

THE SOCIOLOGY OF SAGIP WAKATAN: MANGROVE CONSERVATION PROGRAM IN BAYABAS OF CARAGA REGION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Prof. Ramel D. Tomaquin, Ph.D

Master of Public Administration Program Surigao del Sur State University

8300 Tandag City, Philippines

E mail: r_tomaquin@yahoo.com or rameltomaquin@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The paper presented the impact of "Sagip Wakatan " the mangrove conservation program of the MLGU of Bayabas a coastal town of Surigao del Sur in the Philippines. It presented the panorama in the collaboration of the community or villagers and the government units of the Philippines such the : BLGU, MLGU , the DENR NGP, PFAR and BFAR which contributed to its success story. The other component of "Sagip Wakatan " were : the " Gakit Festival" for its tourism component , values integration, participatory approach in its management , reforestation component and the livelihood interventions". It was found out that " Sagip Wakatan" have tremendous impact to environmental governance, improve earnings of the villagers due to its livelihood interventions and the development of community based tourism Program". Hence, a success story indeed.

Keywords: Bayabas, Sagip Wakatan, NGP DENR, Mangroves

1. RATIONALE

Sociology is a dynamic or vastly growing field of inquiry borrowing themes from various disciplines like environmental studies, management , development studies, public administration, statistics ,corporate administration , community development to name a few. This area of sociology had been widely practiced by development workers and academics mostly in the rural setting. Practitioners of Environmental Sociology are also being hail as development or NGO workers. In the Philippine, setting practitioners in this sub field of sociology ranges from the academics , NGO workers, development workers of government agencies and multinational corporations for their corporate social responsibility (CSP). The paper used the agenda of environmental sociology to present the panorama of the " Sagip Wakatan", the mangrove conservation program of the MLGU of Bayabas in Surigao del Sur of the Philippines. Mangrove preservation means an vicinity preserve by local or national legislation which makes illegal the wanton harvesting of mangroves and similar species this actions /activities are prohibited in the brackish/near shore or fresh water areas with the noble aim of sustainable development hence, fishing in this area is strictly regulated. Hence it is an area for breeding ground of or a progeny area of the mangrove / reef fishes and other organism in the said environs. For this reason allows the said life form to invigorate . This paper presents the milieu or setting of the program and its impact including the community/village participation which contributed to its success story and is indeed value narrating for its varied multi sectors engagement/collaborations worthy to be emulated by other MLGU's. Hence, the study.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURES

Related literatures had been cited/discussed in this paper to present the related studies of the investigation. The study of Retsy Tomaquin Malong (2013) discussed the following findings:

The MPA's of Cortes are presently achieving its purpose of conservation measures and food security despite of problems encountered. With the collaboration of the NGO's, and LBDA the governance of the MPA's is centered biodiversity and interventions of the displaced fisher folks. The program of converting the illegal fishers into steward of the MPA's by employing them as Fish wardens are commendable indeed. Increase in fish catch had been reported since the MPA's had been established. The MPA's promoted other industry such Eco. Tourism (Retsy Tomaquin Malong , 2013) . The study of Esther Consuelo Tan (p. 394, 2008) on the socio-economic Assessment and Environmental Practices of Mangrove Settlers of Davao Gulf provided the following recommendations:

" Authorities should limit urban migration to the coastal areas and develop eco-friendly development programs or projects taking into consideration the cost and benefits of development interventions. Program implementers should source-out strategies through peoples initiative and empowerment management (Esther Consuelo Tan p. 394, 2008) ".

3. TOUR OF RESEARCH INQUIRY:

The following are the tour of the research inquiry:

1. What is the demographic profile of the fisher folks -informants?
2. What is the organizational culture and the best practices of " Sagip Wakatan "?
3. What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of " Sagip Wakatan " and its propose development interventions?

