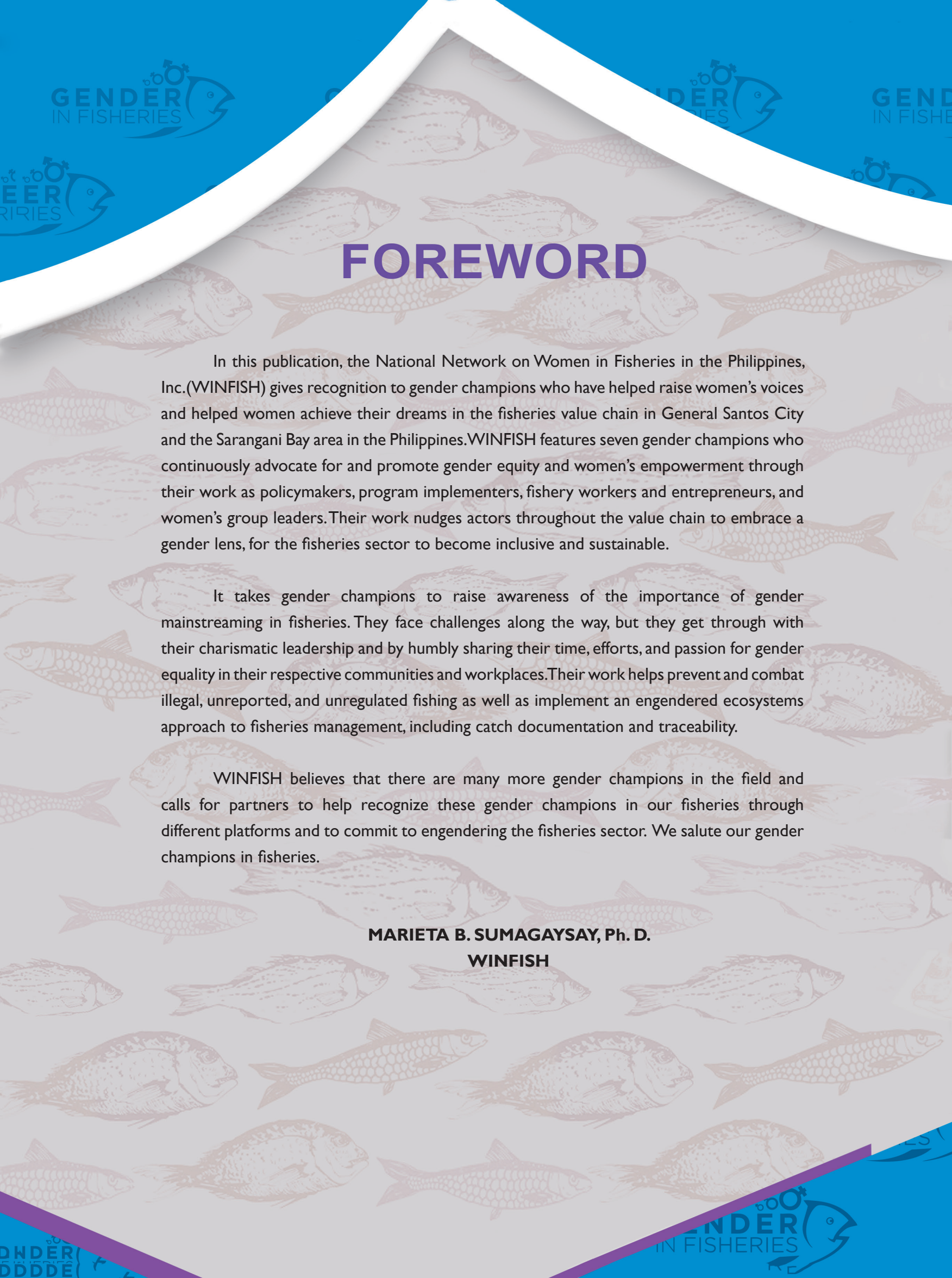




WINFISH takes action to raise awareness on gender equity and women's empowerment in fisheries by addressing observed inequalities that impede the full engagement of women towards the attainment of inclusive and sustainable fisheries management.

