

Documenting the Craft, the Artisans, and their Weaves

Pagrara: Exploring Northwestern Panay Weaving Heritage Project Stakeholders' Meeting and Workshop Day 2

29 September 2024
University of the Philippines Visayas – Antique Extension
Nauring, Pandan, Antique

Prepared by Kyle Philip M. Ravena



UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
CENTER FOR
INTEGRATIVE AND
DEVELOPMENT
STUDIES

The background of the entire page is a grayscale photograph of a workshop. In the foreground, there are several woven baskets and bags, some with intricate patterns. In the background, a sign is visible with the text 'Pagrara: Exploring Northwestern Panay Weaving Heritage Project Stakeholders' Meeting and Workshop'. The sign also mentions 'University of the Philippines Visayas Pandan Campus' and 'September 28-30, 2024'.

Documenting the Craft, the Artisans, and their Weaves

Pagrara: Exploring Northwestern Panay Weaving Heritage Project Stakeholders' Meeting and Workshop Day 2

29 September 2024
University of the Philippines Visayas – Antique Extension
Nauring, Pandan, Antique

Prepared by Kyle Philip M. Ravena

UP CIDS Proceedings

is published by the

University of the Philippines**Center for Integrative and Development Studies**

Lower Ground Floor, Ang Bahay ng Alumni

Magsaysay Avenue, University of the Philippines

Diliman, Quezon City 1101



cids.up.edu.ph

Telephone: (02) 8981-8500 loc. 4266 to 4268 / (02) 8426-0955

Email: cidspublications@up.edu.ph

Website: cids.up.edu.ph

Copyright 2025 by the
UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies.

The views and opinions expressed in this discussion paper are those of the author/s and neither reflect nor represent those of the University of the Philippines or the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies. No copies can be made in part or in whole without prior written permission from the authors/editors and the publisher.

ISSN 2718-9295 (Print)

ISSN 2718-9309 (Online)

Cover image credit

Photo by Ericka Paula Galvan, Project Assistant of the Pagrara Project | 29 September 2024

Table of Contents

2 Introduction

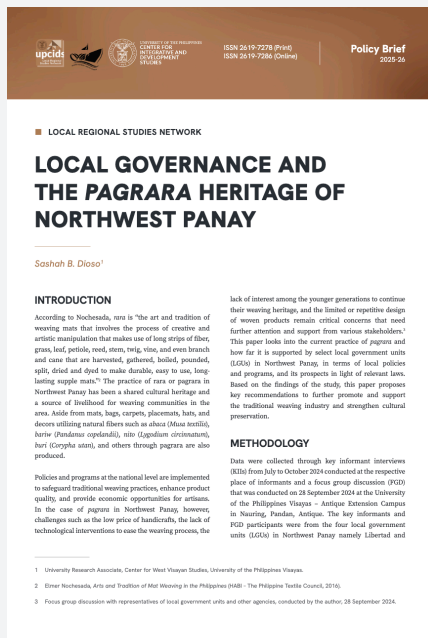
4 Mapping Activity

6 Vision: *Handum* for the Weaving Industry

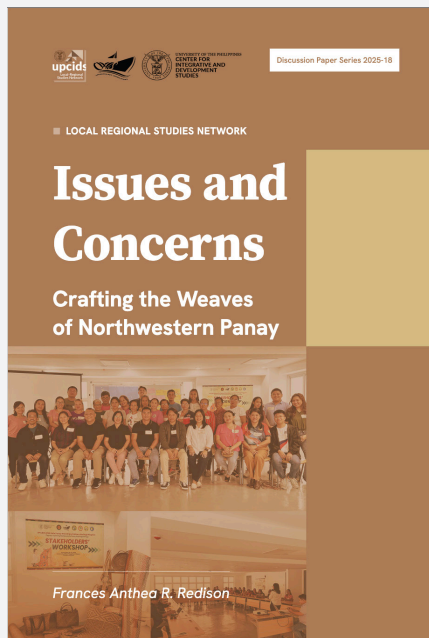
**12 Ways Forward: Concrete Plans or the Future
of the Industry**

Download related policy papers

for free



Pagrara It Kinaaram: Weaving Weaves in the Classrooms



Issues and Concerns: Crafting the Weaves of Northwestern Panay

cids.up.edu.ph/collection-database

Get your policy papers published.

