

NEXT IN LINE:

Analysing the Role of the Younger Generation in Ensuring the Sustainability of Craftship and Artisanal Work in Samar and Leyte, Eastern Visayas, Philippines

A Woven Networks Scoping Study

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Guinadiong Weavers Association

Capangihan Weavers Association

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ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AHS	Average Household Size
BANIG	Basey Association of Native Industry Growth
BANWA	Basiao Native Weavers Association
BC	British Council
CAPWA	Capoocan Weavers Association
CBFM	Community-Based Forest Management
CENRO	Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer
CITEM	Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions
CLUP	Comprehensive Land Use Plans
COVID-19	Disease 2019
CPH	Census of Population and Housing
DA	Department of Agriculture
DAO	DENR Administrative Order
DENR	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DENR-BMB	Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Biodiversity Management Bureau
DENR-FMB	Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Forest Management Bureau
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ECQ	Enhanced Community Quarantine
EVSU	Eastern Visayas State University
FFP	Forest Foundation Philippines
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FLUP	Forest Land Use Planning
GREAT Women	Gender Responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation (GREAT) Women
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGU	Local Government Unit
Manila FAME	Manila Furnishings and Apparel Manufacturers Exchange
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NGA	National Government Agency
OPAPP	Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process
PCW	Philippine Commission on Women
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
RA	Republic Act
VSU	Visayas State University
4Ps	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Pogram

1.0 PROJECT INFORMATION

1.1 Project Name

Crafting Futures – Woven Networks Scoping Grant

1.2 Grant Recipient

Carmen Roceli M. Lopez

1.3 Financial Information

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1.4 Important Dates:

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2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Woven Networks Scoping Grant was conducted for a period of five months from March 2022 to July 2022 and covered the provinces of Samar and Leyte in the Eastern Visayas region of the Philippines.

The provinces of Samar and Leyte have gained worldwide popularity because of Typhoon Haiyan (known locally as Super Typhoon Yolanda). Both provinces were some, if not the most, severely affected areas in the entire country by one of the most powerful typhoons every recorded in history¹. However, there is more to Eastern Visayas than being just one of the most typhoon-prone regions in the Philippines. In terms of landscape, Samar and Leyte are home to 609,325 hectares of forest land. The largest terrestrial protected area in the Philippines, the Samar Island Natural Park is in the region. Further, a major peatland, the Leyte Sab-a Peatland Forest is also in the area².

To promote forest conservation, the participation of local communities is essential. The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the lives of peoples, communities, and nations. The health crisis has exposed the vulnerability of artisans and weavers in Samar and Leyte, mostly comprised of women, because of the uncertainty of their livelihood and the multiple burden they must face at home and at work³. Therefore, it was necessary to look further into their journey as they continue to struggle in producing handmade products and in adapting to digital marketing in the new normal.

The main question that this study sought to answer was to investigate the roles of the younger generation in ensuring the sustainability of craftship and artisanal work in Samar and Leyte, Eastern Visayas, Philippines.

Methodology. This qualitative research utilized feminist principles and approaches, which meant that the artisans themselves were treated as experts of their own experiences.

The following were the data gathering methods used: electronic survey for artisans in Samar and Leyte, stakeholder identification, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and documents review.

The scoping research activities for this grant were both conducted face-to-face and online. The research team and all the participants who attended on-site interviews and discussions practiced physical distancing measures as required by the Philippine health department. Online interviews were implemented through various platforms such as Zoom and Messenger. The survey was administered electronically through Google Forms.

Results. Majority or 50% of the survey respondents (45 out of 91) were aged 65 to 74 years old. Of this, 9 were aged 70 years old, 8 were aged 68 years old and the rest had varying ages. Eighteen percent (18%) or 16 out of 91 were aged 45 to 54 years old. The least number of artisans or 4 out of 91 were from the 15 to 24 years old age range.

For Samar, where mat weaving is famous, the market is still facing challenges. According to the weavers, increasing the price of the mats and other items is hard especially when negotiating with private traders. The amount of effort, practice, and talent of the weavers are not compensated enough. This is one of the major reasons why the younger generation lack interest in learning the art of weaving.

¹Typhoon Haiyan death toll rises over 5,000 (Report). BBC. November 22, 2013. Archived from the original on November 22, 2013. Retrieved November 22, 2013.

² <https://www.forestfoundation.ph/landscapes/>

³ Moser, C. O. N. (1993). *Gender planning and development: theory, practice and training*. London: Routledge.

For Leyte on the other hand, the younger generation have taken not as much interest in the continuation of the craftship industry. This is due to the fact that the internet also somehow limits their participation in weaving or traditional craftship. Some of the interventions or approach that the elder crafters have done in encouraging the younger generations is by rewarding them and introducing the process slowly.

Conclusion. The younger generation is the key to the sustainability of craftship and artisanal work in Samar and Leyte, Eastern Visayas, Philippines. The Eastern Visayas region is continuously under threat from disasters such as typhoons, flashfloods, and earthquakes because of the worsening climate emergency. Every stakeholder within the creative arts and crafts industry has a role to play in its survival and development. The most influential and most affected are the younger generation as they will be the ones to inherit the future. Therefore, the sustainability of craftship and artisanal work is in their hands.

Recommendations.

For the government, the passage of the Philippine Creative Industries Act would help in providing support to all the stakeholders across the arts and crafts value chain.

For Social Enterprises, Traders and Other Businesses, continuity of collaboration is needed as well as product development and upgrading and market access.

For the Artisans, Weavers, Crafters, Makers, artisans can be more pro-active in promoting consciousness about the relevance of craftship and artisanal work for future generations to come within their own households, families and primary communities.

For Scholars and Other Researchers, the data gathered from this research can further be analyzed by other researchers to provide more context to the findings but also for other researches related or unrelated to the subject matter discussed herewith.

For Other Enablers and Implementers, specifically on future programs and services, design and conceptualization about new programs and services that will be implemented should take into consideration the need to involve the youth as participants and partners in development. More than targeting them as audience, inviting them to the table as co-decision makers and planners can boost their confidence and trust in themselves, that they too can make a difference in culture and society through their contributions.

For the Eastern Visayas State University, Visayas State University and other schools, colleges and universities and training institutions and LGUs, the incorporation of awareness raising and knowledge building on issues related to craftship and artisanal work in the region is vital to be included in curriculums or any capacity building activities that will be developed.

For the women-led enterprises, all should be provided an orientation about CBFM and support to business operations and youth engagement.

For potential UK collaborators, there is a need to engage craft experts to link products produced in Samar and Leyte to potential markets.

For Forest Foundation Philippines and the British Council, stage sharing sessions not just virtually but also on-ground where the youth, the communities, the stakeholders are would serve as training ground for better understanding about CBFM, craftship and artisanal work and the connection between craft communities and the environment.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The provinces of Samar and Leyte have gained worldwide popularity because of Typhoon Haiyan (known locally as Super Typhoon Yolanda). Both provinces were some, if not the most, severely affected areas in the entire country by one of the most powerful typhoons ever recorded in history⁴. However, there is more to Eastern Visayas than being just one of the most typhoon-prone regions in the Philippines. In terms of landscape, Samar and Leyte are home to 609,325 hectares of forest land. As per the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Forest Management Bureau (DENR-FMB), Samar has 3,748 hectares of closed forest and 147,835 hectares of open forest. Leyte on the other hand has 17,170 hectares of closed forest and 52,773 hectares of open forest. The largest terrestrial protected area in the Philippines, the Samar Island Natural Park is in the region. Further, a major peatland, the Leyte Sab-a Peatland Forest is also in the area⁵. The presence of these natural forests is enough reason to ensure that these areas remain protected. The Yolanda experience showed the world what climate change is⁶. Therefore, mitigating efforts are needed to avoid future typhoons like Yolanda from occurring. At the core of these efforts is forest conservation, a key strategy that needs to be promoted and implemented to fight the on-going climate crisis.

3.1 Rationale and Background

Forest conservation is the direction that needs to be taken. Nevertheless, it is not possible without the participation of local communities. Given the land area of Samar and Leyte, the role of communities is critical in the development and coordination to ensure forest management in such a massive region.

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the lives of peoples, communities, and nations. The health crisis has exposed the vulnerability of artisans and weavers in Samar and Leyte, mostly comprised of women, because of the uncertainty of their livelihood and the multiple burden they must face at home and at work⁷. Therefore, it was necessary to look further into their journey as they continue to struggle in producing handmade products and in adapting to digital marketing in the new normal.

3.2 Research Questions

The main question that this study sought to answer was:

What are the roles of the younger generation in ensuring the sustainability of craftship and artisanal work in Samar and Leyte, Eastern Visayas, Philippines?

Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following:

1. What is the current state of artisans and weavers in Samar and Leyte?
2. How has COVID-19 and the Typhoons since Yolanda affected the sustainability of craftship and artisanal work in Samar and Leyte?

⁴Typhoon Haiyan death toll rises over 5,000 (Report). BBC. November 22, 2013. Archived from the original on November 22, 2013. Retrieved November 22, 2013.

⁵ <https://www.forestfoundation.ph/landscapes/>

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/12/typhoon-haiyan-climate-change-blame-philippines>

⁷ Moser, C. O. N. (1993). *Gender planning and development: theory, practice and training*. London: Routledge.

3. What are the factors that continue to affect or limit the participation of the younger generation in craftship and artisanal work in Samar and Leyte?
4. How can the younger generation contribute to the survival, development, and pivot to the new normal of the crafts industry in Samar and Leyte?

3.3 Significance of the Research

Artisans and weavers involved in textile production have always emphasized the value of “passing on the skills and tradition of weaving to the younger generation.” (Bayan Academy, 2018). This is the same sentiment for the mat weaving and crafts making industry in Samar and Leyte. The mat weaving industry in Samar for instance has been handed down from one generation to the next (Diaz, 2019). It does not only have cultural significance but also economic benefits (Rustami, 2002). This study seeks to unpack the realities behind the observations of artisans and weavers about the role of the younger generation. It is in the hopes of this research that whatever knowledge will be gained through the conduct of this study would contribute to improving processes, strategies, and approaches in the contemporary craft production in the region and ultimately also contribute to environmental conservation and management.

3.4 Scope and Limitations of the Research

The Woven Networks Scoping Grant was conducted for a period of five months from March 2022 to July 2022 and covered the provinces of Samar and Leyte in the Eastern Visayas region of the Philippines. These are the only two (2) provinces covered within the Forest Foundation’s focal landscapes in the region and therefore, this scoping research was only conducted in the said areas.