GENDER CHAMPIONS *in* FISHERIES





FOREWORD

In this publication, the National Network on Women in Fisheries in the Philippines, Inc.(WINFISH) gives recognition to gender champions who have helped raise women's voices and helped women achieve their dreams in the fisheries value chain in General Santos City and the Sarangani Bay area in the Philippines.WINFISH features seven gender champions who continuously advocate for and promote gender equity and women's empowerment through their work as policymakers, program implementers, fishery workers and entrepreneurs, and women's group leaders.Their work nudges actors throughout the value chain to embrace a gender lens, for the fisheries sector to become inclusive and sustainable.

It takes gender champions to raise awareness of the importance of gender mainstreaming in fisheries.They face challenges along the way, but they get through with their charismatic leadership and by humbly sharing their time, efforts, and passion for gender equality in their respective communities and workplaces.Their work helps prevent and combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing as well as implement an engendered ecosystems approach to fisheries management, including catch documentation and traceability.

WINFISH believes that there are many more gender champions in the field and calls for partners to help recognize these gender champions in our fisheries through different platforms and to commit to engendering the fisheries sector. We salute our gender champions in fisheries.

MARIETA B. SUMAGAYSAY, Ph. D.

WINFISH



WINFISH works to COMBAT ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED, UNREGULATED (IUU) FISHING... PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT through WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUITY

WINFISH takes action to raise awareness on gender equity and women's empowerment in fisheries, by addressing observed inequalities that impede the full engagement of women and working towards inclusive and sustainable fisheries management.

1 LEADING, LINKAGING AND PARTNERSHIPS

- **Establishment of a gender network** composed of tuna value chain players and enablers representing academe, government agencies, local government units, and non-government organizations.
- **Creation of a gender online platform** linked to four social media websites of partner institutions for wider networking space.
- **Forging of partnership agreements with local institutions such as** the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Region XII, and the Mindanao State University (MSU)-GenSan.

2 TRAINING AND CAPABILITY-BUILDING

- **Development of a module** on Gendered Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) and electronic Catch Documentation and Traceability (eCDT), a handbook for Facilitators and implementers and stakeholders.
- **Conduct of Orientation sessions on engendering EAFM & eCDT** for tuna value chain players and enablers, as well as for facilitators on engendering EAFM and eCDT plans, programs and activities.

3 DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

- **Engagement of identified gender champions** who contribute to the promotion of gender equity and women empowerment in fisheries.
- **Sharing of stories on women's journey towards gender empowerment** in online platforms and multimedia.
- **Development and dissemination of gender advocacy materials** (e.g., comics, videos, brochures, flyers, magazine, message Tshirts, posters) to effectively communicate gendered EAFM and eCDT.
- **Documentation of success stories in the learning site**, including best practices in promoting gender equity and women empowerment in fisheries management.

4 GENDER-RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE

- **Development of criteria to check the gender-responsiveness of existing policies and legal documents** on fisheries.
- **Drafting of gendered legal instruments:** proposed amendments for the inclusion of fisheries in the Gender and Development Code, and the inclusion of gender in the Fisheries Code of General Santos City.
- **Development of gender responsive Monitoring and Evaluation tools** to capture progress and outcomes of the gender interventions.

Councilor, General Santos City
Vice-Chairperson, Committee on Gender Equality, Women,
Family and Children's Welfare and Population

MS. SHANDEE THERESA O. LLIDO-PESTAÑO

A Public Servant for Women's Cause

“Health and safety in the workplace cannot be compromised. Women themselves have to realize that they have rights, needs and desires as men do... I will push for local legislation that will ensure that each man and woman feels important in the fishing sector”

**GENDER
CHAMPION**

**GENDER-RESPONSIVE
LEGISLATION EMPOWERS
WOMEN FISHERS**

“As a woman, a mother, a legislator, and a member of the committee on gender, I made it my personal advocacy to help those disadvantaged and the marginalized, the sectors who are in most need of protection here in General Santos...”, said Hon. Shandee Theresa O. Llido-Pestaño when she presented the initiatives and efforts made by the Sangguniang Panlungsod (SP) in relation to the empowerment and advancement of women's rights and gender equality in the city.