Download open-access articles.

The Philippine Journal of Public Policy: Interdisciplinary Development Perspectives (PJPP), the annual peer-reviewed journal of the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS), welcomes submissions in the form of full-length policy-oriented manuscripts, book reviews, essays, and commentaries. The PJPP provides a multidisciplinary forum for examining contemporary social, cultural, economic, and political issues in the Philippines and elsewhere. Submissions are welcome year-around.

For more information, visit cids.up.edu.ph.

All issues/articles of the PJPP can be downloaded for free.

**Get news and the
latest publications.**

Join our mailing list to get our publications delivered straight to your inbox! Also, you'll receive news of upcoming webinars and other updates.

bit.ly/signup_cids

**We need
your feedback.**

Have our publications been useful?
Tell us what you think.

bit.ly/dearcids

About the Proceedings



The project *Pagrara: Exploring Northwestern Panay Weaving Heritage* is a component project of the Panay Weaving and Culinary Heritage Program implemented by the University of the Philippines Visayas Center for West Visayan Studies (UPV-CWVS) and the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP-CIDS) under the Local Research Studies Network cluster.

The project engages the local government units of Ibaday and Nabas in the Province of Aklan, and Libertad and Pandan in the Province of Antique with the primary aim to provide a platform for discussions focused on the economic viability and sustainability the handicraft weaving industry in Northwestern Panay, as well as exploring its cultural significance, assessing its current status, and identifying policy gaps.

Introduction

The two-day stakeholders' meeting and workshop for the “Pagrara: Exploring Northwestern Panay Weaving Heritage” was held at the UP Visayas Extension Campus in the town of Pandan, Antique from September 28-29, 2024. This activity is part of the Panay Weaving and Culinary Heritage Program of the UP Visayas Center for West Visayan Studies (CWVS), funded by the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS). Among the participants were handicraft weavers and officers of local weaving cooperatives, local tourism officers, and representatives from local government units (LGUs) in Aklan and Antique, specifically from the municipalities of Ibajay, Nabas, Pandan, and Libertad, where handicrafts were made and the focus areas of the project.

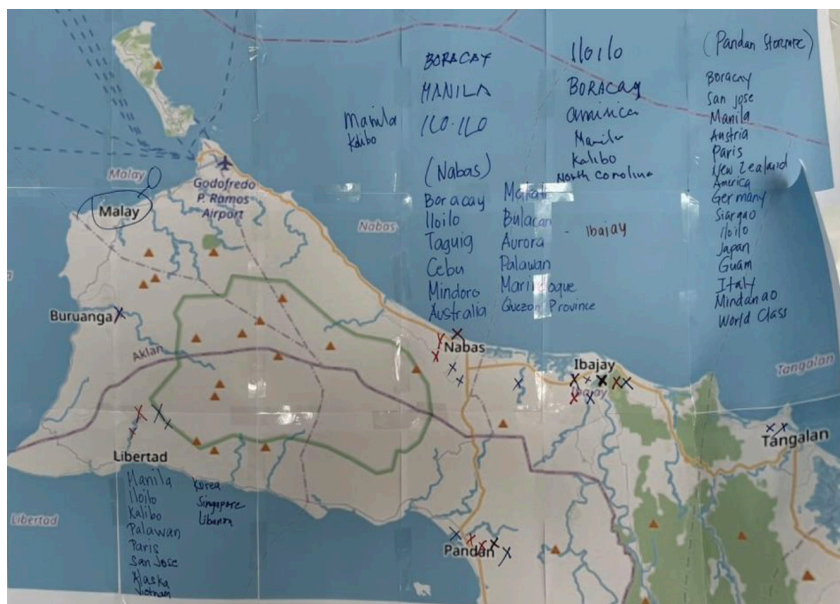
The activity was led and organized by: Project Leader, Asst. Prof. Frances Anthea Redison, CWVS Director; Paper Writers, Mr. Sashah Dioso, CWVS University Research Associate and Asst. Prof. Kyle Philip Ravena; Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Facilitators, Asst. Prof. Precious Maecah Ratay and Asst. Prof. Gay Margaret Gange; Project Assistants: Ms. Febrey Esclares, Ms. Ericka Paula Galvan, and Attorney Joe Fritz Varon.