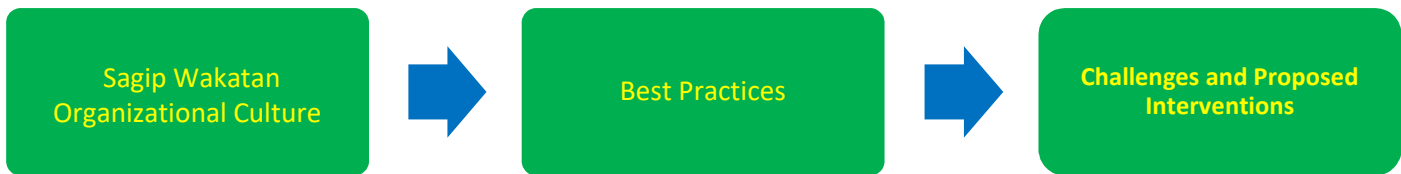


Figure 1. The Conceptual Frame of the Paper

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The study used Descriptive- Survey method aided with the social research approach of "Field Work / immersion". Interview guide , perception scale /researcher made questionnaire , observation were the supplemental tools.

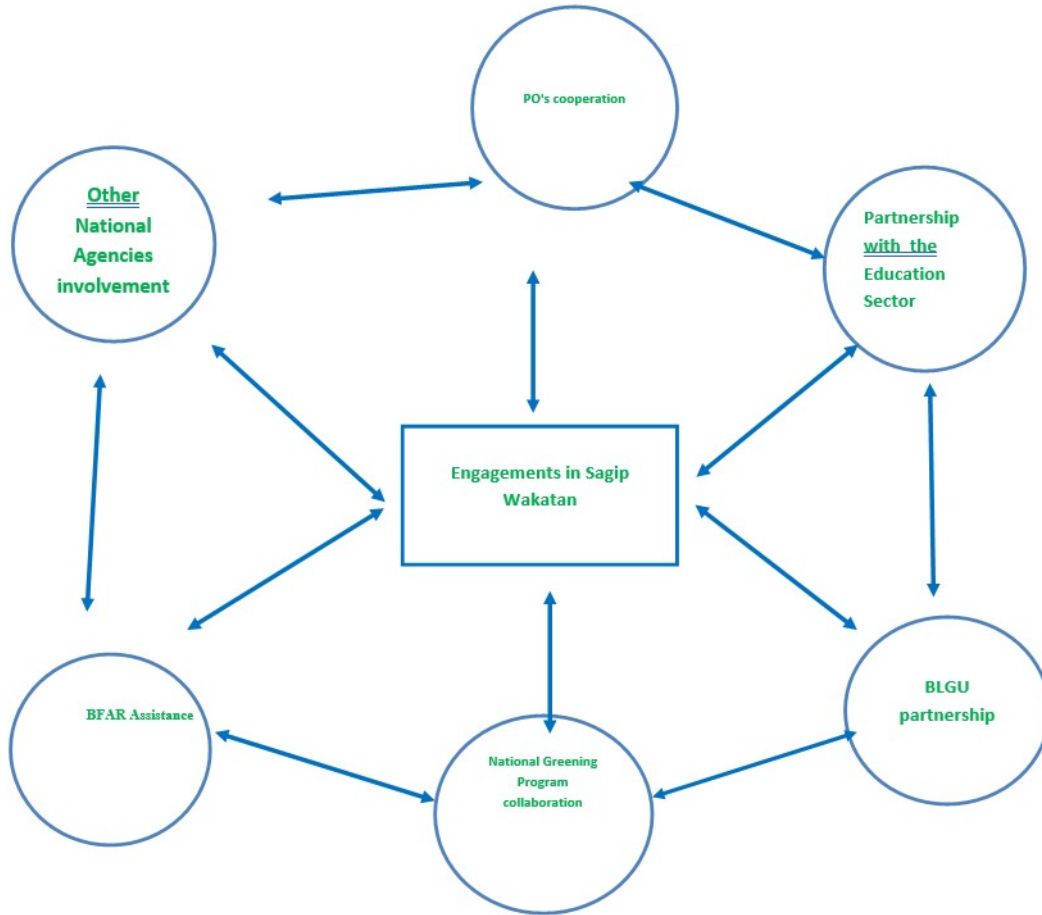


Figure 2. The Sagip Wakatan collaboration illustrated in the sites

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The demographic profile of the fisher folks-key informants

