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The Tangalan story

By **RIY Adan**

"It was accidental," answered Tangalan Mayor Jed Tirol when asked how the Tangalan-SEAFDEC/AQD collaboration started. Upon assumption of office on the first week of July 1998, the mayor received a conference invitation from AQD.

"Even when I was still a vice mayor, I already have an idea of what AQD is — I have attended some of its seminars for fish-pond operators. So when they presented a proposal to integrate Tangalan in a coastal resource management project, I was enthusiastic!" Tangalan gave a counterpart fund of P10,000 and after sometime, the project bore very good results. Since then, a lot of things has taken place.

Tangalan requested AQD to survey and assess their coastal resources. It was found that heavy pressure was put on their seas -- because the community was solely dependent on fishing for their livelihood. AQD then helped them identify alternative livelihood projects.

Floating cages for grouper culture was what AQD suggested. Pleased with the results of the first run, Mayor Tirol initiated a second run which is now on-going. He plans to expand the floating fish cages to include other species such as tilapia.

"I see the economic potentials of the project. This offers additional income to my constituents..."

Mayor Tirol is indeed very optimistic. In fact, he has made a booking at AQD for 10,000 fingerlings of native tilapia. This, he said, will be dispersed to other non-coastal barangays.

"If these people are provided with fishes at their own backyard, then they don't have to go to the seas to fish anymore — this way, we also lessen the pressure on our marine environment..."

Community response

The project site in Dapdap, Tangalan is open to the public. People from the

barangay and even outsiders have seen the project flourish. They are now excited and have began asking the mayor to start another related project.

But Mayor Tirol is not your usual "please the people first" mayor. He believes that these things should be studied thoroughly. For him, a feasibility study is necessary if they want to obtain optimum results. Zoning of all 15 barangays will be conducted to identify location and number of operators feasible to operate such projects.

"We are now reorganizing existing fishermen organizations ... We want to involve the people in the project."

Before, Tangalan people were promised alternative livelihood by several organizations. When no assistance came, they were disappointed and lost confidence. It was a good thing they saw positive results of the AQD-initiated project.

Mayor Jed Tirol of Tangalan: "Grouper cage culture (below) offers additional income to my constituents."



Now, it is not difficult to convince people to participate in any LGU endeavor because they know they can benefit from it financially.

"They just need a little push," noted the Mayor.

Tangalan: the next eco-tourism destination

Tangalan is being developed into an eco-tourism destination. They have their cloth-weaving industry, piña cloth, the Jawili waterfalls and of course, their beautiful beaches. But the biggest attraction is the three restaurants with floating fish cages of grouper and red snapper.

"If you want to order grouper — they get it live from the cage and cook it!" That way, a fresh supply of such fish is always available to consumers. Tilapia is another commodity these restaurants plan to offer in the future.

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In support to this, production of native chicken as an alternative livelihood is considered. So aside from the fish, dressed or grilled chicken will also be available to picnickers.

Other tourist destinations include the Pungtod Reef with its beautiful corals — this is already a favorite diving site of scuba divers. This reef was actually declared as a marine sanctuary through a municipal ordinance in 1995. However, the ordinance was not implemented earlier on. "But this time," Mayor Tirol warns, "we will apprehend people conducting illegal activities around the reef to preserve such exquisite resource."

There is also the reforestation project by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). DENR is planning to convert its reforestation project into a "rescue center" where endangered species will be housed.

Moreover, a small mangrove area is planned for aquaculture production in the near future.

Tangalan on food security

"I agree with President Estrada's idea on self-sufficiency for food security," Tirol said. That's why they have come up with a mission and vision to make Tangalan self-sufficient. They allocated budget for livelihood and CRM among other things.

Specific livelihood projects in relation to food security include the upgrading of native chicken for mass production, with tourists and locals as target clientele. There is also vegetable gardening and production of organic waste fertilizers through vermiculture.

"You have a fertilizer for your vegetable garden, at the same time, you also have worms as feeds for your chicken and catfish. There is really an endless possibility. Nothing is wasted!" quipped Mayor Tirol.

This first-term mayor is just hoping that through his leadership, he will be able to convince people to join hands to make all these plans a reality. ###

The LIPASECU experience

By **MB Surtida** and **E Gasataya**

In the 1980s, coastal resource management (CRM) became accepted as an approach to secure continued productivity of coastal ecosystems, including coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds, primarily by non-government organizations (NGO) and academic and research institutions. Through CRM, several marine protected areas were established and maintained by organized communities.

In like manner, SEAFDEC/AQD, in 1991 started a CRM project in Malalison (also Mararison), an island off the west coast of Panay. Without doubt, after several years of maintaining protected areas, testimonies of increased catch, and a perceivable economic progress in the island, nearby coastal municipalities off the island have followed the Malalison style.

One of such grouping is LIPASECU, an acronym for four coastal municipalities that face Malalison Island. LIPASECU Bay Wide Management Council was organized in 1997 to protect and manage the Pandan Bay coastal and marine resources for continued productivity for the benefit of the resource users specifically the marginalized fisherfolk. The four municipalities are

Libertad, Pandan, Sebaste, and Culasi, including Culasi's three islands Malalison, Batbatan and Maniguin, all bordering Pandan Bay.

LIPASECU's formation was an offshoot of the community-based CRM program piloted by Antique Integrated Area Development (ANIAD) in 1995 in Culasi. ANIAD is a collaborative effort of local non-government organizations (NGO) and government organizations (GO) where NGOs and GOs play equal roles as partners in development. It is jointly supported by the governments of the Philippines and the Netherlands.

Today, LIPASECU has several projects. Among them are resource conservation and rehabilitation, livelihood enhancement, waste management, law enforcement and sea patrol, institution build-



One of the marine sanctuaries visited was in Tibigbas, Libertad, Antique. It is 1 ha x 400 m x 15 fathoms. Installed in 1 April 1999, it now boasts of a proliferation of shellfishes which the fisherfolks gather for family consumption and even for sale. Residents say that the sanctuary has two resident lionfishes



Joelito Mateo exemplifies the young LGU official. He has worked hard for the establishment of the fish sanctuary and would readily mention the benefits that are now enjoyed by his constituents



The man behind the mayor -- Felipe Dimacutac Jr