Mapping Activity

The second day started with a mapping activity. Asst. Prof. Redison asked the participants to map their local resources and raw materials, the place where they weave, and the place where their usual buyers come from.

Weavers from Aklan and Antique have a wide customer base, serving a diverse market, from local and national buyers to international clients. According to them, their craftsmanship is recognized as “world-class,” as they cater to both traditional and modern demand. They supply the local and national markets in Iloilo and Manila and to well-known tourist sites like Boracay Island. International customers include buyers from the United States, Japan, Italy, and New Zealand, among a few listed by the weavers.



■ **Figure 1.** Map of Northwestern Panay showing a) source of raw materials (marked with a blue 'x'; b) where they weave (marked with a red 'x'); c) the list of where their buyers are from

Figure 1 shows that primary raw materials used by weavers come from several nearby towns: Nabas, Ibajay, Buruanga, Tangalan, Libertad, and Pandan. *Nito* is a wild plant that grows in the forest; abaca takes at least one

year to grow before harvesting; while *bariw* takes the longest to grow with an average of five years before harvesting. They also added that soil contributes to the growth of these plants, as Ms. Myrna de Jose adds on abaca: “*pero kung ang lupa na maganda, ang abaca naman, madaling magtaas*” (but if the soil is good, for the abaca plant, it grow tall fast). According to Ms. Salvacion, raw materials for weaving like *bariw* are quite abundant and they have no shortage of such. However, she lamented that the surplus of *bariw* plants is prone to being wasted from being swidden in the process of *kaingin* (swidden farming). The municipality of Balete in Aklan was specifically mentioned to be where they get supplies for coconut shells used in various weaving products. The strategic locations of weaving communities in proximity to these towns allow for efficient sourcing of materials, promoting a localized system of supply and craft production.



■ Figure 2. Day 2 of Workshop

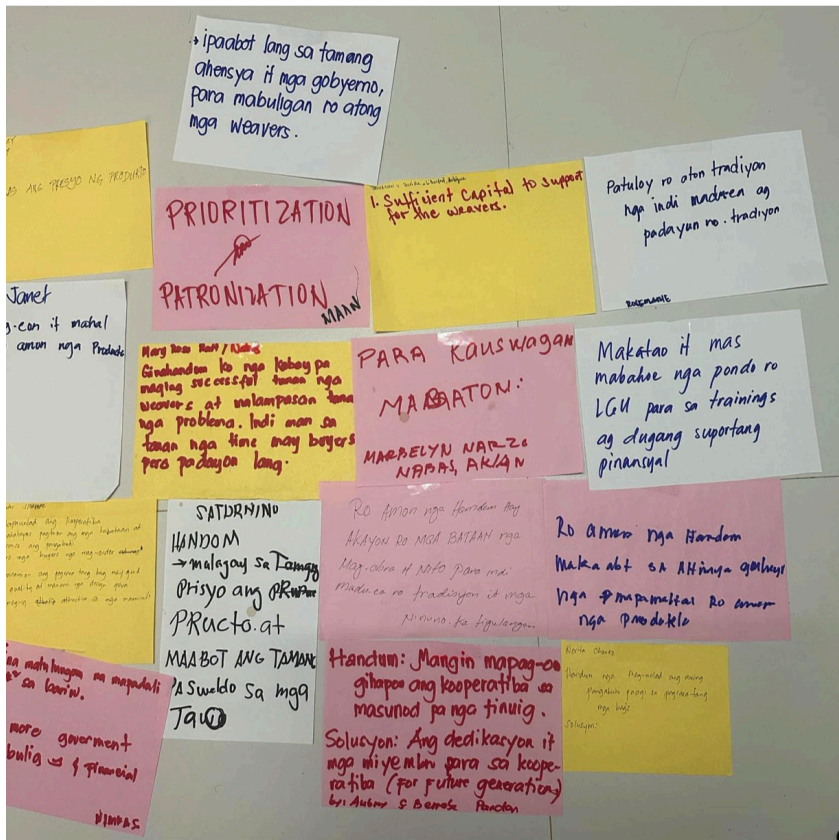
Vision: *Handum* for the Weaving Industry

