

# Local Government Units and the Handicraft Weaving Heritage in Northwestern Panay, Philippines

**Pagrara: Exploring Northwestern Panay Weaving  
Heritage Project Stakeholders' Meeting and Workshop  
Day 1**

---

*28 September 2024 | 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM*

*University of the Philippines Visayas - Antique Extension  
Nauring, Pandan, Antique*

*Prepared by Sashah B. Dioso*



UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES  
CENTER FOR  
INTEGRATIVE AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
STUDIES



# Local Government Units and the Handicraft Weaving Heritage in Northwestern Panay, Philippines

**Pagrara: Exploring Northwestern Panay Weaving  
Heritage Project Stakeholders' Meeting and Workshop  
Day 1**

---

*28 September 2024 | 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM  
University of the Philippines Visayas - Antique Extension  
Nauring, Pandan, Antique*

*Prepared by Sashah B. Dioso*

**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](https://cids.up.edu.ph)

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

**Email:** [cidspublications@up.edu.ph](mailto:cidspublications@up.edu.ph)

**Website:** [cids.up.edu.ph](https://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 Marc Leo Layson

# Table of Contents

---

**2      Introduction**

---

**4      Discussion**

4      For me, Weaving is...

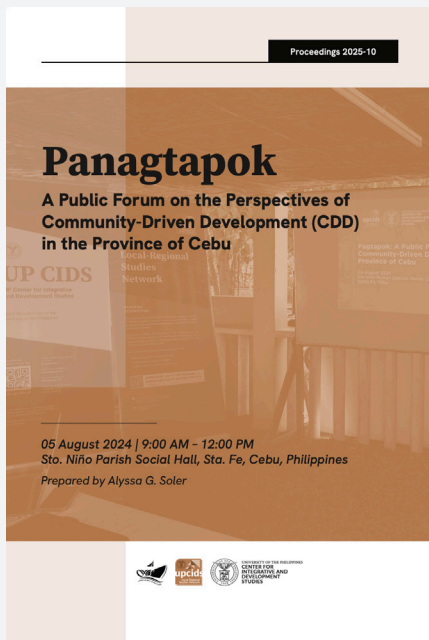
6      Where are We Now?: Weaving heritage and the Local  
Government Units in Northwestern Panay

---

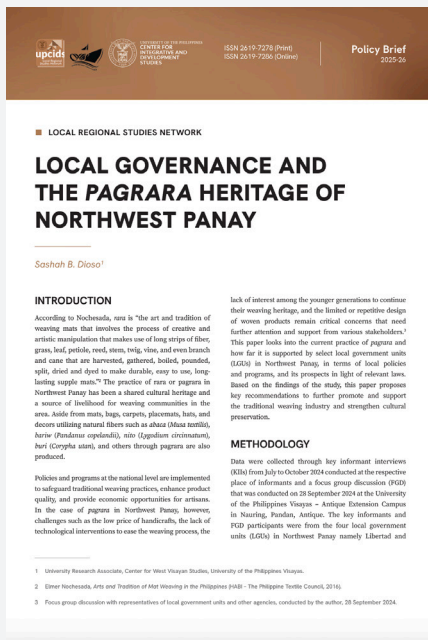
**12    Ways Forward**

Download related policy papers

for free



**Panagtapok: A Public Forum on the Perspectives of Community-Driven Development (CDD) in the Province of Cebu**



**Local Governance and the Pagrara Heritage of Northwestern Panay**

[cids.up.edu.ph/collection-database](https://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](http://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](http://bit.ly/signup_cids)***

**We need  
your feedback.**

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

***[bit.ly/dearcids](http://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.

## Participants

The FGD was participated by ten (10) representatives from the LGUs of Pandan, Libertad, Nabas, and Ibajay and other government agencies:

1. **Bryan Briones**, Municipal Tourism Officer Designate, Nabas, Aklan;
2. **Mary Anne Janoya**, Municipal Agriculture Technologist, Nabas, Aklan;
3. **John Donnel Tumbaganan**, Department Trade and Industry Negosyo Center, Nabas, Aklan;
4. **Lyn Ilinon**, Licensing Officer/Municipal Tourism Officer Designate, Ibajay, Aklan;
5. **Nef Inocencio**, Sangguniang Bayan Member, Ibajay, Aklan;
6. **Junrey Italia**, Punong Barangay of Barangay Monlaque, Ibajay, and Liga ng mga Barangay President, of Ibajay, Aklan
7. **Ivy Redison**, Provincial Budget Officer, Province of Aklan;
8. **Dangielyn Unilonggo**, Municipal Tourism and Cultural Affairs Office, Libertad, Antique;
9. **Jaynel Naquerra**, Punong Barangay of Sto. Rosario, Pandan, Antique; and
10. **Jude Sanchez**, Municipal Tourism Operations Officer, Pandan, Antique

# Introduction



■ Day 1 Workshop

This is the documentation of the first day of the workshop and the focus group discussion (FGD) on Local Government Units (LGUs) and the Handicraft Weaving Heritage (HWH) in Northwestern Panay, Philippines held on September 28, 2024 at the University of the Philippines Visayas – Antique Extension in Nauring, Pandan, Antique.

The FGD was facilitated by the project FGD Facilitator and aimed to achieved the following objectives: (1) to know the initiatives of local government units (LGUs) on handicraft weaving heritage (HWH); (2) to discuss the current situation of HWH; and (3) to foster collaboration among LGUs to address concerns related to HWH.