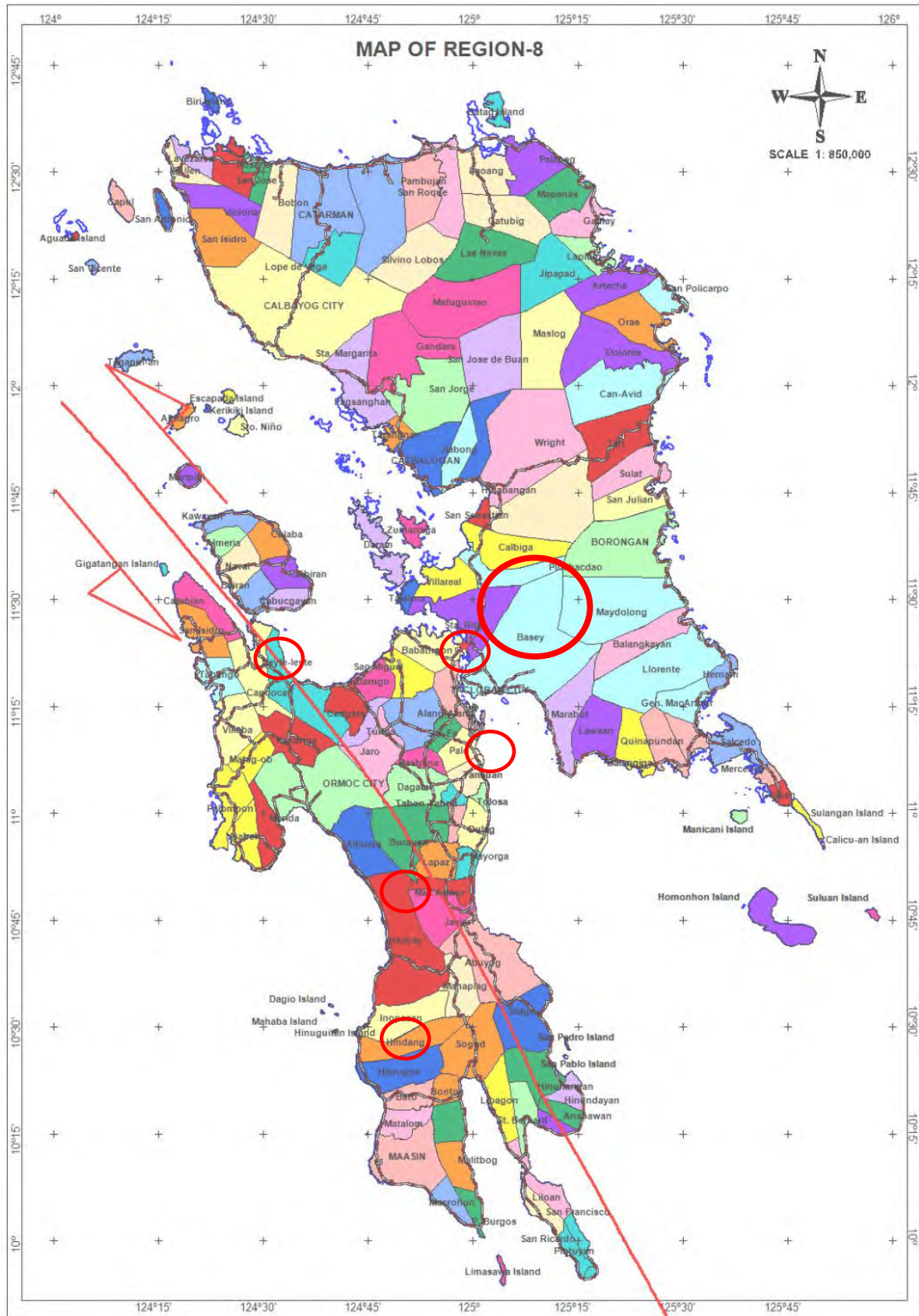
More specifically, this research worked with selected communities and enterprises in the said provinces namely:

For Samar - D&E Mats and Rattan Crafts in Barangay and Eva Marie Arts and Crafts from Barangay Loyo, Basey Association for Native Industry Growth (BANIG) from Barangay Baybay and the Basiao Native Weavers Association (BANWA) from Barangay Basiao. All were from the Municipality of Basey.

For Leyte – Guinadiongan Weavers Association from Barangay Guinadiongan, Municipality of Capoocan, Capangihan Weavers Association from Barangay Capangihan, Municipality of Tolosa, Clair’s Enterprises from Barangay 50-A Youngfield, Tacloban City, Lolo Bobby Handicrafts from Barangay Guererro, Municipality of Bato, Capoocan Weavers Association from Barangay Poblacion, Municipality of Capoocan and Sto Nino de Plaridel Parish Multipurpose Cooperative from Barangay Plaridel, Baybay City.

The scoping and research activities for this grant were both conducted face-to-face and online. The research team and all the participants who attended on-site interviews and discussions practiced physical distancing measures as required by the Philippine health department. Online interviews were implemented through various platforms such as Zoom and Messenger. The survey was administered electronically through Google Forms.

Figure 1. Map of Eastern Visayas⁸



⁸ <https://region8.mgb.gov.ph/en/13-projects/166-leyte-geohazard-map.html>

4.0 METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research utilized feminist principles and approaches (Hesse-Biber, et al, 2007). Foremost was the principle that the participants of the research were recognized not as subjects but as partners whose experiences were treated with respect (Brayton, 1997).

This research utilized the following methods: electronic survey for artisans in Samar and Leyte, stakeholder identification, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and documents review.

The methods used were increased from three (3) to five (5) to provide more depth and understanding about the research topic. The additional funding from the British Council also made the administration of the survey possible.

4.1 Data Gathering Methods

4.1.1 Artisan Survey

The artisan survey developed and used contained quantitative items that sought to capture the socio-economic profile of artisans in Samar and Leyte, their employment status and basic digital and artisan skills (Veal and Darcy, 2014). For easier navigation and dissemination, the artisan survey was created through Google Forms. This allowed the artisans even those from the far-flung areas to participate in this study using their own mobile phones.

The artisans who took part in the survey were community partners of [HerStore Asia](#), a digital empowerment platform which seeks to uplift women artisans and enterprises across Southeast Asia, where the Lead Researcher currently serves as the Chief Empowerment Officer.

The participation of the artisans in the survey was made possible by their community enterprise leaders who assisted those who did not have direct access to a mobile phone, tablet or computer.

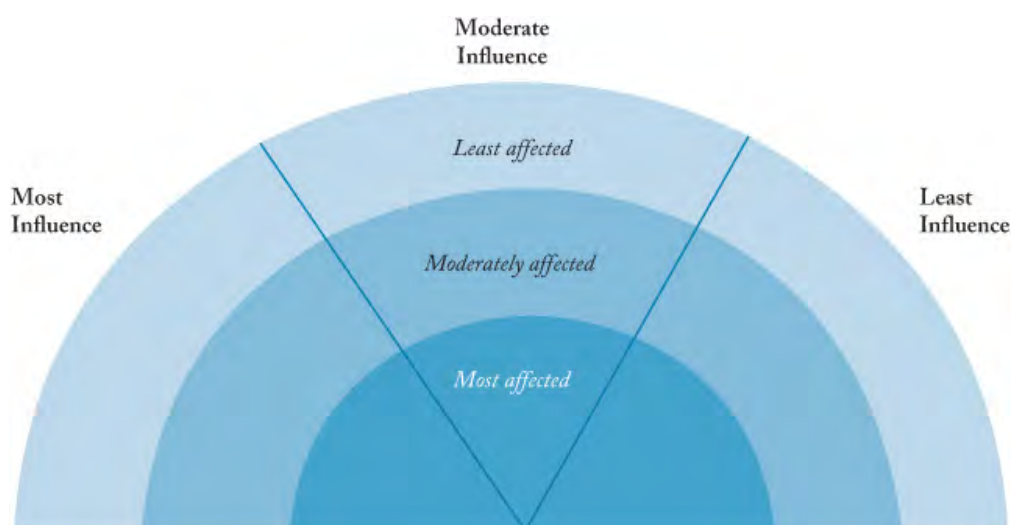
The survey was created following different census and profiling forms used in the past by institutions such as the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW). The survey was distributed at the latter part of this study as it was an additional data collection method that was added to the methodology to provide more context to this scoping proposal.

The artisan survey form is attached as **Annex 1** of this scoping research.

4.1.2 Stakeholder Identification

Stakeholders are “actors that can influence or be affected by a certain problem or action” (Chevalier & Buckles, 2008). To describe more fully the role of the younger generation in the sustainability of craftship and artisanal work in Samar and Leyte, this technique was used to identify and discuss the roles of key actors or stakeholders through a rainbow diagram (See **Figure 2** for the Rainbow Diagram Format) who are supposed be involved in monitoring and sustaining the production of crafts and artisanal work, forest conservation and management (Chevalier & Buckles, 2008).

Figure 2. Rainbow Diagram Format⁹



4.1.3 Key Informant Interviews

This research used the key informant interview (KII). Acknowledging that the artisans and weavers are the experts, the KIIs were conducted with various community leader artisans and weavers from Samar and Leyte. Furthermore, individuals who have knowledge and background on the status of the craft industry in the region were also approached. Interview respondents were: (1) representative of local government, (2) representative from the academe and (3) representatives from a social enterprise.

4.1.4 Focus Group Discussions

Artisans and weavers in the region have formed groups, cooperatives, and associations. To understand more fully their points-of-view, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted to listen to their voices. The FGD, which is a form of group interview seeks to emphasize the importance of knowledge co-creation and insights sharing among a group (Wilkinson, 1998). The FGD was an opportunity to surface what values, themes, and experiences does a group of artisans and weavers share in common.

4.1.5 Documents Review

This research tried to exhaust all potential materials that dealt with the subject matter on hand. Books, journals, articles and other resource materials were thoroughly reviewed to guide the writing of this scoping research proposal. All references can be found at the latter part of this research.

4.2 Ethical Guidance

This research assured all participants regarding the confidentiality of their information. The artisan survey also included a portion which secured the consent of the participants. These were all considered to ensure that no harm was done to any of the participants and that their privacy would be secured (Gray, 2009).

⁹ Chevalier & Buckles, 2008

5.0 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

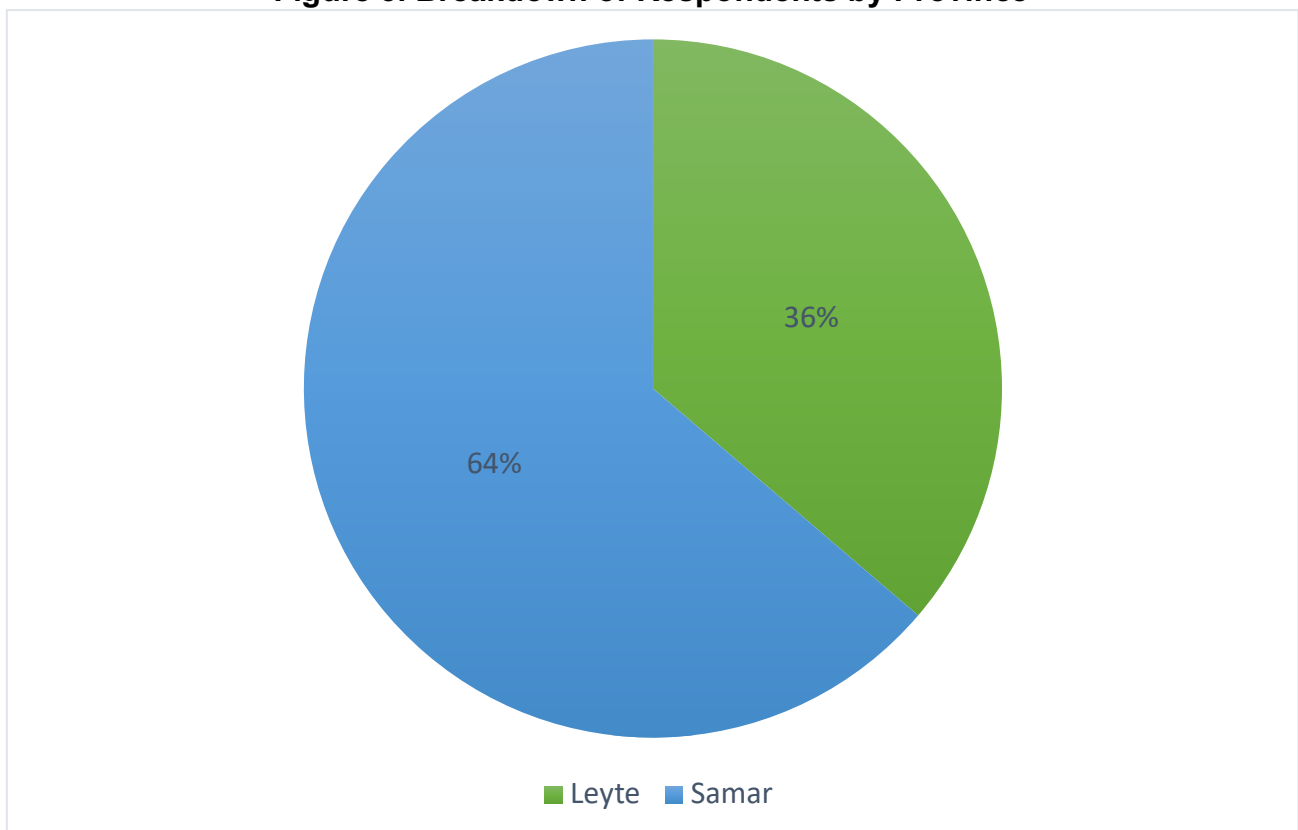
This section presents the key results and findings collected through the administration of all the data gathering methods.