Continuing on, the workshop aimed to capture the participants' vision and handum (hopes) for the future of the weaving industry. This activity utilized metacards to facilitate the discussion and knowledge sharing of their respective visions and insights in highlighting and uncovering their personal aspirations. Asst. Prof. Ravena and Asst. Prof. Ratay distributed pieces of paper and pens for their answers. Their answers are shown below in Table 1 and Figures 3 and 4. This activity was moderated and facilitated by Asst. Prof. Frances Anthea Redison, Project Leader and Director of the CWVS.

Table 1. Vision Activity Metacards

ENGLISH TRANSLATION	
<i>Ipaabot lang sa tamang ahensya it mga gobyerno, para mabuligan ro atong mga weavers.</i>	Direct to the proper government agency to help our weavers
<i>Tumaas ang presyo ng produkto.</i>	Increase in the price of our products.
Prioritization and patronization.	
Quality Control <i>kang produkto</i> ; financial support	Quality control of our products; financial support
Consistency	
<i>Pag-eon it mahal ro amon mga products</i>	For our products to be sold at higher and fair prices
<i>Ginahandum ko nga kabay pa maging successful tanan nga weavers at malampasan tanan nga problema. Indi man sa tanan nga time may buyers pero padayon lang.</i>	I hope all weavers achieve success and overcome their challenges. Though there may not always be buyers, it's important to keep moving forward.
Sustainable and Popular	
Sustainability	
<i>Handum: na matulugan na mapadali ang pokpok sa bariw; solusyon; more government bulig and financial</i>	Wish: To receive more support in improving the technique for processing "bariw" raw materials. Solution: More government assistance and financial support.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION	
<i>Handum nga mapaunlad ang kooperatiba, makatapos pagtuon ang mga kabataan at umasenso ang pangabuhi, duro mga buyers mga mag-order; solution na panamion ang pagrara tang bag may good quality at manami nga design para maging attractive sa mga mamimili</i>	<p>I hope that (weaving) cooperatives will grow and achieve success, that my children will finish their education, and that our overall quality of life will improve.</p> <p>Solution: Improve the weaving process to produce higher quality (bag) products with better and more innovative designs to attract more buyers.</p>
<i>Handom - malagay sa tamang prisyo ang producto at maabot ang tamang pasweldo sa mga tao.</i>	<p>Wish: To ensure appropriate pricing for the products and fair compensation for the workers.</p>
Sufficient capital to support for the weavers	
<i>Para sa kauswagan mabaton</i>	To attain progress or to prosper
<i>Ro amon nga handum hay akayon ro ang mga bataan nga mag-obra it nito para indi madu-ea ro tradisyon it mga ninuno ka tigulangan</i>	To encourage the younger generation to develop interest in nito weaving to preserve the tradition of our ancestors and ensure it thrives for future generations.
<i>Handum: mangin mapag-on gihapon ang kooperatiba sa masunod pa nga tinuig; solusyon: ang dedikasyon it mga miyembro para sa koopratiba (for future generations)</i>	<p>Wish: For cooperatives to remain active and engaged for many years to come.</p> <p>Solution: To encourage cooperative members to show greater dedication and ensure its sustainability for future generations</p>
<i>Patuloy ro aton tradiyon nga indi madu-ea ag padayun ro tradiyon</i>	For our weaving tradition to be preserved and safeguarded
<i>Makatao it mas mabahoe nga pondo ro LGU para sa trainings ag dugang suportang pinansyal</i>	For the Local Government Units to provide increased funding for training and additional financial support.
<i>Ro amon nga handom makaabot sa ahinsya gobyerno nga mapamakal[?] ro amon nga prodokto</i>	We hope that government agencies will help us promote and sell our products
<i>Handum nga mag-unlad ang aming pangabuhi paagi sa pagrara tang mga bags</i>	Our wish is to improve our quality of life through banig weaving as our source of income.