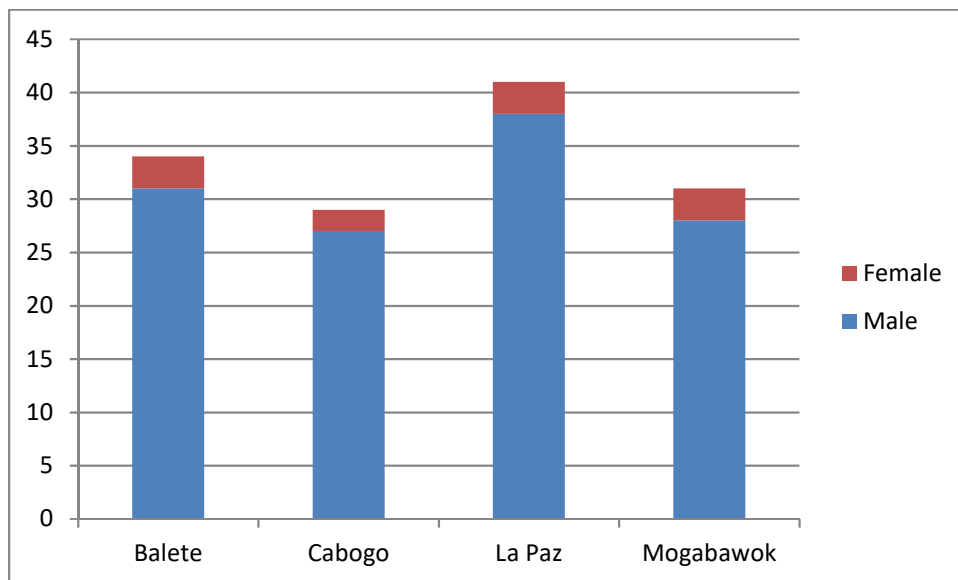


Figure 3. Distribution of respondents in every site according to sex (n=135)

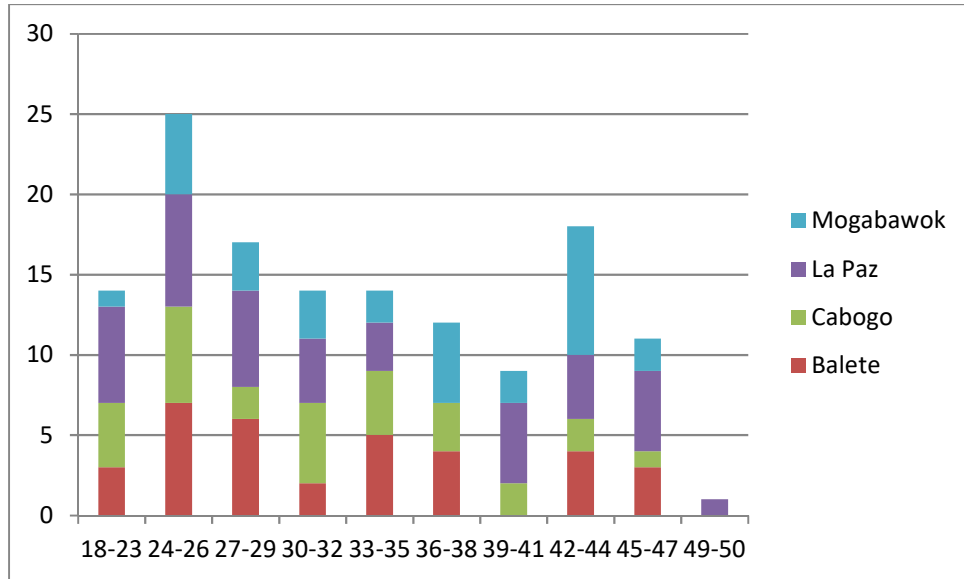


Figure 4. Distribution of the age of the respondents (n=135)