5.1 Socio-Economic Profile of Artisans

5.1.1 Place of Origin

This study focused on the provinces of Samar and Leyte. The artisans engaged as participants in the survey and FGDs were from the 2 provinces. **Figure 3** shows the breakdown of respondents by province.

Figure 3. Breakdown of Respondents by Province

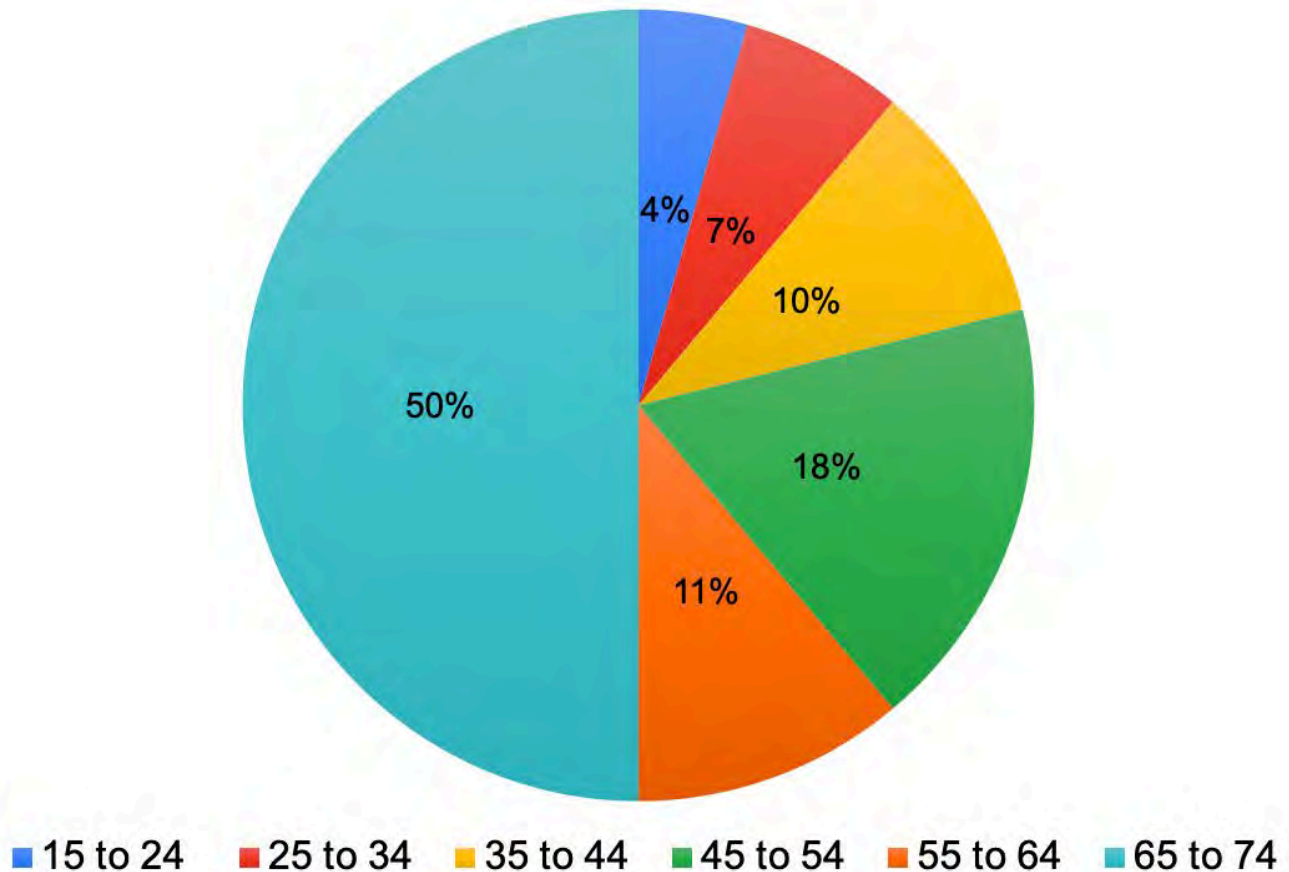


Through the active involvement of some community enterprise leaders, a total of 91 respondents were reached. Among those interviewed, 33 or 36.26% were from Leyte while 58 or 63.74% were from Samar.

5.1.2. Age

The premise that most artisans in Samar and Leyte are old and that not a lot of youth are participating in the creative arts and crafts industry is based on observation. Thus, this research aimed to survey at least 50 artisans to provide context as to the distribution of artisans per age range.

Figure 4. Breakdown of Respondents by Age Range



Majority or 50% of the survey respondents (46 out of 91) were aged 65 to 74 years old. Of this, 9 were aged 70 years old, 8 were aged 68 years old and the rest had varying ages. Eighteen percent (18%) or 16 out of 91 were aged 45 to 54 years old. The least number of artisans or 4 out of 91 were from the 15 to 24 years old age range.

The 'youth' age group is defined as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years¹⁰. As predicted prior to the conduct of this survey, not a lot of youth become artisans. As per the data collected, the smallest number came from the youth age group. It is alarming to know that only a few members of the community have risen up to carry on the tradition of craftship and artisanal work in the region.

Figure 4 validated the earlier observation of this scoping research about the involvement of both the old and the young in craftship and artisanal work in Samar and Leyte. Table 1 below presents the breakdown of respondents by age range per province.

¹⁰ <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/youth>

Table 1. Breakdown of Respondents by Age Range per Province

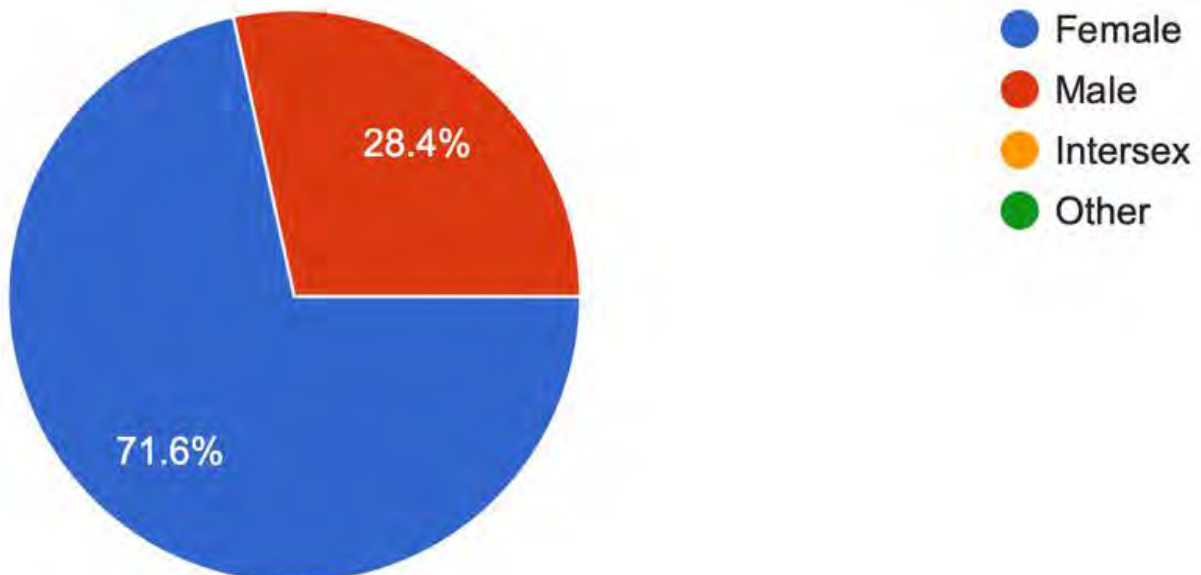
Age Range	Leyte		Samar	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
15 to 24	1	3%	3	5%
25 to 34	4	12%	2	3%
35 to 44	5	15%	4	7%
45 to 54	6	18%	10	17%
55 to 64	1	3%	9	16%
65 to 74	16	48%	30	52%
Total	33	100%	58	100%

For Leyte, 48% of the artisans surveyed were aged 65 to 74 years old while for Samar, 52% of the artisans who responded belonged to the same age group. Table 1 highlights that the lack of youth involvement in the same for both Leyte and Samar. Middle-aged group involvement from those belonging to the 45 to 54 years old age group placed second to the senior group.

5.1.3 Sex

Almost 75% of artisans surveyed in Samar and Leyte were female (71.6% or 65 out of 91). This is true for most work that involve the hands. The wider Philippine Wearables and Homestyle Industry estimate is that 60% of workers in the different subsectors (fashion, handicrafts, etc) are female.

Figure 5. Breakdown of Respondents by Sex



The collection of sex disaggregated data (SDD) for the crafts and artisanal industry is critical in ensuring that interventions or services that will be conceptualized in the future would take into consideration the fact that women comprise a huge percentage of the target audience. Women are not only burdened to nurture their families but at times, they are also the ones expected by society to sustain their communities and cultures. However, the weight of

sustainability and continuity of craftship and artisanal work should not just be put on the shoulders of women but on everyone belonging to these communities.

Table 2 shows the breakdown of respondents by sex per province. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of artisans surveyed in Samar were female while only 22% were male. These numbers were not as far from the numbers in Leyte which was 70-30 or 70% were female while 30% were male.

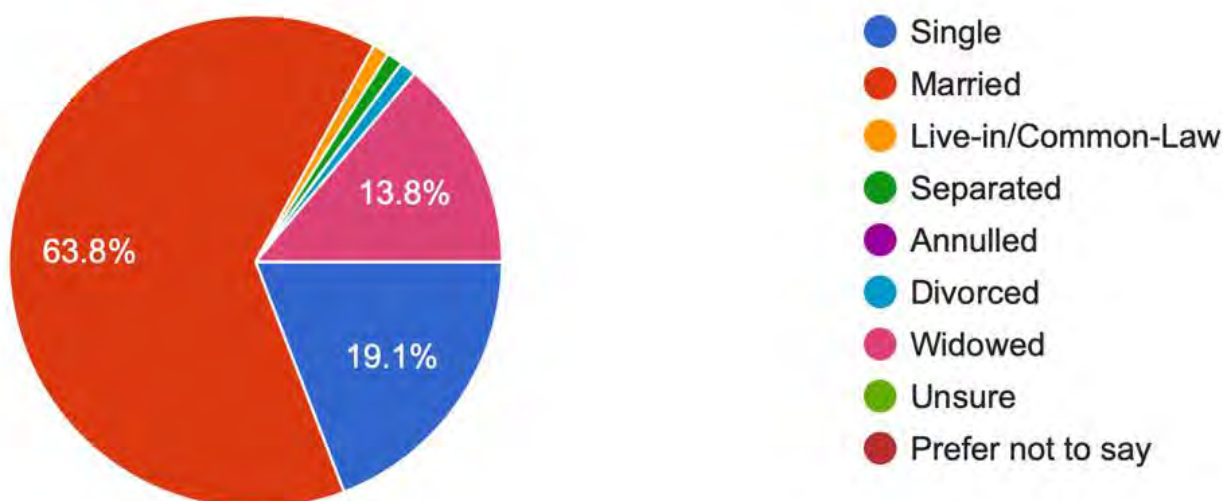
Table 2. Breakdown of Respondents by Sex per Province

Sex	Leyte		Samar	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Female	23	70%	45	78%
Male	10	30%	13	22%
Total	33	100%	58	100%

5.1.4 Marital Status

Marital status is “the status of an individual in relation to marriage”¹¹. Official classification is divided into (a) single, (b) married, (c) widowed, (d) divorced/separated, (e) common-law/live-in and (f) unknown. These were the classifications used in the last population census done in 2015 by the PSA.