■ Figure 4. Metacard Answers, Vision for the Weaving Industry (Part 2)

The first metacard presented was: “ipaabot lang sa tamang ahensya it mga gobyerno para mabuligan rug atong mga weavers” (direct to the proper government agency to help our weavers). Ms. Norita Chavez added that they need the government’s support, whatever help may it be. This was overwhelmingly agreed by all participants.

The next metacard to be presented was: “para sa kauswagan mabaton” (for advancement to be achieved). This answer was by Ms. Marbelyn Narzo who added that they needed improvement in their production especially in the post-processing of raw materials, i.e. *bariw*. This was also overwhelmingly agreed by all participants.

The next metacard pertained to teaching the younger generation to weave and carry on the tradition: “*Ro amon nga handum hay akayon ro ang mga bataan nga mag-obra it nito para indi madu-ea ro tradisyon it mga ninuno ka tigulangan*” (To encourage the younger generation to develop interest in nito weaving to preserve the tradition of our ancestors and ensure it thrives for future generations). This answer however met many reservations from the participants. Some expressed doubts (‘slight’ or ‘in-between’) while some expressed agreement. Ms. Dangielyn Unilongo from the Municipal Tourism, Culture, and Arts Office of Libertad said that the youth are quick to follow trends and the task is to make the weaving industry attractive to younger audiences. Ms. Lyn Ilinon from the Municipal Tourism Office in Ibajay expressed that LGUs can think of ways to make the industry attractive. Doubts were expressed by Ms. Mary Anne Janoya, Agricultural Technologist of the Nabas Local Government Unit, saying that the younger generation prefer “to earn right away, constant income” hence many tend to engage in tourism, i.e. in Boracay. She added that it would be a difficult task and dependent on the ways to encourage them to learn.

Another metacard to be discussed was: “sustainable and popular.” Ms. Josefina delos Santos expressed that they will not stop from weaving until it would become popular “all over the world.”

The last metacard to be discussed was: “*malagay sa tamang presyo*” (to be at the right price). Many participants agreed while some were in the “slight” category. Ms. Lucinda Fennis from Ibajay protested on how some buyers are “*barat*” or cheap, buying with the lowest price. On the other hand, Ms. Myrna de Jose countered the statement that it depends on how one puts the price on the product relative to the actual cost of materials and labor.

Ways Forward: Concrete Plans or the Future of the Industry

The workshop proceeded with another session using metacards to capture their suggestions for concrete plans and activities for the weaving industry moving forward. With the FGD Facilitator, the participants discussed key areas of action for the weaving industry to thrive, and for the preservation of a rich cultural heritage while also creating new economic opportunities for local communities. Their answers are shown below in Table 2 and Figures 3 and 4.