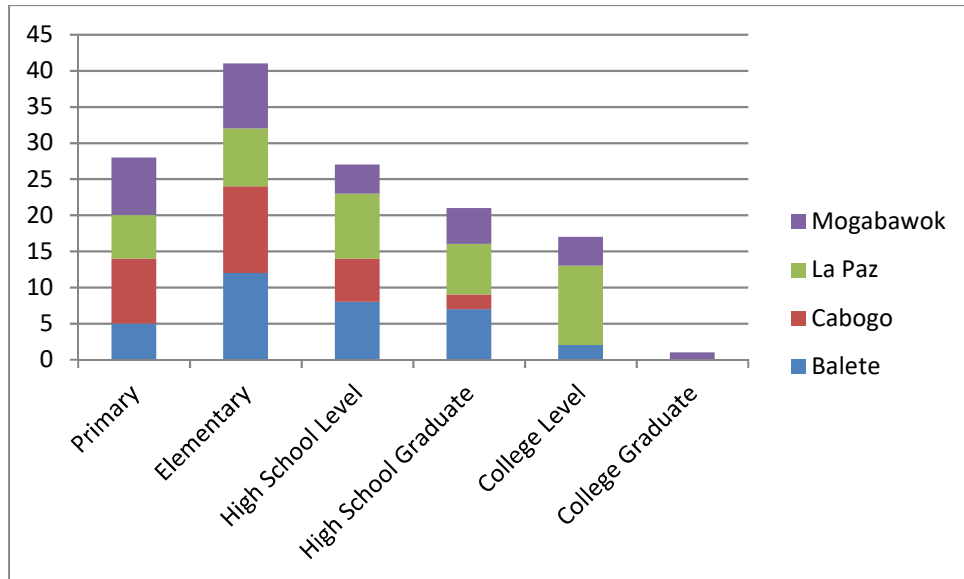


Figure 5. Distribution of respondents according to educational attainment (n=135)

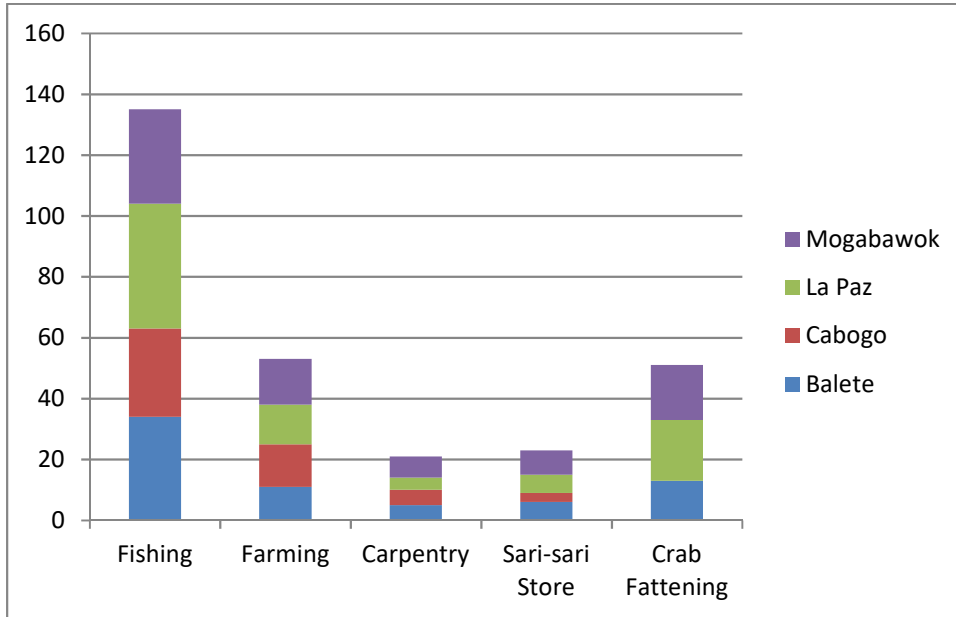


Figure 6 .Distribution of respondents according to their sources of income (multiple responses, n=283)