Figure 6. Breakdown of Respondents by Marital Status



The most number of artisans surveyed or 63.8% were married. This is followed by the group comprised of single individuals (19.1%) and those that were already widowed (13.8%).

Artisans are not just working as weavers, makers and crafters but are also active in keeping relationships and families intact. This means working productively to be able to respond to

¹¹ <https://psa.gov.ph/content/marital-status-1>

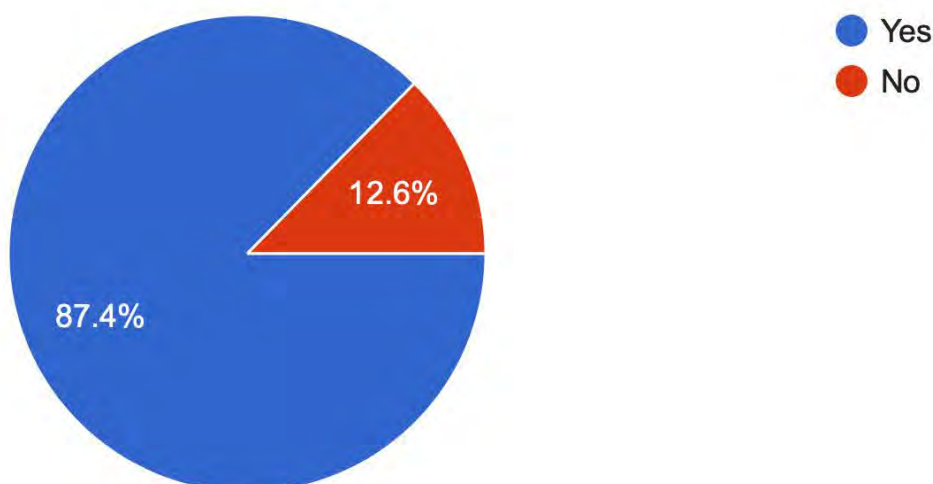
the needs of their keen in terms of health, education and other needs. Artisanal work is therefore a source of livelihood that could sustain needs of individuals.

5.1.5 Household Head

A household head is considered as the “person who manages the finances of the family or any member of the family who can give reliable information”¹².

Figure 7 below shows that most of the artisans surveyed are responsible not just for themselves but for their entire households.

Figure 7. Breakdown of Respondents by Status as Household Head



5.1.6 Family Size

Family size or average household size (AHS) is the number of individuals or family members in a family, which is a “group of persons usually living together and composed of the head and other persons related to the head by blood, marriage or adoption. It includes both the nuclear and extended family”¹³.

Table 3. Family Size of Artisans

Family Size	Number	Percentage
1-2 Members	5	5.49%
3-5 Members	30	32.97%
6-8 Members	45	49.45%
9-11 Members	8	8.79%
12 or More Members	3	3.30%
Total	91	100.00%

Most or 49.45% of the artisans surveyed belong to families whose AHS is at least 6 to 8 members. The 2020 Census of Population and Housing (2020 CPH) in the Philippines shows that the AHS is 4.4 persons per household. The data above presents that most families where the artisans belong to in Samar and Leyte have more members than the AHS.

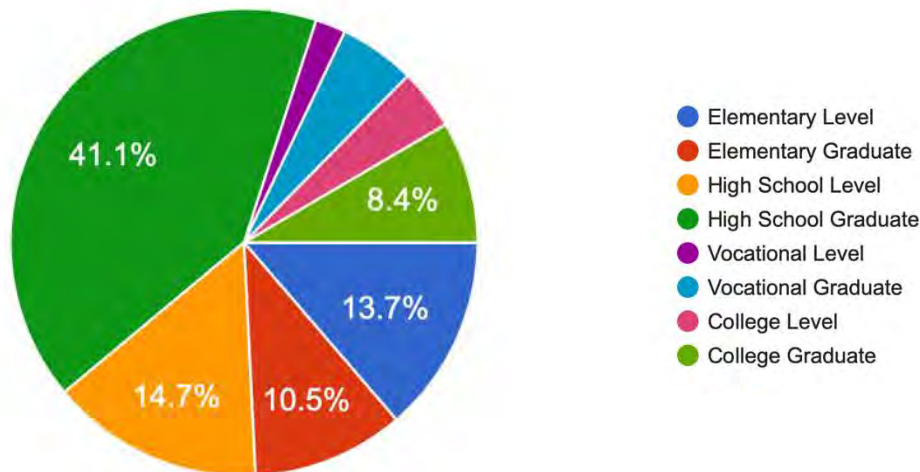
¹² <http://rso05.psa.gov.ph/statistics/fies/fies-definition-of-terms-1>

¹³ <https://psa.gov.ph/poverty-press-releases/glossary>

5.1.7 Highest Educational Attainment

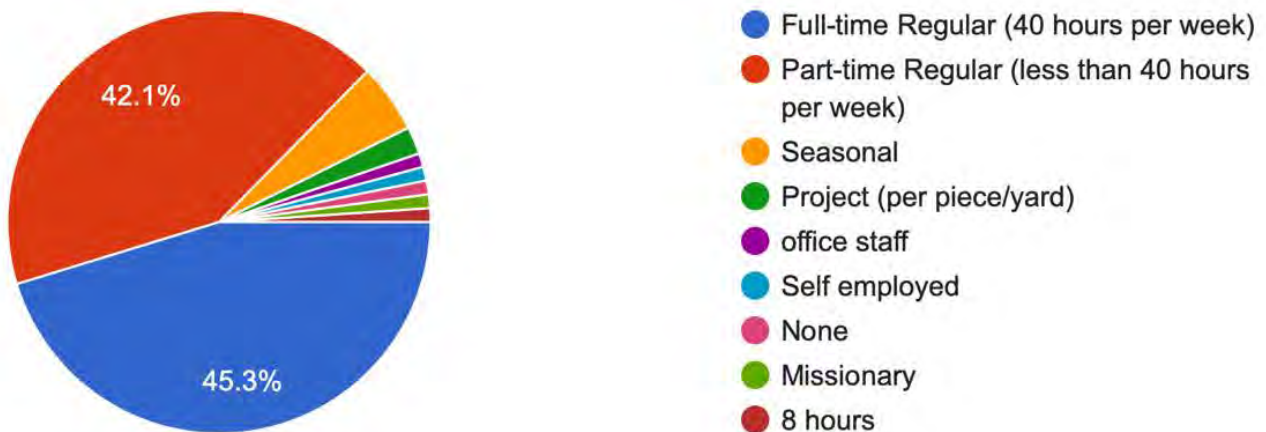
In the Philippines, 19.1% have at least finished high school as per the 2010 CPH. The percentage among the artisans surveyed is twice higher at 41.1%. Others have either entered high school and did not finish (14.7%), have graduated elementary (10.5%) and some have finished college (8.4%).

Figure 8. Breakdown of Respondents by Highest Educational Attainment



The data above presented shows that artisanal work is an option for work. This is true for the artisans, comprised of older generations, who saw the potential of the industry as a profession. As per discussion with a group of artisans in Basey, Samar, they articulated that their own children nowadays don't see artisanal work as promising. Among the factors they identified as hindrances for the younger generation to prioritize artisanal work are the following: (a) pursuing more rewarding degrees in college such as Information Technology and Engineering in urban areas; (b) lack of interest due to the lower income returns; (c) the work is literally hard and difficult to sustain; (d) the younger generation's preference for gadgets over arts and crafts and (e) the uncertainty of the industry in terms of work regularity as depicted in **Figure 9** below. Less than half or 45.3% of artisans surveyed are able to work full-time while 42.1% are only working part-time or less than 40 hours per week.

Figure 9. Breakdown of Respondents by Employment Status



5.2 Profile of the Craft Communities

5.2.1 Samar

5.2.1.1 D&E Mats and Rattan Crafts



In the Photo: Ms. Elvira Padoc

Photo © AC Dimatatac

Background

D&E Mats and Rattan Crafts was founded by Mrs. Elvira Padoc in 1983. She was a teacher by profession, who was also passionate about embroidery and sewing. It was a hobby that became a business that involved the creation of handmade embroidered bags and mats. During the day, her husband tended to the business while she taught at school. However, she remained dedicated to the craft work by being involved in quality control.

The business suffered greatly when Typhoon Haiyan ravaged the region. D&E Mats and Rattan Crafts had nothing left but a ruined van. All their raw materials and equipment were destroyed during the typhoon. Through the assistance of family, friends and various government and non-government organizations, they were able to relaunch their brand and bounce back from the effects of the typhoon.

What was instrumental in the recovery of D&E Mats and Rattan Crafts after Typhoon Haiyan was the support of DTI in Region VIII. Ms. Elvie attended product development clinics, trade fairs and shows, brand development seminar-workshops and market encounters. Through DTI's assistance and the Gender Responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation (GREAT) Women Project 2 of the PCW, they were able to join the Manila Furnishings and

Apparel Manufacturers Exchange or Manila FAME, the bi-annual trade show organized by the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, the export promotions arm of DTI. Through these events, they were not just able to sell but were also able to link up with institutional buyers.

Everything was going well for the business until the COVID-19 pandemic hit. This led them to close down for a while since lockdowns were imposed across the entire country. This was the situation for most of 2020. Thankfully, cases finally decreased towards the end of 2021 and orders have started to come in again.

Business Operations

D&E Mats and Rattan Crafts is registered under DTI as a sole proprietorship. It has assets amounting to about Php1,000,000.00 as of 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, their estimated gross sales for the year 2020 was only about Php200,000.00 for the entire year.

In terms of market reach, they have access to local pasalubong centers, other MSMEs and institutional buyers. They have sold their products in local, regional, and national trade fairs. They have an existing organization structure, continuous access to raw supply and have already been oriented on the basics of exporting. They source their raw materials from both Samar and Leyte. When asked, Ms. Elvie was not familiar with the term forest management due to lack of formal knowledge and information linking forest management and the sustainability of tikog from her experience.

Today, the company has around 4-5 female weavers/embroiderers and 3 male sewers.

Youth Engagement Challenges and Efforts

For the enterprise, youth in the area or daughters and sons of the employees have low level of interest in the craft as they see it as a low-income work. According to Ms. Elvie, youth in their locality want easy money. Some would rather travel for work to Manila to use their bodies as investment. Weaving takes time and it is difficult to earn money from it.

Weavers continue to work at home to try and influence their children to get involved in the craft. Continuously doing the craft in the young ones' presence may eventually entice them to try it. Weavers usually assign small tasks such as 'braiding' so their children can witness the processes.