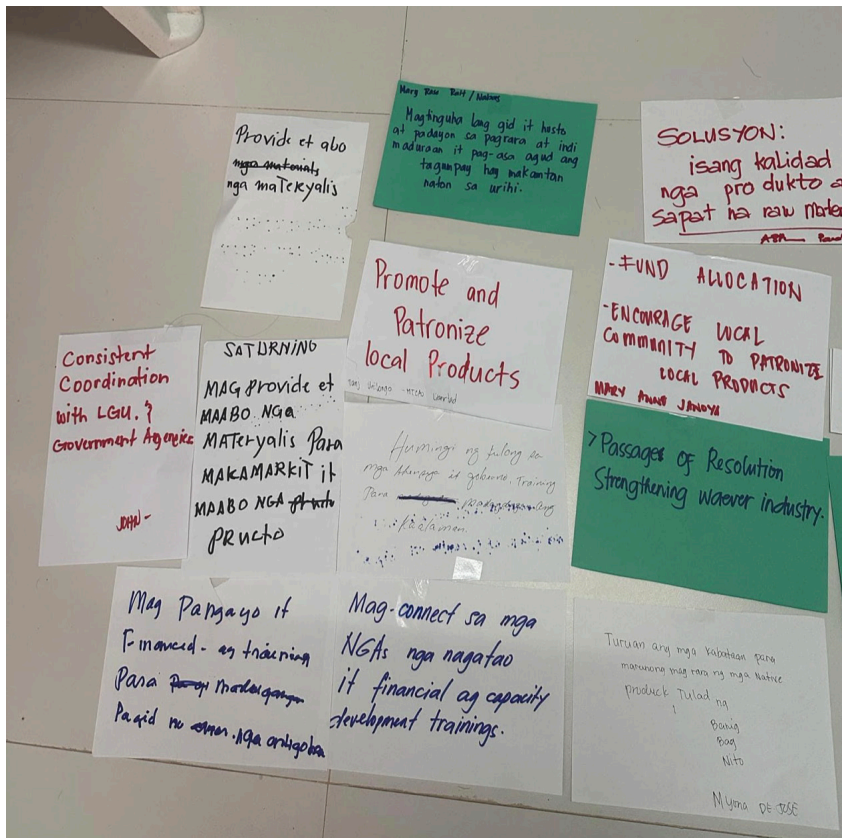
Table 2. 'Ways Forward' Metacards

ENGLISH TRANSLATION	
<i>Provide et abo nga materyalis.</i>	Provide more (raw) materials
<i>Magprovide et maabo nga materyalis para makamarkit it maabo nga produkto.</i>	Provide increased supply of materials to promote and market more products
<i>Mag pangayo it financed ag training para madugangan pa gid na amon nga orohgoba.</i>	To request additional funding and training support to enable us to produce more products.
<i>Magtinguha lang gid it husto at padayon sa pagrara at indi maduraan it pag-asa agud ang tagumpay hay makamtan naton sa urihi</i>	To keep striving and continue weaving, staying hopeful with the goal of achieving success in the end
Promote and patronize local products	
<i>Humingi ng tulog sa mga ahensya it goberyno, training para madagdagan ang kaalaman.</i>	Request government assistance and training to enhance skills and knowledge in weaving
<i>Mag-connect sa mga NGAs nga nagatao if financial ag capacity development trainings</i>	To establish connections with NGAs that offer financial support and capacity development training.
<i>Solusyon: isang kaildad nga produkto at sapat na raw materials</i>	Solution: Quality products and sufficient supply of raw materials
Fund allocation; encourage local community to patronize local products	