Ms. Pestaño was elected as City Councilor of General Santos City in 2013 and is currently on her last term of office after having been re-elected during the 2016 and 2019 elections. Until recently, she was the Chairperson of the Committee on Gender Equality, Women, Family and Children's Welfare, and Population, a position she held in the SP for five years.

At an early age, she realized that gender and economic inequality predominantly exist in society. Growing up, she personally knew women who had no or less opportunities to pursue higher education because of gender biases and lack of economic resources.. These realities left an impact on her and she vowed to do the best that she can to alleviate women's struggles.

Now that she takes the role of being a government official, she highlights that the administration should be at the forefront in practicing inclusive governance where every sector has a voice in the making of plans and programs. She has authored/co-authored around 14 local ordinances that highlight and address the plight of men, women and/or children.

To localize the Solo Parents' Welfare Act 2000 (RA 8977), Ms. Pestaño authored the Solo Parent Ordinance of General Santos City which established Solo Parents Desks at the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO). These desks help extend comprehensive development and welfare programs for solo parents and their children.

Ms. Pestaño likewise lobbied for the creation of Barangay Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Desks through the enactment of the Gender and Development (GAD) Code. The local GAD ordinance provides legal basis for the creation of support services for victims of gender violence and their families so that they may cope with the traumas that they may have experienced. In 2017, there were 300 cases filed at the different barangay desks and the number dropped to 170 in 2018.

Another ordinance that Ms. Pestaño authored was the Anti-Discrimination Ordinance, a strategic entry-point for scholarships, health benefits, and livelihood assistance for women in the fisheries value chain and their respective families.

Ms. Pestaño resolves to collaborate with different committees in the SP to come up with programs and policies that will help women in the fisheries value chain. To be able to provide livelihood assistance, she plans to push for a strategy such that women will have assured slots for financing through the city's cooperative funds. Moreover, to spread and raise awareness about the plight of the women fishers, she will propose that the ongoing Mayor's Lecture Series shall include a topic on women empowerment in the fisheries sector.

Being a woman in a high government position is a recognition of women's capacity and reflects the breaking of the glass ceiling phenomenon, particularly in crafting quality legislations and in influencing policy directions. Ms. Pestaño defines what it means to be a public servant ---one who pours her heart into the work she's doing in order to provide a better future not only for women but for all of her constituents.



City Councilor Pestaño with other city councilors during the Mayor's Lecture Series held in General Santos City.



City Councilor Pestaño with centenarians in General Santos City.

“I believe in the capability of each individual regardless of gender but often times, women’s capabilities are limited merely because they are women. I want to end this stigma.”

SETTING DIRECTIONS TO EMPOWER WOMEN FISHERS



**GENDER
CHAMPION**

Senior Aquaculturist
Gender and Development Coordinator, BFAR Regional Office XII

MS. MERCY M. TOMO

A Prime Mover in Engendering Fisheries

Ms. Mercy Tomo has been working in the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) for the past 40 years and is currently the GAD Coordinator of the office. She works closely with women fishers in General Santos City and has observed that women are generally active in fisheries post-harvest and processing. Hence, she makes sure that the agency holds an ample amount of trainings that focus on fisheries post-harvest and processing activities such as deboning, canning, smoking, and drying of fish. Ms. Tomo would initiate and lead in the organization of events and trade fairs in the region where the women fishers get extra income out of vending the value-added products that they produce as a result of the trainings.

She shares that women fishers in General Santos are also mothers who need to attend to their family’s needs aside from supporting their husbands in looking for income. Providing women with trainings that can result to long-term livelihood opportunities can empower them since they will have their own salary. Ms. Tomo believes that if only everyone is provided with enough resources and opportunity, then they will be more than capable to do the job that is assigned to them.