5.2.1.2 Eva Marie Arts and Crafts



In the Photo: Eva Marie Adona-Yu

Photo © AC Dimatatac

Background

Ms. Eva Marie Adona-Yu is the owner and sole proprietor of Eva Marie Arts and Crafts from Basey, Samar. She founded the company in 2011. Just like other MSMEs from Samar, they suffered immensely during the typhoon and the pandemic.

Business Operations

In 2020, they produced over 1,000 pieces of bags which resulted to more than Php2,000,000.00 in sales. Their capital assets were equivalent to about Php500,000.00.

Their business already has markets in the Philippines and abroad. In 2022, they traveled to Canada to bring their handmade bags to the North American market. They sell their products online but also on the local, provincial, regional and national levels.

Youth Engagement Challenges and Efforts

Engaging the youth is a problem for their weavers because most are interested in technology and the internet and not in weaving.

5.2.1.3 Basey Association of Native Industry Growth (BANIG)



In the Photo: Anita Ogrimen, BANIG Chairperson

Photo © AC Dimatatac

Background

The Basey Association for Native Industry Growth (BANIG) was founded in 2014, a year after Typhoon Haiyan. BANIG is a federation of local weavers' associations which was organized with the help of DTI Samar.

During the founding of BANIG, they had about 1,000 members who were weavers, embroiderers, sewers and assemblers. Ms. Anita Ogrimen serves as the Chairperson of this association of associations.

Business Operations

BANIG creates embroidered bags, boxes, and other homestyle products. They are registered as an association and have around Php750,000.00 in capital assets. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they only had about Php300,000.00 in gross sales in 2020.

They have access to local, provincial and national markets. It ranges from local boutiques to department and retail stores. They also work with other MSMEs, the provincial government and through an online marketing platform.

Youth Engagement Challenges and Efforts

BANIG is mostly composed of middle-aged women. Since orders usually come in bulk, they work long days and nights to finish their deliverables. The young are in search more for opportunities outside or in the cities.

5.2.2 Leyte

5.2.2.1 Guinadiongan Weavers Association



Photo © Guinadiongan Weavers Association

Background

The Guinadiongan Weavers Association based in the Municipality of Capoocan has been in operations since 2015. They work with Anahaw leaves as raw material. The leaves are sourced from local farmers. They use it to make salakot hats and fans.

Business Operations

The association was initially funded by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and Save the Children. They had about Php270,000.00 in capital.

They sell their products at pasalubong centers across the province. Some of their products are displayed in the Barangay Hall while some are available at the local government unit (LGU).

Youth Engagement Challenges and Efforts

Among the different communities engaged for this study, according to the interview conducted, they do not have issues within the association since the younger generation work part-time and are being encouraged by the elders and their Barangay Captain to weave. The young ones in the area are also engaged in artisanal work and craftship for additional income.

The Barangay Captain is hands on in working with the women artisans in order to promote weaving. They provide incentives to those who participate in the weaving activities.

5.2.2.2 Capangihan Weavers Association



In the Photo: Association Members.

Photo © AC Dimatatac

Background

The Capangihan Weavers Association hails from Barangay Capangihan, Tolosa. For the past 7 years, the association has been engaging mother weavers to make native handicrafts such as mats, bags, wallets home decors, slippers, bayong and other materials made of tikog grass.

Business Operations

With a capital of Php200,000.00, they can support their members. Furthermore, they have accumulated assets equivalent to Php350,000.00.

They source their supply of anahaw, tikog and buri leaves from local farmers. Their products have traveled across the country. Most sell at the pasalubong centers while they also join live trade fairs and bazaars.

Youth Engagement Challenges and Efforts

For Capangihan, the youth are not interested in or are impatient in creating crafts. Some members of the association are also members of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Pogram or 4s, the conditional cash transfer program of DSWD. This sometimes led their members to just wait for their allowance rather than work as weavers.

5.2.2.3 Clair's Enterprises



In the Photo: Clarita Villamor

Photo © AC Dimatatac

Background

Clarita Villamor, known to many as Clair is a native Taclobanon. She is passionate about weaving and this motivated her to start “Clair’s Enterprises” back in the 1990s. She comes from a family of weavers. Her grandparents and parents were also weavers. They use tikog as their raw material to produce products such as mats, bags, slippers, purses and other home decor. Through the years, she has received support from DTI Leyte, Negosyo Center Tacloban, GREAT Women Project 2, Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship, CUSO International and other service providers. She was part of the pioneer batch of Kapatid Mentor Me back in 2016. She continues to weave up to this day and also involves her own family in preserving the art of weaving.

Business Operations

Clair’s Enterprises has about Php1,000,000.00 worth of assets as of 2020. They were able to sell around Php400,000.00 even in the midst of the pandemic in the same year. They source their raw materials from Tanauan and San Miguel in Leyte. They sell at the local, regional and national level through accessing pasalubong centers and participating in trade fairs.

Youth Engagement Challenges and Efforts

Engaging the youth has been difficult given the needed attention to detail of weaving and embroidery. Clair continues to try to influence her grandchildren by exposing them to the art of weaving at home.

5.2.2.4 Capoocan Weavers Association (CAPWA)



In the Photo: Association Members.

Photo © AC Dimatatac

Background

The Capoocan Weavers Association (CAPWA) was formed through the help of the LGU. They are composed of nito, pandan and bariw weaving groups. Then mayor Hon. Federico Carolino was instrumental in the process of CAPWA's formation as he really sought to promote livelihood among the women in their town, especially those who weren't involved in paid work.

At present, they have about 80 members, mostly weavers who produce bayongs, bags of different types, wallets, boxes, baskets, homeware and slippers.

Business Operations

They were very much affected by the pandemic as they usually sold their products in local and national trade fairs. However, they kept their total assets at about Php500,000.00. Some other buyers were not able to order also since they were closed too in 2020, some of them are: Balikbayan Handicrafts, Etniko Filipino and Rustans.

Youth Engagement Challenges and Efforts

Most of the members are middle-aged to senior. The difficulty in weaving using nito is a struggle for the young to stay interested in the craft. The members are always trying to involve their own children.

5.3 Community Based Forest Management

On July 19, 1995, the Philippines officially adopted the Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) as the government's overall strategy towards the management and protection of forest and forestlands. Executive Order (EO) No. 263 series of 1995 entitled as "Adopting Community-Based Forest Management as the National Strategy to Ensure the Sustainable Development of the Country's Forestlands Resources and Providing Mechanisms for its Implementation" was signed by former President Fidel V. Ramos.

As stated by Aquino & Daquio (2014), the CBFM is anchored on current and applicable policies of the Philippine government to: (1) democratize access to forests and forests resources, (2) improve the upland communities' socio-economic condition, (3) decentralize and devolve forest and forestland management, and (4) conserve biodiversity and maintain the environmental services of forests and forestlands to both on-site and off-site communities.

In accordance with EO 263 s. 1995, local communities were given the capacity to manage forest areas in coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The EO was also further strengthened through the DENR Administrative Order (DAO) No 2004-09 or the Revised Rules and Regulations for the Implementation of Executive Order 263, otherwise known as the Community-Based Forest Management Strategy.

In accordance with EO 263 s. 1995 and the DAO 2004-09, the community can take it upon themselves to manage the forest area, given that they adhere to the guidelines provided by the DENR. One of the factors to be considered is the establishment of a People's Organization (PO) within the community in which the PO will be the liaison with the government. The communication between the national government and the LGU will also depend on how large the forest area is to be managed. Given that the community will manage an area of 500 hectares or less, the PO will only need to communicate with the Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer (CENRO). The office of the CENRO was established to provide the necessary support to the local communities. This would fill the void left by the national government's inability to reach out to all communities. The requirements needed by a community to comply with to properly manage a certain forest area can be found in the DAO. The conservation and protection of the forest area ensures the availability of raw materials to be used to produce handicrafts. Moreover, the DAO also covers information regarding the conversion of any forest land for other uses. It is necessary for communities to set a regular meeting with the CENRO to train the community on the technical aspects of the CBFM.

Another technical aspect that the community must take on is forest land use planning (FLUP). It is a participatory process of allocating forests and forestlands as natural resource assets by the government under appropriate management and tenure arrangements. It aims to eventually put these assets to their best uses to attain a balance of production activities with forest protection and biodiversity conservation.

Under EO No. 318 (Promoting Sustainable Forest Management in the Philippines), LGUs are mandated to incorporate FLUPs into their comprehensive land use plans (CLUP). Since LGUs are mandated to manage the CLUP and FLUP, the community can tap into the CENRO or LGUs to have technical assistance in these areas.

5.3.1 Community Based Forest Management in Samar

Tikog is the main raw material used in making the famous mat from Samar. It is a type of reed grass that wildly grows in swampy areas or on peatlands. The coastal municipality has formed a lot of peatlands making it suitable to cultivate tikog or *Frimbistylis globulosa*. It grows abundantly in the province this has become the main source of income for many. According to the Sustainable Management of Peatland Forests in Southeast Asia, the peat is in the Dolongan area in Basey, Samar (Bureau of Soils, 1975).

Tikog grows mainly in wetlands along paddy fields and acts like a sponge because it absorbs large amounts of water in the rainy season and releases water to the ground in the dry season (Taculao, 2013). Weavers buy tikog wherever it is available, but some choose to plant their own tikog to lessen their expenses. It takes six months to one year for the tikog grass to grow to its desirable size for harvesting.

Usage of peatland areas in growing tikog entails coordination with the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau, namely the Caves, Wetlands, and Other Ecosystems Division (DENR-BMB CaWED). DENR offices monitor the utilization of certain areas that are considered as Protected Areas (PAs). Only zones identified as multiple-use areas can be accessed by communities.

Coordination in identifying the ideal location for the farming and cultivation of tikog is needed since peat soil areas are rare in the Philippines. Communities should be made aware of the basic dos and don'ts in sustainability to ensure biodiversity-friendly tikog farming. Adhering to the proper handling of peatlands mean a steady and sustainable income for communities while at the same time conserving and protecting the environment for future use.

According to Meniano (2018) there was a slight shortage of tikog supply after the devastating result of Typhoon Haiyan. The province's abundant supply of tikog was greatly interrupted when the typhoon devastated the province in 2013. Their home, their materials, and their mats were damaged. The soil where the grass wildly grew became unsuitable due to the increase in salt content (CARE, 2015).

After the typhoon, the LGU started the expansion of the tikog grass plantation in the province of Samar. For four years since 2014, the LGU already developed 30 hectares of land for cultivating tikog to address the depleting source after the disaster (Meniano, 2018). The expansion project included a partnership with the Visayas State University (VSU) and funding from the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP). VSU committed to develop a technology that will allow drying of mats that will be useful for rainy days. OPAPP's funding, on the other hand, was to support the nearby towns in learning how to propagate the grass. This is seen as a source of additional income in the province that the office believe will contribute to their efforts in deviating people from joining rebels due to poverty.

Although the weavers from Samar said they have enough supply of tikog in the area since weavers started cultivating them in their backyard. Waiting for the right time to harvest them and reach a certain height still forces them to procure raw materials from nearby Leyte province.

Aside from the challenges after the typhoon, the Sustainable Management of Peatland Forest in Southeast Asia identified some management issues that might affect the supply of the grass. As peat is somehow a rare soil type in the Philippines, there is still lack of awareness on what it is, its properties, and in properly managing it. More importantly, there is lack of national institutional framework that will guide the management of peatlands despite the presence of the CBFM.

5.3.2 Community Based Forest Management in Leyte

For the Province of Leyte and their community products, handicrafts for homestyle and wearables are reliant on raw material resources other than tikog such as abaca, coconut shells, pandan leaves, buri, bamboo and molave woods. It is important to note that Leyte has an open forest area of 52,773 hectares in which most of the trees and plants used in their handicrafts are found. Tikog is available in different towns such as Alang-alang, Tanauan, San Miguel and McArthur. While the other raw materials grow abundantly in most of the towns.