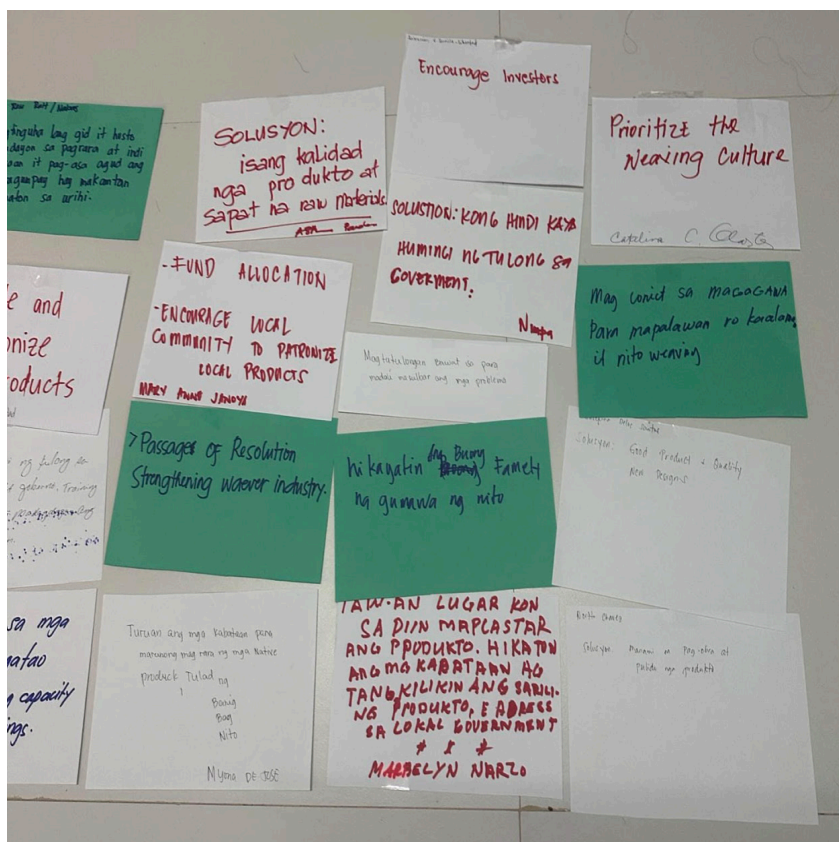
ENGLISH TRANSLATION	
Passage of resolution strengthening weaver industry	
<i>Turuan ang mga kabataan para marunong magrara ng mga native produkto tulad ng banig, bag, nito.</i>	Teach the youth how to weave traditional or native products such as banig, bag, and nito.
Encourage investors	
<i>Solusyon: kong hindi kaya humingi ng tulog sa government</i>	Solution: If we can no longer continue, ask the government for assistance
<i>Magtutulongan Bawat isa para madali masulbar ang mga problema</i>	Help each other to make problem-solving simpler
<i>Hikayatin ang buong famely na gumawa ng nito [products]</i>	Encourage all family members to weave nito products
<i>Taw-an lugar kon sa diin maplastar ang produkto. hikaton ang mga kabataan ng tangkilikin ang sariling produkto, e-address sa lokal government</i>	Provide a suitable space to display the products, encourage the youth to support local products, and seek assistance from the local government
Prioritize the weaving culture	
<i>Mag conict [connect] sa magagawa para mapalawan ro kaalaman it nito weaving</i>	To connect to the weavers to expand knowledge and enhance skills in nito weaving
<i>Solusyon: good product and quality new designs</i>	Solution: Good products and quality, new designs
<i>Solusyon: manami na pag-obra at pulido nga produkto</i>	Solution: Great craftsmanship and polished products

In her discussion of the answers, Asst. Prof. Ratay highlighted the needs of capacity building, skills management, quality control, and product innovation as part of their envisioned concrete solutions for the future of the weaving industry. Furthermore, proper connection and communication between weavers, local government units, national government agencies, educational institutions, and other related stakeholders were emphasized especially in terms of financial support and for marketing and promotion. For example, consistent coordination and synchronized interventions from various agencies, e.g. product development training from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), technological innovation support from Department of Science and Technology (DOST), expertise from Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA), and access to raw materials through the

Department of Agriculture (DA). Moreover, local government units from the municipal to the barangay level can enact legislation and/or ordinances for the promotion, support, and safeguarding of the industry. Even international non-governmental organizations and private philanthropists and organizations were also highlighted to be a potential support for the industry. Some of these international institutions Asst. Prof. Ratay mentioned are the Asian Development Bank and World Vision International, adding that these institutions are most welcome in aid and funding for such projects.