Despite the work that she has done in reaching out to women fishers, she admits that there is still a long way to go to end the discrimination experienced by women. At present, there are still existing stigmas that limit an individual's capabilities according to his or her gender. Despite various efforts to put an end to such stigma, she believes that education must be intensified to change people's outlooks and build respect for others regardless of their gender.

Ms. Tomo emphasizes that the community needs to work with the government to be able to attain their goals on gender equality and women empowerment. Officials serve solely as symbols in the community but the catalysts for change are always the people. The culture, tradition, and values within the community have to be re-engineered to be able to stop and eliminate the mentality that people's capacity relies on their gender.

Guided by the principles of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Ms. Tomo will champion the creation of a community where fisheries and aquatic resources are being protected by both value chain players and enablers. More than this, she believes that the best kind of community to have is a community that values and protects the people's rights and well-being regardless of their gender.



Mrs. Mercy Tomo of BFAR XII and LGU Personnel of Lake Sebu South Cotabato dispersed tilapia fingerlings during Farmers and Fisherfolks Month.



Mrs. Mercy Tomo provided assistance during the workshop on Benchmarking and Best Practices for Tilapia Grow-out.

The Society of Oblates of Notre Dame;
Executive Director, OND-HESED Foundation;
Founder, Apostles of the Sea, General Santos City

SR. SUSAN O. BOLANIO, OND

An Unflinching Community Organizer

**WOMEN CAPACITATING
MORE WOMEN TO EARN
AND MAKE DECISIONS**



***“Any misfortune that befalls the fisher-
husband will always burden the wife, so I
link women to support agencies and teach
them self-help initiatives. Women ... free
yourselves. Earn your own incomes and
develop your capacities so that you can
participate in decision-making.”***

In 2011, news about detained and dead fishers from Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Russia, and Taiwan erupted in the papers and television. At that time, Sr. Susan O. Bolanio was already with HESED FOUNDATION OBLATES OF NOTRE DAME (OND-HESED Foundation) and has organized the Apostles of the Sea, a church-based organization that is dedicated to alleviating the struggles of fisherfolks in the Philippines.

When this and similar cases of human trafficking intensified, Sr. Bolanio's organization received women and listened to their stories about their husbands being caught in Indonesian waters and held captive by authorities for lack of proper documentation. This pushed the organization to work for the return of captive fishers and consequently initiated measures to empower fishers' wives. With Sr. Bolanio's leadership, the organization assisted 483 repatriates since its establishment.

Sr. Bolanio recognizes that wives of fishers experience the greater burden when misfortunes happen to their husbands. Aside from being left behind to take care of the children, women have to find means to compensate for the loss of their husbands' livelihood which they previously depended on. Sr. Bolanio finds it necessary that women should have their own source of income to defray household expenses. She acknowledges that if women earn their own incomes, they get to have a voice when participating in the decision making at the community and at home. The wives then become more confident in addressing family concerns such as food, health, education, and upbringing of children.

The Self-Help Groups (SHeGs) that Sr Bolanio organized facilitated constant discussions about the well-being of fisherfolks and address issues such as forced labor and human trafficking. These groups also help promote the welfare and basic rights of fishers aboard commercial fishing vessels as stipulated in the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Department Order 156-16. The SHeGs, together with OND HESED, assist affected women through direct communication with their captive husbands and facilitate transmission of necessary documents for their husbands' immediate repatriation.

In addition, SHeGs promote discussions on marine conservation and other environmental concerns. The group teams up with national agencies like BFAR to provide information about mangrove restoration and other means of conserving the marine environment. They also collaborate with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to provide advice to women on how they can launch their own enterprise. By helping women get access to information and opportunities, a Sr. Bolanio helps increase women's confidence



Sr. Susan Bolanio, OND and the Oblates of Notre Dame HESED Foundation assisted repatriated fishers through provision of livelihood trainings.



thereby increasing their chances to achieve a better life for their selves, family and community.

Through OND-HESED, Sr. Bolanio will continue to advocate the implementation of DOLE DO 156-16 in order to ensure better working conditions for fishers and subsequently protect their families. Currently, there are 25 SHeGs in General Santos. Sr. Bolanio hopes that in the future they can establish more SHeGs in the city to continue providing fishers' wives with literacy and entrepreneurial programs and ultimately empower these women.