In 2017, a research study was conducted by Compendio and Bande which assessed the effectiveness of the CBFM program as a strategy on forest restoration in communities in Cienda and San-Vicente, Baybay City, Leyte. Results showed that there is a high level of awareness on environmental issues which resulted to the communities adopting rain forestation even before the CBFM was implemented in their area. Rain forestation is the method used to sustain human food production while preserving the biodiversity of terrestrial ecosystems and its important functions for humankind. The introduction of rainforest management in the region has led to the main interest of local and various environmentalists abroad.

Though, over the years, despite the continuous expansion of CBFM in Leyte, many issues continue to weigh on its implementation. First, the access of local communities to forest resources requires complex procedures relating to harvesting timber resources. In addition, there are plenty of restrictions being imposed on program officers before they are allowed to utilize these resources. Second, the institutional insufficiencies affect CBFM's overall policy implementation. The limited number of DENR staff, particularly at the field level, impedes the implementation of CBFM. The lack of appropriate capacity and necessary attitudes to provide technical assistance and to conduct regular monitoring of the implementation further aggravates the situation. And lastly, while CBFM contribution to forest management is incalculable, only a meager budget is provided for the program to be fully implemented. In fact, CBFM has only received an annual average of 5.12% out of the total forestry sector budget from 2000-2004 (Aquino & Daquio, 2014).

CBFM policies and institutional support have been identified as major concerns, but CBFM policies need to be reviewed and operational guidelines streamlined to meet local level needs, especially with regards to participant selection criteria, issuance of tenure instruments, and use of forest resources.

5.4 Craftship and Artisanal Work in Samar and Leyte

5.4.1 The 'Banig' Industry in Samar

Weaving is an act of interlacing cloths, yarns, threads, and ropes. It is a form of craftship that has become an everyday activity for the women in Basey, Samar. The province was known for producing *banig* (mats) for centuries (Amazona and Abella, 2020). Saob cave in Basey is known for where women gather to weave banigs in the morning (Go, 2020). The cool temperature inside the cave makes it conducive to keep the tikog grass easier to work with, making it soft and bendable without breaking.

Women in particular weave the colorful mats from woven dried grass. According to Ms. Elvie, of D&E Mats, it takes at least two weeks to completely dry the grass under direct sunlight. The color is added once the grass is completely dried and bleached.

Banig is known to be an affordable alternative to a bed which is widely used all around the Philippines. The prices of the mat varies depending on the design and colors. Personalized design is also an option. Ms. Elvie accepts requests were she provides a design and translates it to a mat and can have it framed. These special orders are usually used as gifts or souvenirs. Aside from mats, she also produces other items made out of woven tikog such as bags, laptop covers, purses, and house slippers. According to Ms. Elvie and Ms. Eva, a weaver herself, orders are slowly coming back and access to resources is no more an issue. The former said 70% of her employed weavers are growing the grass in their own backyard. However, since tikog grass requires a certain height to be suitable for harvest, there are times that they would need to procure tikog from Leyte. Leyte has an abundant supply of tikog considering it is the home of the Leyte Sab-a Peatland Forest and other smaller peatlands.

Although banig is widely used nationwide, the market is still facing challenges. According to the weavers, increasing the price of the mats and other items is hard especially when negotiating with private traders. The amount of effort, practice, and talent of the weavers are not compensated enough. This is one of the major reasons why the younger generation lack interest in learning the art of weaving.

The main concern of the weavers is that the lack of interest from younger generation seems to be putting in danger the continuity of banig weaving as part of their culture. One of the weavers shared that growing up, learning how to weave was a part of their daily life. She added that all women in the community knew how to weave. However, this is not the case now. The weavers are concerned with the lack of support from the LGU in addressing the dwindling market and development of the industry. Although loans are available to the business owners of tikog weavers, they are still hoping for more efforts from the LGU. According to one of the weavers, aside from the free transportation of materials, there are no other support from the LGU. Although upon interview with the LGU, they have mentioned that they have various efforts such as working with the weavers in the barangays to promote local tourism and trade fair participation. It is a matter of providing more information in accessing and availing the services and coordination with the LGU.

5.4.2 The Handicraft Industry in Leyte

The province of Leyte is a destination rich in history. It is renowned for its picturesque scenery and pristine environment. With its vast agricultural land area, various crops are grown such

as coconut, rice, banana, rice, root crops, fruits, and vegetables that serves as the main source of income in the province.

Handicraft making is also one of the livelihoods in the province. Aside from agriculture, by craft making, people can make things using only their hands or basic tools and create items that are usually decorative and have a particular use which can be sold. Traditional art forms in Leyte includes pottery in Tanauan and basket weaving in Carigara and Matalom.

Leyte is known for their handicrafts that are made of various raw materials such as abaca and pandan. From the harvested agricultural crops, several by-products can also be produced. These waste products are being transformed skillfully by craft workers to create beautiful handicrafts made of coconut shells and bamboo twigs to form wall displays, pots, lampshades, and cooking utensils.

Handicrafts for homestyles and wearables industries also include hat, bag, wallet, and basket weaving made of abaca and coconut fiber. Some weavers also use tikog.

In Leyte also, traditional craftship such as pottery and basket weaving requires some technical knowledge along with years of dedication and practice. Reyes (2018), said that in pottery making, turning the potter's wheel is just the beginning of a long and tedious process. After that, crafter has to air dry each mold, which is almost impossible in the rainy season. Then, cooks each pot by hand, a dangerous task that requires a large, fiery stove or furnace. On the other hand, weaving involves folding over strips of materials to make unique geometrical designs. But before the actual weaving, weavers had to prepare the raw materials which includes various processes. Taculao (2020) mentioned that these processes includes gathering the grass/leaves (i.e. tikog, abaca, or pandan) which is then placed to dry in the sun for 3-5 days. Farmers keep the grass from getting wet during this period. After drying, when the greens fade and the grass becomes straw or hay, the roots are cut off and sprinkled on peat to ensure continued growth of the grass in the area. Next, the grass is flattened with bamboo to make it easier to weave. The woven tikog panel can be dyed to match the pattern that acts as the base for the bag or mat. It usually takes several days for the preparation of the raw materials and another couple of days for the actual weaving.

Now that the artisans have discovered that handicrafts making are a valuable resource for income, the Philippines is considered one of the largest producers of handicrafts in the world, and Leyte is one of the contributors.

5.5 Typhoon Haiyan and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Leyte and Samar are islands that are prone to typhoons because of their proximity to the Pacific Ocean. In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan struck the region, destroying people, homes, and other forms of life and structure.

Before the typhoon, the practice of weaving, handicraft-making and pottery provided an income for the locals working in the informal creative economy. After the typhoon which claimed over 6,000 lives and left everything devastated, local crafters thought that their livelihood was dead because for a while, there were no raw materials available along with any inventory and equipment they had. All the tikog, pandan, abaca, and bamboo plants were washed away and they thought the weaving industry was really gone.

It took several months for the people and crafters to recover and be able to function with some semblance of normalcy. Help came little by little, but finding food, shelter, and materials to rebuild their houses were the priorities during that time. Two years later, many institutions stayed and created new opportunities for business, investment and local employment, but demand for local goods and services also increased, pushing up prices and creating jobs (Secret Aid Worker, 2015).

Some crafters continued creating handicrafts, while some also considered taking up a different job since during that time, they thought that no one would buy their products. Despite the challenges, passionate local weavers, potters, and artists were persistent and continued in creating handicrafts.

In 2020, the unprecedented global COVID-19 pandemic happened which heavily affected almost all the industries especially the arts and crafts industries. Subsequent lockdowns were also imposed by the Philippine government to mitigate the spread of the virus. These lockdowns which forced businesses to shut down for extended periods of time have had a devastating impact on the handicrafts sector since most of their products are considered "non-essential".

During the lockdown period, manufacturing has stopped completely. Huge unsold stock has piled up and quite a lot of orders were cancelled. And since mass gatherings were restricted, there has been no sale through exhibitions or trade fairs that also resulted to unavailability of any capital to reinvest. Most of the artisans have been out of work and lost wages. Everything was uncertain during those periods.

Countries and local governments around the world have taken a number of steps to assist workers and businesses in the face of COVID-19. During the last quarter of 2020, restrictions were slowly loosened by the Philippine government to uphold the economy of the country. Since some crafters were still unable to purchase raw materials, they are taking only small orders that can be managed.

The pandemic also demonstrated the importance of investing in innovative ways to provide digital education, e-commerce and social protection, and drives business innovation to meet rapidly changing demand (Tabuga, et al, 2020). The COVID-19 lockdowns also gave way to the digital runway, and as some new virtual habits take hold, the transition to a more digital world will be even more pronounced for those who can afford the tools and experience. Hence, government agencies and other private sectors supported the local MSMEs including the local artisans and crafters to learn more about the digital marketing, and explore different online platforms to catch up with the "new normal" and avoid being sidelined or excluded from rapidly transforming markets and supply chains. But despite the push-marketing efforts, the recovery for handicrafts is still slow since some people especially the buyers would still set aside their non-basic needs.

As the government's effort in rolling-out the vaccine continued and the restrictions being slowly lifted, the local artisans are looking forward to a better future with their income slowly going back to the pre-pandemic level or better.

Natural calamities, which include typhoons and earthquakes, as well as pandemic are just some of the challenges that could happen and is out of one's control. In a region where traditional craftship has become their main source of living, no storm could stop them from

doing their sole source of livelihood. This is an instance where the Filipino's spirit of resilience reigns (Castillejos, et al, 2014). However, resiliency does not necessarily means sustenance. Without the support from the government, organizations and the locals, traditional craftship might no longer be passed on to the younger generation.

5.6 Sustainability Initiatives

5.6.1 Social Enterprises

There were a lot of efforts in sustaining, stabilizing, and in expanding the culture of weaving in Samar. One of the earliest and known after Typhoon Haiyan was the formation of Woven PH by John Francia and Trish Lim in 2016. The social enterprise was formed after the two worked in 2014 on area development in Basey, Samar. Francia and Lim, after being able to organize a group of women weavers which they refer to as "community craft associations", provided support through product development modules that aimed to help better market the banig. Woven PH is a social enterprise that aims to ensure the fair benefits to the women weavers and uplift the industry (Woven.ph). What John and Trish highlighted as the concerns from their end was the low pricing of the hand woven banigs. They too as a social enterprise acknowledged that the banigs were worth more. In their close collaboration with the various associations they worked with in Samar, they were able to work hand-in-hand to raise the price of banig per yard. This was a huge achievement that benefited the artisans.

Another notable social enterprise that aims to support the livelihood of rural women weavers in Basey is LARA, which was established by the Provincial Government of Samar. They worked closely with the BANIG. Through programs and engagements, they worked to ensure that the members received assistance and protection (Klassen, 2019). They provided market access by bringing the banigs to as far as Manila, in established trade fairs such as ArteFino and Katutubo, events that drew in buyers on a regular basis.

CARE Australia, in their 2015 article highlighted how empowered women weavers will be able to earn more. Since 2013, CARE supported a total of 13 women's handicraft associations in Basey, Samar. One of the beneficiaries was BANIG. CARE aimed to help the associations to develop a competitive industry that is resilient to disaster. Together with BANIG, they established production areas in Basey to ensure the regular and steady supply of raw materials. In addition, they rehabilitated a display area to market and promote products and contribute to Basey's tourism industry (CARE, 2015).