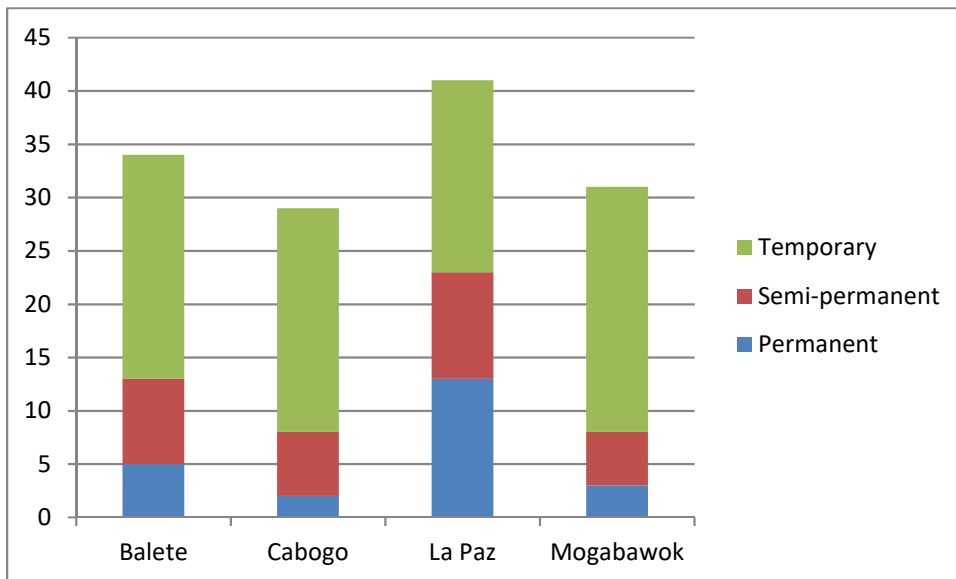


Figure 7. Distribution of respondents according to their type of dwelling (n=135)

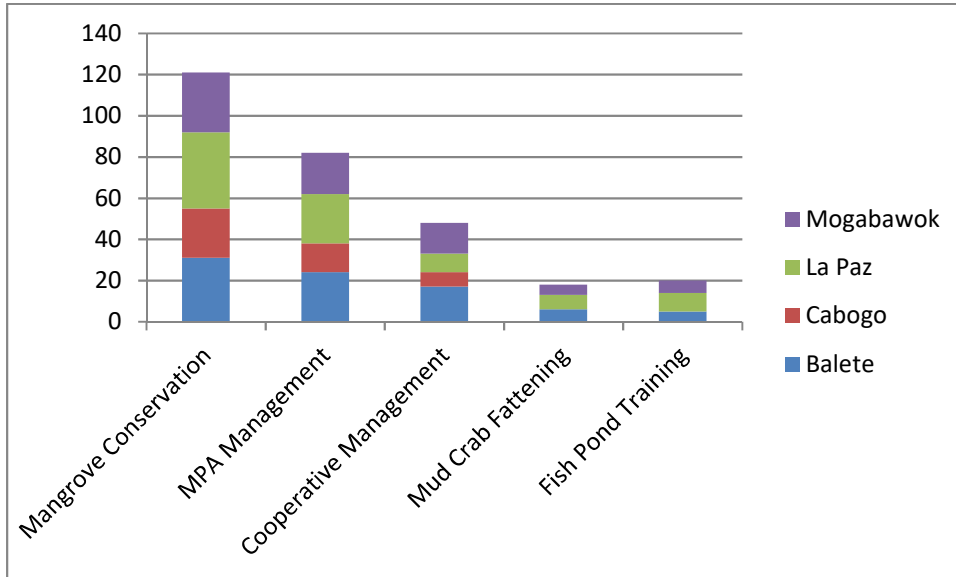


Figure 8. Distribution of respondents according to the type of fishery training they attended (multiple responses n=289)