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."



**GENDER
CHAMPION**

**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.

“Women should earn their own incomes. We must strive to become business owners, not just salesladies. In the community, let us report illegal fishing practices. We should not be afraid.”

**WOMEN WHO SAVE
THE OCEANS, SAVE THE
FUTURE**



Former Bantay Dagat, Fish Vendor
and Member, Alliance of Tuna Handliners
Brgy. Ladol, Alabel, Sarangani Province

MS. HILDEGRACIA O. DE LA CRUZ

A Fearless Fisheries Steward

It's just six o'clock in the morning and people already flock the area. Hilde is there in the crowd wearing her ten-peso apron that she got from the local *ukay-ukay*. With her are a set of knives that have been carefully sharpened in the *bairan*, a chopping board, and a plastic fan to keep her cool throughout the day. She vends fish in one of the makeshift stalls along the beach of Brgy. Ladol.

Hilde and her husband raised their family with incomes derived from fishing until her husband met two accidents at sea that almost cost him his life. He decided to go to Manila to work in a construction firm. It was then that Hilde realized that it is essential for wives to have their own incomes to support their families especially in situations such as hers. Hilde remained in Alabel and continued to sell fish for Nelson, a supplier who provides 12 boxes of fish for Hilde to sell within three days, after which, she is paid 500 pesos.

Hilde is a member of the Alliance for Tuna Handliners (ATH). Once, male-dominated, ATH now includes wives of tuna fishers who usually sell the fish caught by their husbands. At ATH, women members are given the opportunity to highlight their concerns. Hilde is one dedicated member who ensures that concerns raised are provided with concrete actions. She hopes that in the future, she would be able to come up with a project where her fellow women fishers can have their own income and

not just rely on their husbands, nor remain as fish vendors but become entrepreneurs. However, the women in ATH do not have the appropriate skill to write the project proposal which government agencies require from applicants for funding assistance. Nevertheless, Hilde remains patient and continues to have conversations with government agencies in hopes that in the future, they will have better sources of income to sustain their family's needs.

Aside from being active in ATH, Hilde gives importance to the protection of the oceans. She is a former *Bantay Dagat* volunteer in Alabel and earned an extra 200 pesos monthly. As a *bantay dagat* volunteer, she performed reporting, monitoring, and recording of illegal fishers in their area. She says that since women do not usually go out to sea, they should allot time to monitor how coastal resources are being used. Women should be alert in reporting to authorities if they see any malpractice by people that could ruin the oceans. On various occasions, Hilde received threats from illegal fishers after she was suspected to be the one who reported them to authorities. Despite these, she keeps her head high and fearlessly responds, “*Wala ako nahadlok nga magreport sa mga awtoridad sa mga kaso sa illegal nga mananagat, panpanguha, ug pagpamutol sa mga bakhaw.*” (I am not afraid to report to the proper authorities of any illegal fishing or unsustainable



Ms. Hildegracia dela Cruz together with Bantay Dagat volunteers in Alabel, Sarangani during the 13th Kasadyaan Festival

use of mangroves.) She believes that if you take care of your environment, it will also provide what you need.