5.6.2 Policy

In 2020, law makers in Samar led by the 2nd district Representative Sharee Ann Tan who was working to flourish the tikog cultivation and banig weaving in the municipal since 2014, pushed the passage of the law developing the mat weaving industry and to recognize Samar as the country's "Banig" capital (Amazona and Abella, 2020).

The House Bill 6566 or the Tikog Industry Development Act, aims to *revitalize the tikog-growing and banig-making industry in Basey*. This involves supporting the province in making the industry commercially competitive and help boost the economic condition of the people as well as to preserve the historic and cultural tradition of weaving. The House Bill includes the creation of the Tikog Research and Development Center under the Samar State University in Catbalogan City. The center will focus on conducting researches and technical

studies on development, production, management of grass, including its products. It will also be part of their mandate to develop a development roadmap for cultivating the grass and the banig-weaving. Further, the bill will provide financial assistance through capital development for banig production, weaving, trading, and skills training and more via the Banig Subsidy Fund. Most importantly, the law mandates the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and other agencies to ensure that all necessary regulations to carry out the provisions of the Act will be established.

The law, although not yet fully adopted, acknowledges the need to address the challenges faced by the tikog and banig industry in the country. However, despite the efforts in making banig products more competitive, there are still a lack of effort from the LGU and the national government in encouraging younger generation in learning the art of weaving. Although there are articles that mentions the issue, not much is written on the strategies that actually targets the concern.

Most written articles or literature are on propagation of tikog and in supporting product development of the banig. Weavers also are also aware that the sustainability and transfer of knowledge is in danger if younger generation will not gain interest in learning the craft. For Ms. Elvie, her children and grandchildren were not interested in continuing her career as a professional weaver, their only involvement to the business was trying to market the product and join her on her travels during trade fairs. She said that the attention span of younger generation is too short for them to work on a mat for days. Phone, internet, and other gadget is what distracts them from learning how to weave. Banig-weaving is a part of the culture and life-style of the people of Samar, particularly the women. Encouraging the younger generation is important in making sure that the culture stays and flourish.

In Leyte on the other hand, FFP implemented a 4-year project to support the Leyte Sab-a Peat swamp forest. The project supported extensive researchers to help develop a management framework for the protection and management of the peat.

The Peatland Bill or Senate Bill No. 522 was filed in July 2022 which was an act to conserve, protect and sustainability manage peatlands and its resources. During the 18th Congress, Senate Bill No. 2036 or the National Wetlands Conservation Act was also filed. It was supposed to be the mother law for all wetlands including peatlands as supported by former DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu. The bill was refiled in the 19th Congress as Senate Bill No. 124. The act is supposed to give care and support for the wetlands that is considered the “cradle of biodiversity”.¹⁴

5.7 The Role of the Younger Generation

There are a number of social enterprises and government initiatives that aim to develop and support the weaving industry in Samar and Leyte. However, women weavers’ main concern in relation to sustaining the art of weaving in the region was the lack of interest from younger generation. The younger generation are seeking high paying jobs and are looking forward to moving to bigger cities in other parts of the country such as Manila, Cebu and Tacloban. Ms. Elvie was specially concerned that no one from her family has the interest in inheriting their mat business. They added that even though weaving has been integrated in schools where students learn the basics of *paraglara* (weaving), it still does not pique the interest of the

¹⁴ <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2022/07/31/2199189/villar-pushes-wetland-protection-measures>

young ones. One major reason they cited was how the young see it as a low paying job. Mats are sold in very affordable prices. It can go as low as 150 pesos, she stated. With the amount of effort and time put into completing one mat or item, the price does not seem to match. According to Ms. Elvie, depending on the design, it could take at least 3 to 5 days to finish a mat. The finished products are usually sold at a low price. Most buyers are from Manila or other major cities. The president of BANIG Ms. Anita Ogrimen, in her interview with Rappler in 2015 stated that aside from the challenges brought by calamities, the private traders that buy their products at a low price would usually sell the same items at triple the price. This deprives the women weavers of what they deserve. For her, weavers should be empowered and have the confidence to be able to negotiate and market their own products.

The Philippines is the second largest producer of handicrafts in the world, most of which are baskets made from local materials. While the industry continues to make a significant contribution to the country's forex revenue (US \$ 71.9 million in 2000), many handicrafts are also sold in the local market (Arch, 2019).

Buyers are usually unaware of the complex process that handcrafted products underwent. Reyes (2018) also mentioned that it also doesn't help when trade fairs especially those held in Manila presents these products as highly sanitized and distinctive products "from the province". This is the gap between low-priced souvenirs and internationally competitive products. Seeing who makes of what we buy makes a difference.

In the country, handicrafts are being undervalued. Local weavers, potters and other crafters are afraid that this would result to lose of interest of local craftsmen in continuing the handicraft-making and eventually lessen the engagement of younger generations in the traditional craftship.

Cultural degradation is another social issue faced by the local artisans and crafters, and is endangering the transfer of knowledge to the younger generation for creating intricate handicrafts. Nowadays, youth are attracted with different forms of activities that makes them less interested in engaging in craftship.

Aside from studying, youths are also tempted on technology such as the use of social media applications and online games. Furthermore, they are also lured with the instant cash from such activities like online streaming and selling, and non-fungible token-based online video games which requires lesser time and effort in making money.

In the absence of substantial government programs, market that gives fair trade, and support in providing social empowerment to the local crafters, the sustainability of craftship may not be achieved.

In the time of pandemic, COVID-19 has caused a paradigm shift in different dynamics of way of living, education, employment, communications, and even in business operations. From labor restructuring to the introduction of telecommuting policies, the pandemic has redefined day-to-day operations.

In these unprecedented times, no one knows how long the disruption caused by the pandemic will last, or where recovery will take us. Innovation is the key to survival and success.

However, over the years, artisans and crafters have been aging along with their crafts. In Leyte, women are the ones who do the “burda” or embroidery while the males do the “lara” or weaving. Currently, most of the weavers in their area ages from 40 and older. Given these, crafters who have been in the industry for ages found it challenging to adjust to these new norms while sustaining the traditional crafts and their businesses.

In this digital age, technologies and the Internet are fundamentally changing the way people access, create, and disseminate ideas and information. The younger generations, who grows up in the digital world are well-versed in using digital media. These potential of the youths can be useful in the adaptation of the traditional craftship in the new normal and sustainability of the industry.

But at the present time, the younger generation have taken not as much interest in the continuation of the craftship industry. This is due to the fact that the internet also somehow limits their participation in weaving or traditional craftship.

Given these discoveries from the insights of the respondents from Leyte, some of the interventions or approach that the elder crafters done in encouraging the younger generations is by rewarding them and introducing the process slowly. Additionally, providing the youth a space where traditional crafters can share the cultural importance and technical skills, and the younger generation can share their views and learn with each other.

Younger generations these days are also more open and familiar with the popular culture and trends. They are more expressive and inclusive in terms of designs, colors, and concept. Furthermore, since they are the ones that are more adept in technology, exploring and keeping up with the trend is easier for them.

The digital aged has also allowed the innovative ways of marketing and promotion. Aside from the quality of the handicrafts made, technology has become useful in documenting and presenting the stories behind how the product has been made. This also adds value and increase the product lines. These can be the opportunities where the younger generation can be engaged in order sustain the craftship in the province.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

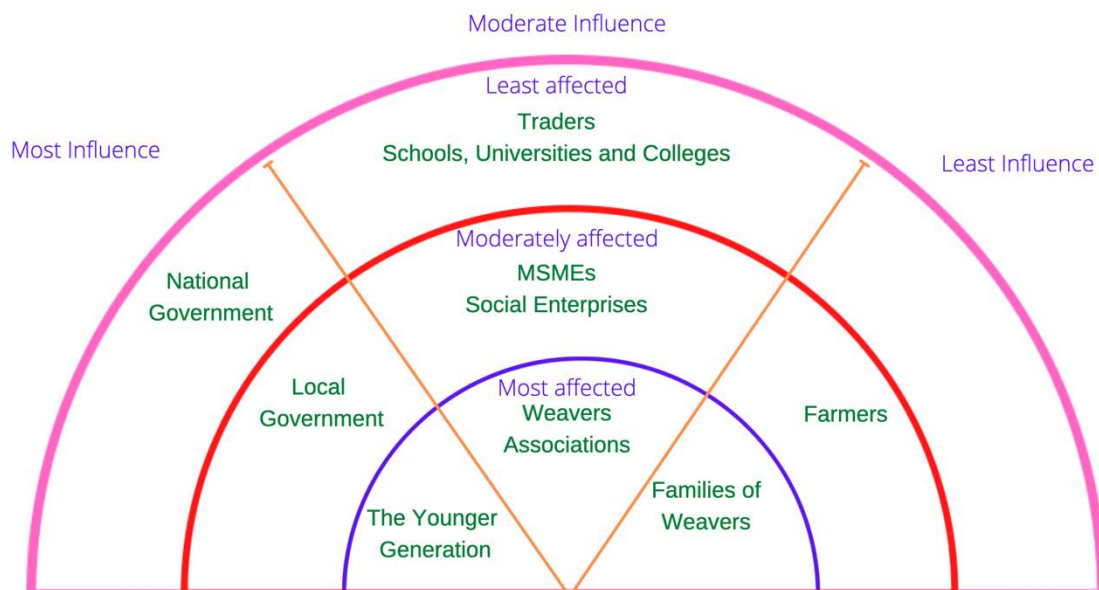
6.1 Conclusion

The younger generation is the key to the sustainability of craftship and artisanal work in Samar and Leyte, Eastern Visayas, Philippines.

The Eastern Visayas region is continuously under threat from disasters such as typhoons, flashfloods, and earthquakes because of the worsening climate emergency. Furthermore, the global economic crisis and the Russian invasion of Ukraine are also affecting trade and economics not just on the international and national levels but also on the local level. The current state of artisans and weavers in Samar and Leyte is influenced by these external factors and even by internal realities they need to face daily.

Every stakeholder within the creative arts and crafts industry has a role to play in its survival and development. **Figure 10** presents the various levels of influences of each key player. The government remains to be the most influential as they have resources available at their perusal to support artisans, both the old and the young. The weavers, their associations and cooperatives are the most affected in the industry. But they are not totally paralyzed. They have moderate influence since they are already organized and can certainly come together to express themselves, voice out their needs and ask for assistance. Other enterprises as well as traders also have moderate influence. They are not the most affected as they are not usually based in the region. However, they are in the position to influence the most influential. Also included in the rainbow diagram are the Schools, Universities and Colleges who have direct access to students in-school. They are moderately influential since they can shape the future of the industry as they hone and train potential leaders. The most affected yet least influential are the families of the weavers. They usually are the source of motivation and recipient of economic benefits but are not able to contribute to the discussion. The farmers producing the raw materials are moderately affected since if there is no demand from the market, no supply is expected. Lastly, the most influential and most affected are the younger generation as they will be the ones to inherit the future. Therefore, the sustainability of craftship and artisanal work is in their hands.

Figure 10. Rainbow Diagram for the Creative Arts and Crafts Industry in Eastern Visayas



6.2 Recommendations

This scoping research proposal was intended to provide insights on the roles and responsibilities of the younger generation in ensuring the sustainability of craftship and artisanal work in Samar and Leyte. However, the data collected from this research has provided not just insights and thoughts for reflection but also action points that can be realized.

Below are the specific recommendations of this study to the key players within the industry:

6.2.1 For the Government

6.2.1.1 *On policy and regulations*

The creation of the implementing rules and regulations of the recently passed Philippine Creative Industries Act would help in providing support to all the stakeholders across the arts and crafts value chain. The enhanced implementation of other existing laws such as Republic Act (RA) 10644 or “An Act Promoting Job Generation and Inclusive Growth Through the Development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises”, otherwise known as the “Go Negosyo Act” and RA 11293 or the Philippine Innovation Act would create ripples in the communities.