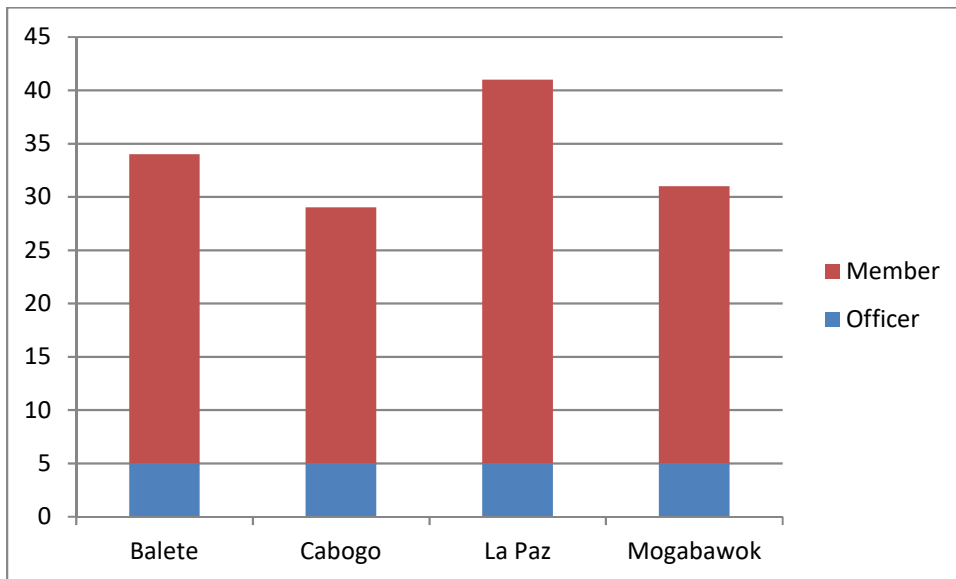


Figure 9. Distribution of respondents according to their memberships in PO (n=135)

The organizational culture and the best practices of " Sagip Wakatan ".

Ramel D. Tomaquin (2013) discussed that Mangrove rehabilitation is an integral part of the coastal resource management program of the LGU of Bayabas which aim for preservation and valuing its biodiversity resources as a coastal town , community collaboration , cultural and ecological tourism promotion are all well integrated in the said program. Its leading platform is for deterrence of disaster such floods, soil erosion besides its recreational importance. In particular the mangrove forests are areas for perpetuation of various species of fish, safeguard for siltation and soil erosion in addition also of its aesthetic, research and educational value. Tomaquin (2013) further discussed that the LGU’s are empowered by the Local government Code of 1991 to develop the natural resources such the mangroves forest with the end view of sustainable development. That the importance of mangrove forest for environmental governance, tourism and

scientific and cultural value can be best harnessed if an effective conservation program is formulated as illustrated by the MLGU of Bayabas.

The Program of "Sagip Wakatan" is anchored on environmental restitution with village/community full participation of the program, and co-ownership as stewards of the said endeavor. Thus resulted to a collaborative actions which contributed to its success. Hence it is a community based program which activities are empowering the immediate fishing communities. In view of this preservation procedures, hands-on involvement of the community was observed. Committed MLGU and other support agencies such: The National Greening Program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), PFAR and BPAR contributed to the success of "Sagip Wakatan".

The collaborative engagements of the women, 4 P's recipients (Pantawid), professional sectors, fisher folks, farmers, academe made the implementation of "Sagip Wakatan" a collaborative or multi sectors engagements. Its significant components are monitoring the mangrove forest covers, implementing its infrastructure components such building guard houses for its marine protected areas, sea wall and sea wall boulevard, Gakit festival/festivities and provided 15 hectares in Barangay Mogabawok as a marine/community tourism park. Installations of bill boards, presence of patrol boats, constructing rest houses, coastal resource management properly implemented, active fish warden/bantay dagat, network system in case of intrusion in the mangrove conservation sites, waste management instituted/properly in placed, reforestation regularly conducted, presence of active village community leaders (Pork or link leaders), guarding the mangrove forest is well instituted, regular feed backing or monitoring observed, capacity building with the fisher folks association down to the Purok/village level was manifested indeed. In like manner orientation for the tourist both local and foreign regarding the relevance of the mangrove forest was properly implemented and mangrove conservation facilities periodically checked. Similarly NGO's are welcome as partners of mangrove conservation/governance hence active collaboration was evident. The mangrove conservation is back up by a Municipal Council resolution and fishery laws properly integrated in the conservation. It can be deduced that best practices are highly commendable such funding from LGU regularly allocated, BFAR technical assistance was successfully instituted, DENR assistance though NGP vigorously undertaken.