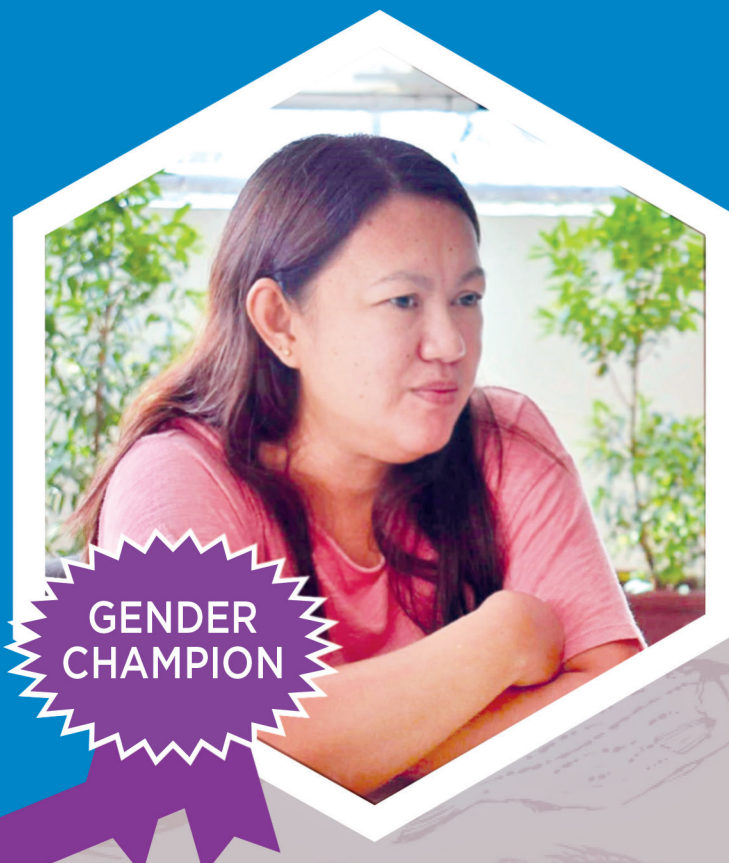
The passion that drives her to save the oceans keeps her going despite not being compensated enough and having very little to work with. At eight o'clock in the evening, Hilde is just getting ready to go home, 500 pesos richer after three days of selling fish. The amount is small but what makes Hilde the richest one is that she dreams bigger than life, she dreams for bigger things for her fellow women and for her environment.

Head, Provincial Fishery Office,
Sarangani Province, BFAR Region XII

MS. GEMMA CHYREL GARCIA-MORENO

An Indefatigable carer

**LEADING WOMEN TO
GET ENGAGED**



“I believe that women are equal partners in both productive and reproductive life activities. ... and every day that our society fails to give women that chance, economic growth and development is hindered.”

Ms. Gemma Chyrel Garcia-Moreno is a Senior Aquaculturist in BFAR who considers gender mainstreaming a duty that she has to fulfill in her line of work. She sees her position in the agency as an opportunity to influence others to take part and share their resources to promote gender equality. As a public servant, she aspires to ensure food security and improve the social and economic status of fisherfolks. She hopes that their current efforts would lead towards an improved quality of life and better welfare for fishers and their families.

Ms. Moreno initiates and implements various extension works to women fishers in the community. Presently, she hopes to increase the income that women earn by developing and conducting technical livelihood assistance and trainings. She finds means to organize more trade fairs and gain assistance from the communities to patronize the local products of the fishers. Aside from this, she encourages women to participate in bigger coastal resource management projects such as mangrove rehabilitations and coastal cleanups.

Being a mother as well, she has a soft spot for women who strive to juggle a full-time job and taking care of their families. She shares that she tries her best to provide the best service that she can to women fishers especially since she knows that they do not have as much resources. She knows that they are among the most vulnerable and disadvantaged sectors in society yet they continue to have a positive disposition and unwavering determination in facing life's challenges. The thought of this gives Ms Moreno the motivation to continue to find means to improve these women fishers' lives.

Ms. Moreno would oftentimes go out of her way to help fishers and this has sometimes affected her personal time and space. Despite this, what motivates her to continue and keep going is the thought that she can make a difference to improve the quality of life for the next generation of the fishers' families. She sees that if the fishers' children are provided with assistance, they would have better chance of a more promising future. With so much on her plate, she acknowledges the support of the local government units, non-government organizations, and community as essential factors in achieving the goals of BFAR. She believes that educating the mass public on gender equality and empowerment is vital in building the full potential of communities. Through government programs, Ms. Moreno strives to ensure that women's voices are heard and included in the decision making for the community and the entire fisheries value chain.



Difficult paths taken by the BFAR XII staff to get to Sitio Akbual, Upper Suyan, Malapatan for the Ridge2Reef program which aims to provide the Bla'an brethren basic government services.