Given the availability of national laws that govern creativity, the way forward for policy and regulations is the localization of these existing laws. Hopefully, the Mandanas ruling which is about full realization of RA 7160 or the Local Government Code would help in making services and programs, rules and regulations more context-based and understandable on the community level. The inclusion of the youth, the younger generation as target audience would greatly influence increased involvement on their part.

6.2.1.2 *On services and programs*

Increased awareness about services and programs would help facilitate improved access to current ongoing and available services and programs. There are enough resources that can assist artisans. Information dissemination can help hasten the lack of interest among the younger generation.

6.2.2 For Social Enterprises, Traders and Other Businesses

6.2.2.1 *On support for artisans, weavers, crafters, makers, farmers*

Continuity of collaboration would be beneficial for all. Players across the value chain need each other to succeed. Transparency and accountability among the stakeholders could help build trust and strengthen relationships between the micro and macro players. These principles can also guide the younger generation in learning ethical practices that they can follow and adhere to.

6.2.2.2 *On product development and upgrading and market access*

In order to increase value within the industry, the value of products and services that are offered should be continuously developed and upgraded. Through this, demand within the

industry can potentially increase which is equivalent to faster movement of goods. The creation of demand can influence increase in sales and income. A stable industry can be a good motivation for the younger generation to choose to work as artisans or as players within the industry.

6.2.3 For the Artisans, Weavers, Crafters, Makers

6.2.3.1 *On community organizing and collaboration*

Everything starts at home. Artisans can be more pro-active in promoting consciousness about the relevance of craftship and artisanal work for future generations to come within their own households, families and primary communities.

Creation of peer support groups within associations and cooperatives may also help the artisans discuss among themselves what strategies they can use separately and together to reach out to the young in their areas. Community-based collaborative efforts may be a powerful approach.

6.2.4 For Scholars and Other Researchers

6.2.4.1 *On the conduct of future researches*

The data gathered from this research can further be analyzed by other researchers to provide more context to the findings but also for other researches related or unrelated to the subject matter discussed herewith.

More studies about the participation of the youth in creative arts and crafts and even in other industries can help identify best practices in youth organizing. Most of the younger generation now belong to the sub-group they refer to as “Gen Z” or those who are referred to as late millennials. Further research can provide better understanding about their perceptions and insights regarding arts and crafts and their role in sustaining efforts to support it.

6.2.5 For Other Enablers and Implementers

6.2.5.1 *On future programs and services*

Conceptualization about new programs and services that will be implemented should take into consideration the need to involve the youth as participants and partners in development. More than targeting them as audience, inviting them to the table as co-decision makers and planners can boost their confidence and trust in themselves, that they too can make a difference in culture and society through their contributions.

The younger generation have so much knowledge and skills to share. Future programs and services can investigate sustainability and development efforts that can protect and preserve craftship and artisanal work in Samar and Leyte that can be led by the youth or facilitated with the involvement of the youth.

Below are the specific recommendations of this study to the key players tapped for this study:

6.2.6 For the Eastern Visayas State University, Visayas State University and other schools, colleges and universities and training institutions and LGUs

6.2.6.1 *On knowledge dissemination*

The incorporation of awareness raising and knowledge building on issues related to craftship and artisanal work in the region is vital to be included in curriculums or any capacity building activities that will be developed.

Advocacy for a higher degree on artisanal work and craftship can influence the young to partake in traditional practices and contribute to the preservation of culture. Moreover, integration of environmental conservation in any given course should be a priority.

6.2.6.2 *On training of teachers and trainers*

Teachers and other knowledge contributors should be provided more technical proficiency through the support of DENR and its bureaus on how CBFM and artisanal work can be connected and linked.

6.2.6.3 *On advocacy and consciousness raising*

Institutions can serve as the influencers in creating more consciousness about the importance of culture and the environment. Campaigns that can be coordinated with DENR and the LGUs can strengthen the movement of supporters.

Emphasize link of craft production with environmental conservation through the implementation and awareness about CBFM and its importance to craft communities.

6.2.7 For the women-led enterprises

6.2.7.1 *On CBFM*

All should be provided an orientation about CBFM. It should provide clear explanation of how it impacts their businesses. Clear coordination with DENR and not just the economic agencies involved across the production value chain of handicrafts.

6.2.7.2 *On Business Operations*

The following enterprises need support in the following aspects of their business:

- a. D&E Mats and Rattan Crafts – product development, upgrading, digital marketing, correspondence, digital literacy, youth engagement and training
- b. Eva Marie Arts and Crafts - digital marketing, youth engagement and training
- c. Basey Association for Native Industry Growth (BANIG) - organizational development, marketing, digital literacy, product enhancement, youth engagement, networking and communications
- d. Basiao Native Weavers Association (BANWA) – organizational development, marketing, digital literacy, financial literacy, inventory, youth engagement
- e. Guinadongan Weavers Association – digital and financial literacy, organization development, youth engagement, leadership and management

- f. Capangihan Weavers Association – digital and financial literacy, organization development, youth engagement, leadership and management
- g. Clair’s Enterprises – digital literacy, youth engagement, coaching and mentoring
- h. Lolo Bobby Handicrafts – digital marketing, youth engagement
- i. Capoocan Weavers Association – product development, digital marketing, youth engagement, leadership and management, financial literacy
- j. Sto Nino de Plaridel Parish Multipurpose Cooperative – product development, digital marketing, youth engagement, consolidation

6.2.8 For potential UK collaborators

Create connections with entrepreneurs in the UK instead of development workers. Understanding the vision of the communities is one thing but understanding why there is a need to grow, develop and earn is another important aspect of it.

Engagement of craft experts to link products produced in Samar and Leyte to markets.

Upon consultation with UK collaborators, replication of volunteering models in the UK (VSO ICS and Professional Volunteering) can create partnerships. Criteria for engagement can be set in order to find those who fit in the communities.

6.2.9 For Forest Foundation Philippines and the British Council

6.2.9.1 *On knowledge dissemination and advocacy*

Staging of sharing sessions not just virtually but also on-ground where the youth, the communities, the stakeholders are would serve as training ground for better understanding about CBFM, craftship and artisanal work and the connection between craft communities and the environment.

6.2.9.2 *On continuity and sustainability*

Conversations with decision-makers such as LGUs, national government agencies, NGOs and Civil society regarding the results of the study can create deeper involvement and build consciousness about the findings of this research.

Funding support to implementation of youth engagement activities that will tackle CBFM and artisanal work integrating digital literacy to ensure interest of the younger generation. Provide hybrid opportunities to ensure engagement even of hard to reach communities.

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Annex 1. Artisan Profile Form

Artisan Profile Form

Good day and thank you for being here!

We have secured support from the British Council's Crafting Futures Program for the conduct of a Scoping Research entitled "NEXT IN LINE: ANALYZING THE ROLE OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION IN ENSURING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF CRAFTSHIP AND ARTISANAL WORK IN SAMAR AND LEYTE, EASTERN VISAYAS, PHILIPPINES".

In view of the above, we are conducting this survey to gather basic information about artisans, weavers, crafters and makers from the entire Eastern Visayas Region.

Thank you and hope you can participate in this survey!

Respectfully yours,

Carmen Roceli M. Lopez
Lead Researcher

*** Required**

Part I - Personal Information

1. Name of Artisan *

[First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name]

2. Nickname *

3. Age *

4. Birthdate

Example: January 7, 2019

5. Sex *

Mark only one oval.

- Female
- Male
- Intersex
- Other

6. Civil Status

Mark only one oval.

- Single
- Married
- Live-in/Common-Law
- Separated
- Annulled
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Unsure
- Prefer not to say

7. Are you the "head of household"? *

Head of household refers to the primary person who provides for a family.

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

8. How many people are in your household including yourself?

9. Religion *

Mark only one oval.

- Roman Catholic
- Protestant
- Islam
- Buddhism
- Born Again Christian
- Iglesia ni Cristo
- Aglipay
- Jehova's Witness
- Seventh Day Adventist
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- Judaism
- Tribal Religion
- Other Christian Denomination
- Atheism
- Prefer Not to Say

10. Highest Educational Attainment *

Mark only one oval.

- Elementary Level
- Elementary Graduate
- High School Level
- High School Graduate
- Vocational Level
- Vocational Graduate
- College Level
- College Graduate
- Masters
- Doctoral
- Unsure
- Never been to school

12. Current Location/Address *
[Number/Building/Street-Barangay-Municipality/City-Province, Region]

13. Contact/Mobile Number [if available]
[(Country code)(Area Code)(Number)(ie, 639171234567)]

14. Email Address [if available]

15. Facebook Account [if available]

16. Instagram Account [if available]

17. TikTok Account [if available]

18. Are you available on the following messaging applications? [Check all that apply]

Check all that apply.

- Messenger
- Viber
- WhatsApp
- Telegram
- Skype
- Discord
- Signal
- iMessage
- Other: _____

19. Do you belong to any sector? [Check (✓) all that apply] *

Check all that apply.

- Indigenous People
- Senior (60 years old and above)
- Person with Disability (PWD)/ Differently abled
- 4Ps
- None
- Other: _____

Part II - Enterprise Information or Affiliation

20. Organization/Association/Affiliation *

21. Job/Task/Role *

22. Employment Status *

Mark only one oval.

- Full-time Regular (40 hours per week)
- Part-time Regular (less than 40 hours per week)
- Seasonal
- Project (per piece/yard)
- Other: _____

23. How many hours per day do you work? *

24. How many days per week do you work? *

25. How many weeks per month do you work? *

Part III - Skills Inventory

Check all that apply

26. What are your skills?

Novice - new to job; knows little or nothing; Competent - can perform following basic standards; Experienced - can adjust to unique situations; Master - can create/invent new ways to do job, can teach others.

Check all that apply.

	Novice (New)	Competent (Basic)	Experienced (Advanced)	Master (Expert)	Don't Know this Skill/Does Not Appl
Weaving (Ticog, Pandán, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weaving (Handloom,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Upright)

**Weaving
(Handloom,
Backstrap)** **Embroidery (Buri)** **Embroidery** **Sewing (Hand-
stitching)** **Sewing (Machine)** **Design** **Beading** **Patternmaking** **Farming/Harvesting** **Scraping** **Flattening** **Washing** **Drying** **Knotting** **Warping** **Bobbing** **Suksok/Pili** **Dyeing (Natural)** **Dyeing (Artificial)** **Packaging** **Selling** **Record Keeping** **Facebook Posting**

Other Social Media Posting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email Writing and Replying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile Texting and Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cooking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food Processing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food Preservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Photography	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Videography	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fishing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part IV - Consent

27. I agree to the HerStore Asia and the British Council gathering data, photographing and/or recording me and give permission to the HerStore Asia and the British Council to use any material in the data and photographs and/or recordings where the copyright or any other rights are owned by me

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

28. I agree that the HerStore Asia and the British Council can use, free of charge, the data, photographs and/or recordings made of me, in their original format or edited, adapted or altered, processed and analyzed, for promotional materials and for any programmes, publications, websites, electronic publications and social media services worldwide produced by or on behalf of the HerStore Asia and the British Council

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

29. I agree that the HerStore Asia and the British Council can pass the processed data, photographs and/or recordings of me, and my name, to external press and media agencies, publishers and broadcasters, and to partners and other third parties which the HerStore Asia and the British Council works with, anywhere in the world, for these purposes.

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

30. I have read this form, understood its contents and consent to the processing of my personal data.

(Please Enter Your Full Name Below)

Annex 2. Photos

Meetings, Interviews, FGDs





