Tsuda University facilitated this event.

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The 10th TU-RIPS Seminar, the fourth TU-RIPS seminar of this year, was held at Sendagaya Campus, Tsuda University on December 15th, 2023. This is the fourth TU-RIPS seminar with the overall TU-RIPS's topic of this year, "Environment and Society." Dr. Maria Kristina G. Alinsunurin, the Visiting Associate Professor at College of Policy Studies, Department of Policy Studies, Tsuda University and also the Visiting Scholar at the Research Institute for Policy Studies, Tsuda University from the end of November until the end of December 2023, gave a talk on the current situations, policy background of eco-tourism and its challenges in the Philippines. In her talk, with the title of "Leveraging Ecotourism Governance for Local Economic Growth: A Case Study of Laguna Province, Philippines," she illuminated the balance between economic growth and environmental conservation in ecotourism and stressed the importance of the role of local governments in taking a balance of these two objectives. In her presentation, she demonstrated the preliminary results of the collaborative research and fieldwork on the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) strategies and development in the tourism related industry by Naoko Shinkai and Maria Kristina G. Alinsunurin. This international collaborative research was partially supported by Tsuda University.

Her talk consisted of four parts: the previous literatures on the effect of tourism on the local economy and the conceptual framework, the economic and policy background of Laguna province in the Philippines, the case of eco-tourism in Laguna and its effects on the local economic development, and the challenges and opportunities for the local governments, concerning tourism development and local economic growth.

She pointed out that although the society is aware of the economic benefits of tourism and most local development plans in the Philippines integrated tourism, we have not explored enough the identification of the actual contribution to the local economic development and its theoretical process. She also added that the complexity of realization of benefits of ecotourism exists due to the multi-faceted functions of eco-tourism, but also said that ecotourism has potentials to contribute to not only economic, but also social, and environmental development.

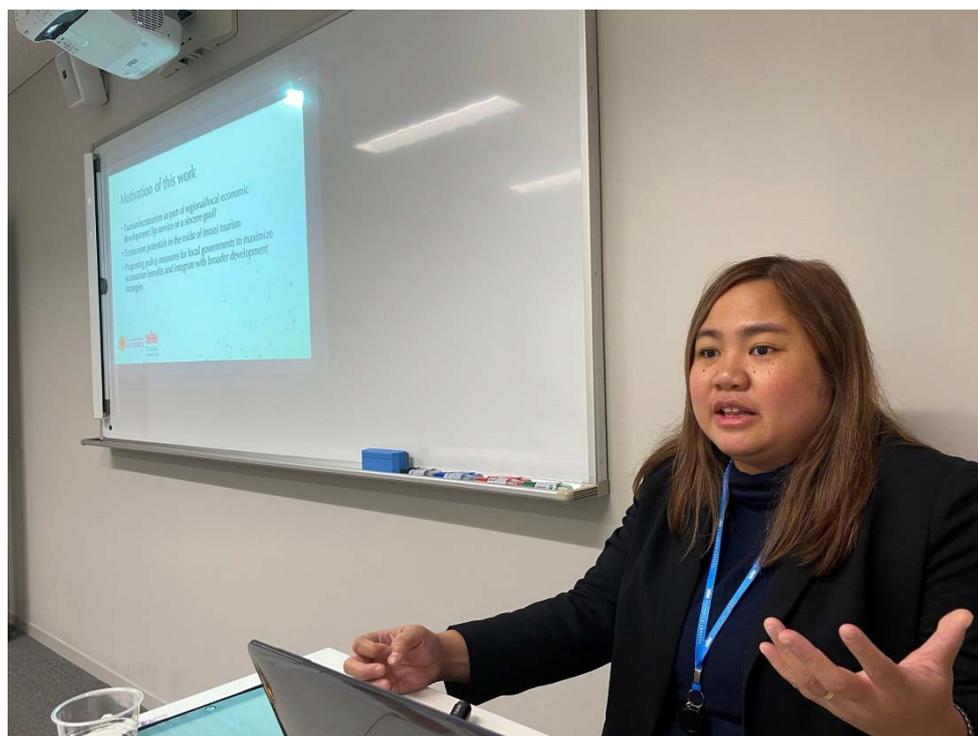
As a case of eco-tourism near NCR (National Capital Region) in the Philippines, she brought Pagsanjan and Cavinti Municipalities of Laguna to participants' attention. These places are popular among both national and international tourists and are the destinations of our collaborative research fieldwork this year. We recognized economic benefits by residents in the locality of ecotourism destinations but found some drawbacks in environmental and cultural components. She cited the paradox of proximity and the paradox of entertainment and explained those paradoxes in the ecotourism sites in Laguna. Using Butler's (1980) Tourism Area Life Cycle Framework, she exhibited a possibility of under-explored potentials and opportunities. The aftermath of COVID-19 may partially had brought about this under-exploitation. However, she concluded that there are many roles that LGU (Local Government Units) can play in enhancing

the economic outcome of ecotourism further and yet subduing the negative impact of ecotourism on the local communities. During her talk, we reviewed tourist destinations in Japan, with experiences of various stages, from the boom, bust, and re-emergence or being-forgotten and discussed the reason for having those stages of tourism.

After the lecture, all the participants expressed their opinions on the importance of serenity of eco-tourism sites and presented their ideas on how to preserve it.

We conducted this seminar in a hybrid format and about ten people participated in real-time. Tsuda University students participated in person, and the students from the University of the Philippines, Los Baños, participated virtually. Some Filipino students participated on an on-demand basis due to the office engagement.

Dr. Naoko Shinkai, Director, Research Institute for Policy Studies, Tsuda University facilitated this event.



Dr. Maria Kristina G. Alinsunurin during her talk (Permission granted by the speaker)