BFAR XII personnel headed by Mrs. Gemma Moreno together with AFP Alpha company 731B headed by 1st Lt. Orestes Fausto and the teachers from Akbuli Indigenous People School.

President, Saganang Buhay Nagkakaisa Organization
Barangay Councilor, Brgy. Buayan, General Santos City

MS. JACQUELINE S. DEGAYO

A Grassroots Trailblazer

“I have been through a lot of challenges as a leader, like being questioned of my ability because I am a woman. I prove everyone wrong because I deliver outputs that make life better. I know that women work with dedication because women work with love.”



**WOMEN LEAD AND
WORK WITH LOVE AND
COMPASSION**

The seven years that Ms. Jacqueline Degayo served as Purok Chairperson edged her way into now becoming a Barangay Councilor (Kagawad). She makes the most of the authority granted to her position in order to introduce changes and initiate strict compliance to all the rules in order to have a more efficient system in their barangay.

Before she entered the realm of politics, she was a fish vendor. She would peddle the fish caught by her husband. If the harvest was less than ten kilos, she would sell them around their barangay. If it was one of the better days, she would go to the market and sell the fish at her in-law's stall. This earned her a little extra income to defray their family's expenses.

Being a former fish vendor, advocating for women in fisheries has always been close to her heart. Now that she is capable of creating change, she makes sure that the plight of fishers in their community could be improved. Ms. Degayo is also a Bantay Dagat volunteer and is very vigilant together with other women in reporting all forms of abuse of natural resources and illegal fishing practices.

She was President of *Saganang Buhay na Nagkakaisa*, a women's group that is registered under the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and is presently composed of 25 to 40 members. Their group received a 10,000-peso grant from DOLE and this helped them create livelihoods for their members' families. They actively come up with projects that are considered as long-term income generators for women. These include fish drying, crafting of souvenir items, and rehabilitation of mangroves.

The efforts of Ms. Degayo and the rest of the group were identified by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) as an outstanding initiative to help women in the community.

Ms. Degayo ensures that women are knowledgeable so that they do not end up as blind followers. She encourages them to remain informed of the government services available to them and make the most out of such services. She shares that women will come up with various ways to generate resources for their livelihood once they are equipped with proper knowledge. This also becomes a stepping stone for them to value their contribution to society and to fight for their rights.

Being a Barangay Kagawad puts her in a position to influence her constituents' behavior with new policies particularly in fisheries management. She always reaches out to her community by thoroughly explaining to them new policies or programs before they are implemented. She endeavors to continue her works in counseling and training women on coastal law enforcement, gender sensitivity, anti-violence against women campaigns, and establishing community livelihood programs.

Ms. Degayo is sure that she makes the most out of her days in office because the people embrace her with the trust that she is there to help them empower themselves. She believes that only empowered citizens can bring the most out of a functional community. *"Ang lakas ng kababaihan ay dapat na maipakita. Sa ano mang trabaho, lahat ay pantay-pantay sapagkat ito ay ating karapatan."*

Ms. Degayo does not only ensure a strong community for women fishers. She is building the community closer through mutual respect from the people; regardless of gender, status, and upbringing.



Ms. Jacqueline Degayo and members of Saganang Buhay Nagkakaisa Organization in Brgy Buayan, General Santos City.



Ms. Jacqueline Degayo participated in mangrove planting and rehabilitation initiatives implemented by DENR.



THE NATIONAL NETWORK ON WOMEN IN FISHERIES IN THE PHILIPPINES, INC. (WINFISH)

The National Network on Women in Fisheries in the Philippines Inc., or WINFISH, was established in 2000. It was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission with membership coming from different sectors involved in fisheries-related activities nationwide. One of its regular activities is the conduct of a conference every two years that seeks to increase the public's awareness on the situation of women vis-à-vis that of the men in the fisheries and aquaculture. WINFISH likewise conducts researches, extension and community work, and capacity building initiatives to various stakeholders. Through its 18 years of existence it has broadened its constituency and strengthened its advocacy in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women in partnership with men in the aquatic and fisheries sector.

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