Close collaboration/engagement of DENR and BFAR through the following projects are highly commendable via the following programs viz: the Integrated Social Forestry Program (ISF), the National Greening Program(NGP), which are all form forest rehabilitation programs. The "Sagip Wakatan" planning and implementation includes the following: hydraulic mapping, consultation with the fisher folks, budget allocation for infrastructures of community tourism facilities like rest houses, pavilions, tourist cottages, sea side board walk/walk ways, sea walls, guard houses, recreation centers and among others. In addition BFAR assistance was sought in the identification of mangrove species, measures in providing adequate staff by the MLGU was properly implemented, participatory approaches was employed, encouragement of NGO involvement and inclusion of the MLU budget for "Sagip Wakatan" Highly Satisfactorily implemented. So, the program is properly staff, facilities like BFAR patrol boats and binoculars adequately provided, active involvement of the public and privates sectors was evident.

The program generate local employment such contributed to the development of restaurant or food industry for the municipality, mangrove similar species had been identified, including the communal mangrove tidal forest delineation, and inland fishery protected are identified, law enforcement of the "Sagip" Wakatan ordinance "Highly Satisfactorily" implemented. In addition capacity/capability training for MLGU staff in coastal resource management "Highly Satisfactory Implemented", periodic mangrove reforestation conducted, use of Bill Boards, portal and radio advertising also "Highly Satisfactorily Implemented". The program promoted "Bayanihan" spirit for community voluntarism in the mangrove conservation program well instituted, linkages with other national agencies was conducted. The following components of "Sagip Wakatan" were "Highly Satisfactorily Implemented": environmental governance as a response to climate change initiatives, encourage and support NGO involvement in mangrove conservation, facilities adequately provided, clear vision, objectives, mission, livelihood interventions adequately provided, monitoring and assessment of mangrove forest covers regularly conducted.

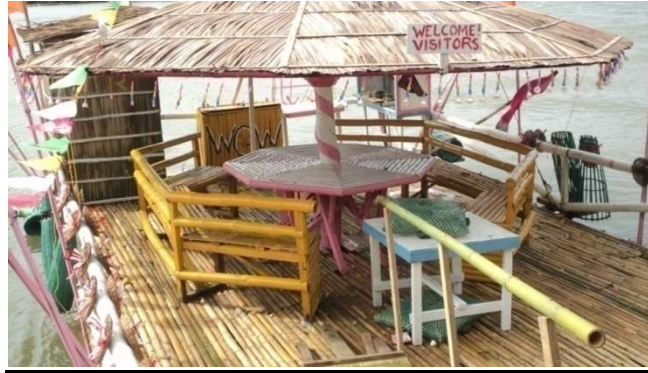


Plate Number 1. The decorated non motorized Banka/baroto displayed/utilized during the " Gakit" festival. Photo Credit; Prof. Ramel D. Tomaquin.

The challenges encountered in " Sagip Wakatan Program" .

Challenges
Intrusion in the Fish Sanctuaries and Mangrove Conservation sites
Conversion of mangrove areas into fish ponds
Limited foreign Tourist
Enhance Involvement of NGO's in Mangrove Conservation
Intensify the integration of environmental education in the basic education
Intensify the Promotion of " Gakit Festival" the tourism and cultural component of " Sagip Wakatan".
Intensify Mangrove reforestation employing the enhance NGP Program of DENR with other mangrove species besides : Bakhaw, Piyapi, Padada, Nipa and Saging Saging
Encourage the creation of fisher folks cooperatives
Encourage the voluntarism of 4 P's recipients in guarding the mangrove sites
Encourage more multinational companies to have their corporate social responsibility in the sites
Have an active convergence/collaboration/engagement with DOT, DPWH in enhancing more the "Sagip Wakatan" infrastructure
Conversion of PO's into Cooperatives
Formulate learning module for mangrove conservation program based on "Sagip Wakatan " experience



Plate Number 2. Expressing gratitude after conducting an interview with one of the staff in Bayabas Municipal Agriculturist Office.