■ Figure 5. Metacard Answers, 'Ways Forward' (Part 1)



■ Figure 6. Metacard Answers, 'Ways Forward' (Part 2)

In these ways, interest in the weaving industry, and by extension local products, would remain economically viable for the younger generation..

Asst. Prof. Ratay and Asst. Prof. Redison further expressed the role and goal of the Project, together with UP CIDS and University of the Philippines Visayas, as an avenue to facilitate conversations between weavers and implementers, for technical assistance, for connections and collaborations with more potential stakeholders.

Building from the FGD Facilitator's discussion, comments and further suggestions from the participants were included. A participant from the Nabas, Aklan's DTI Negosyo Center commented that the agency has been providing training skills depending on the needs of the weavers. Adding

to this, the agency also has programs such as product streamlining and consultations with well-known designers. Festivities were mentioned and suggested by one weaver as an avenue to promote the crafted products. Other suggestions included team building among cooperatives and collaboration of weavers and implementers in Northwestern Panay through a group messaging platform, e.g. Facebook Messenger Group Chat.



■ **Figure 7.** Discussion during the the FGD

CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Established in 1985 by University of the Philippines (UP) President Edgardo J. Angara, the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS) is the policy research unit of the University that connects disciplines and scholars across the several units of the UP System. It is mandated to encourage collaborative and rigorous research addressing issues of national significance by supporting scholars and securing funding, enabling them to produce outputs and recommendations for public policy.

The UP CIDS currently has twelve research programs that are clustered under the areas of education and capacity building, development, and social, political, and cultural studies. It publishes policy briefs, monographs, webinar/conference/forum proceedings, and the Philippine Journal for Public Policy, all of which can be downloaded free from the UP CIDS website.

THE PROGRAM

The **Local Regional Studies Network (LRSN)** aims to create a network of research programs engaging in local and regional areas of study, involving scholars and research centers based in the different UP System constituent universities.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Rosalie Arcala Hall
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Honeylet L. Alerta
DEPUTY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

PROGRAM EDITORS

■ EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING CLUSTER

Dina S. Ocampo
Lorina Y. Calingasan
EDUCATION RESEARCH PROGRAM

Fernando dIc. Paragas
PROGRAM ON HIGHER EDUCATION
RESEARCH AND POLICY REFORM

Marie Therese Angeline P. Bustos
Kevin Carl P. Santos
ASSESSMENT, CURRICULUM, AND
TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH PROGRAM

Ebinezer R. Florano
PROGRAM ON DATA SCIENCE FOR
PUBLIC POLICY

■ SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND CULTURAL STUDIES CLUSTER

Rogelio Alicor L. Panao
PROGRAM ON SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL CHANGE

Darwin J. Absari
ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAM

Herman Joseph S. Kraft
Francis Rico C. Domingo
STRATEGIC STUDIES PROGRAM

Marie Aubrey J. Villaceran
Frances Antoinette C. Cruz
DECOLONIAL STUDIES PROGRAM

■ DEVELOPMENT CLUSTER

Annette O. Balaoing-Pelkmans
PROGRAM ON ESCAPING THE
MIDDLE-INCOME TRAP: CHAINS FOR CHANGE

Antoinette R. Raquiza
Monica Santos
POLITICAL ECONOMY PROGRAM

Eduardo C. Tadem
Ma. Simeona M. Martinez
PROGRAM ON
ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Leonila F. Dans
Iris Thiele Isip-Tan
PROGRAM ON HEALTH
SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

■ NEW PROGRAMS

Maria Angeles O. Catelo
FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM

Weena S. Gera
URBAN STUDIES PROGRAM

Benjamin M. Vallejo, Jr.
CONSERVATION AND BIODIVERSITY

Rosalie B. Arcala Hall
LOCAL AND REGIONAL STUDIES NETWORK

EDITORIAL STAFF

Jheimeel P. Valencia
COPYEDITOR

Alexa Samantha R. Hernandez
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Jessie Feniquito
Mikaela Anna Cheska D. Orlino
LAYOUT ARTISTS

