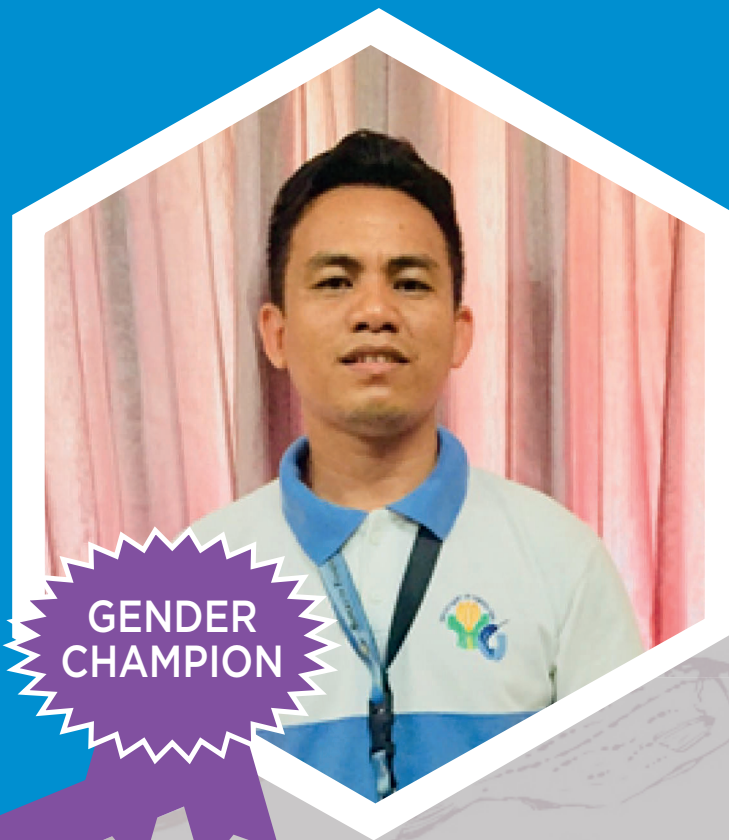


Aquaculturist City Fishery Office,
BFAR Regional Office XII, General Santos City

MR. ROEL C. MARABULAS

Women's Ally and Unrelenting Voice

“It’s better to see men and women working equally with no gender bias, and with equal access to resources. Women’s voice must be clearly heard, their rights freely exercised, and their needs equally and adequately supplied.”



**MEN AT THE FRONTLINE
FOR GENDER EQUITY**

Mr. Roel Marabulas is an Aquaculturist of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) under the City Fishery Office of General Santos City. His line of work involves helping fisherfolk with technical know-how on fish farming. The trainings that he organized enabled him to work with fishers in General Santos City at a grassroots level. Coming from a family whose sole income came from fishing as well, he considers the experience he gets out of his work to be humbling since he gets to help other fishers.

Mr. Marabulas also conducts trainings on topics such as fishery laws, Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing, and the preservation, protection, and rehabilitation of fisheries resources. These trainings often have more female audiences since they are the ones who are left at home when husbands are out at sea to fish. This observation made him realize and appreciate more the important roles and responsibilities that women have in the fisheries sector. This was to become a turning point for advocating the integration and mainstreaming of gender equity and women empowerment in all the projects and activities that he was handling. For him, inclusive fisheries management is one to push for, to embrace and advocate.

Being a male doesn't in any way pose as an obstacle for Mr. Marabulas to engender fisheries, especially in the capacity building activities that he conducts. It even works favorably because it gives the lens of both men and women in the fisheries value chain. He integrates and mainstreams the roles of women and men in the protection, preservation and rehabilitation of fishery resources in the communities. He shares that it is important to educate everyone about these key roles of women and men in the fishing communities because the industry will not fully thrive without them as partners in sustainable fisheries.

Aside from the trainings he holds, he tries his best to ensure that women are included in activities such as mangrove rehabilitation, policy making, and gender sensitive livelihood programs of BFAR. He shares that he has personally experienced women being discriminated in the workplace where they were verbally abused, given lower salaries, or merely confined to their reproductive roles. He takes it as a moral responsibility to look after women and empower them to be at their best versions. According to him, *"Women are indispensable in the fisheries sector; they must be given equal treatment, rights, benefits, obligations, and opportunities."*

The steps he incorporates with his work to attain gender mainstreaming in fisheries include steadfast community organizing, conducting GAD orientations and trainings, and creating provisions on gender sensitive livelihood projects.



Coastal Clean-up Drive during Earth Day on April 22, 2019.



Women deputized as Bantay Dagat during the Fishery Law Enforcement Training in General Santos City.