6. CONCLUSION:

- 1) " Sagip Wakatan" the Mangrove conservation program of the Municipal Government of Bayabas is anchored on reforestation measures, environmental governance, livelihood interventions and commendable also is its eco-tourism component likewise its cultural component the " Gakit " festival or festivities which has also a tourism value or importance;
- 2) The infrastructure component of " Sagip Wakatan " is properly in placed like the cottages, pavilions, boulevard, sea side walking area, guard houses , road network etc. , are Highly Satisfactorily Implemented;
- 3) The DENR through its NGP Program , BFAR and the Provincial Fishery and Aquatic Resources actively assisted the MLGU of Bayabas for its " Sagip Wakatan" Program. So with the Provincial Tourism office in the tourism component of "Sagip Wakatan" the " Gakit Festivity or festival".
- 4) The fisher folks and the residents of Bayabas accepted well the noble aim of mangrove conservation and actively participated in its activities / endeavors;
- 5) Participation of the Public and private Sector in " Sagip Wakatan " was evident;
- 6) The governance of " Sagip Wakatan" was Highly Satisfactory;
- 7) The MLGU of Bayabas employed participatory and community based approaches in harnessing fishers folks and other sector active involvement in the program.

VII. Recommendation/Propose Development Interventions:

1. The Best Practices of " Sagip Wakatan" be emulated by other coastal MLGU's;
2. Study on extensive biodiversity resources in the mangrove sites be conducted;
3. Enhance the tri-media promotion of " Sagip Wakatan".

List of Abbreviations/Notations:

BFAR Bureau of Fishery and Aquatic Resources
BLGU Barangay Local Government Unit
CSR Corporate Social Responsibility
DENR Department of Environment and National Resources
DOT Department of Tourism
ISP Integrated Social Forestry Program
LGU Local Government Unit
List of Notations/Abbreviations:

MLGU Municipal Local Government Unit
MPA Marine Protected Area
NGP National Greening Program
PFRAO Provincial Fishery and Aquatic Resources Office
PO's People's organization
PPP Public and Private Partnership

8. REFERENCES CITED

Malong, Retsy Tomaquin (2013) " Best Practices in Marine Protected Area (MPA's) Stewardship in the Contexts of Participatory Environmental Governance , Empowered Fishing Communities and the Economics of its Sustainability in Cortes of Caraga Region , Philippines : A Discourse "

National Greening Program retrieved from <http://www.denr.gov.ph/priority-programs/national-greening-program.html>

Sagip Wakatan Ordinance of the MLGU of Bayabas in Surigao del Sur, Philippines.

Tan ,Esther Consuelo " Socio-Economic Assessment and Environmental Practices of Mangrove Settlers in Davao Gulf", JPAIR (Philippine Association of Institutions for Research) , Vol.1, 2008 , Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines .

Tomaquin, Ramel D. (2013) " Mangrove Rehabilitation Program in the Coastal Frontier : A Case Study of the Fishing Villages in Surigao del Sur, Philippines Golden Research Thoughts retrieved from www.aygrt.istj.net Volume-3, Issue-6, Dec-2013.

9. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

1. Associate Prof. Jocelyn B. Panduyos ,R and E Director of Surigao del Sur State University for sharing her technical expertise in social research;
2. To the Barangay Captains and Fishers of La Paz, Balete, Cabogo and Mogabawok for their hospitality;
3. Retsy Tomaquin Malong,DPA for editing this work;
4. Hon. Maria Clarita G. Limbaro for her generosity .