The activity is part of *Pagrara: Exploring Northwest Panay Weaving Heritage*, 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 (LRSN) cluster.



# Discussion



■ Figure 1. Day 1 Workshop

## FOR ME, WEAVING IS...

Asst. Prof. Frances Anthea Redison, Project Leader and Director of the CWVS, welcomed all the participants and gave brief remarks on the two-day stakeholders' meeting and workshop activity. This was followed by short self-introductions of the attendees: weavers and local weaving cooperative offices participants from the towns of Libertad and Pandan in Antique and Nabas, and Ibajay in Aklan, and representatives and officials from national agencies and respective LGUs.

Asst. Prof. Redison introduced the *Pagrara* Project, the project team, and an overview of the Project. In brief, the goal of the project, at least in the first phase, was identifying the needs and challenges of the stakeholders involved in the weaved handicraft industry in Northwestern Panay, to assess its viability and sustainability. The workshop then was to facilitate and initiate a space for all stakeholders to meet, share, and discuss their outlooks and perspectives on the industry.

The workshop then proceeded with a general activity with a task to complete the phrase: "*For Me, Weaving is...*" All participants were given metacards and

markers to write down their answers, each their personal perception of the weaving industry and its connection to the individual and the community.

Unanimously, all participants, whether weavers or part of the local government, agree that it is an inalienable part of their individual lives and the community. They recognized its value as a cultural heritage that defines them along with their respective communities and their livelihood that sustains them. It is their *pangabuhi* (way of life): it is deeply embedded in their lives and their communities; to some weavers, it is “life” itself. For the weavers, weaving is their *pangabuhian* (livelihood): it is considered a significant aspect of their existence in terms of personal and economic development. “*Mabahoe nga bagay*” (a significant part of their lives), provided them with their survival, their children’s education, and even their own individual pursuits.



■ **Figure 2.** Participants writing their answers for the activity

Local government officials believe and agree that weaving is a process that involves *pangabudlay* (hard work) and *malisod* (difficulty), emphasized by its intricate and labor-intensive nature. This also involves high levels of creativity, innovation, and new ideas to meet the demands of the market. Participants also added that this merits them “*dagdag kaalaman*” (additional knowledge) to further enhance their craft.

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?: WEAVING HERITAGE AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS IN NORTHWESTERN PANAY

The FGD was facilitated by Asst. Prof. Gay Margaret Gange. Asst. Prof. Gange provided a brief background of the project and the objectives of the FGD. Individual introductions of participants followed with each participant stating their name, their position, and from what LGU or institution.

The facilitator asked the participants on the initiatives of their respective LGU and institution on handicraft weaving. The answers of participants revealed that preservation and documentation of the weaving heritage are embedded in some of the LGU-led initiatives and activities such as the cultural mapping activity that document cultural elements including handicraft weaving, institutionalization through the conduct of a living museum to show and experience the complex and tedious processes involved in weaving, and the holding of municipal festivals to celebrate the weaving heritage in some municipalities.

According to Bryan Briones, the Municipal Tourism Officer Designate of Nabas, the Nabas LGU is currently doing its cultural mapping of cultural heritage which include the *pagrara* or the process of weaving. The LGU has also partnered with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) to conduct training with weavers such as their recent training on twine making. Aside from the *banig* (mat), weavers are also trained to make other products. Briones stated that LGU wanted to revive flower-making made of *bariw* due to positive feedback from customers. The holding of the annual *Bariw* Festival is also Nabas LGU's way of highlighting the weaving industry in the community. In the field of education, Briones pointed out that Laserna Integrated School in Nabas has a subject on weaving *bariw* and *nito* for learners.

In the case of Libertad, its LGU has institutionalized their annual Banigan Festival and included the said festival as part of its cultural property according to Dangielyn Unilongo, personnel of the Municipal Tourism and Cultural Affairs Office of Libertad. Libertad is aiming that with the 25<sup>th</sup> year of Banigan Festival in 2025, it will be an official identity of the municipality. She shared that last September, the LGU had conducted a product development workshop

facilitated by the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA). During the founding anniversary of Libertad last August 5, 2024, the LGU held a living museum where banig weavers demonstrated the entire process involved in making banig, starting from *pagsasa* (gathering) up to the final step of *panggutab* (removal of unwanted strips). Students were invited to experience the process while printed material containing the 14 steps in making banig in Libertad were given to serve as supplementary sources of information.

It was also mentioned that national government agencies such as the DTI and the PhilFIDA, through the coordination of the LGUs concerned, mainly conduct skills training and product development workshops in weaving communities in these municipalities. The role of the LGU is mostly relegated to coordinating with the national agencies for skills development, training on new designs, provision/request of equipment/s and livelihood/financial assistance. The LGU mostly promotes the weaved products by bringing them to the national and international trade fairs and links the weavers to the prospective buyers in the trade fairs.

According to Ivy Redison, the Provincial Budget Officer of the Province of Aklan, there is a sustained production of abaca in the municipalities of Libacao and Malinao. She added that training was conducted in partnership with National Government Agencies (NGAs).

Jude Sanchez, the Municipal Tourism Operations Officer of Pandan shared that the Pandan LGU has conducted activities on enhancing the capacities of communities and the promotion and marketing of handicrafts. He emphasized that in Barangay Sto. Rosario (the main producer of handicraft in Pandan), there was a shift from banig-weaving to bag making. The community, he added, had been assisted by the Antique Development Foundation (ADF) in product design and most of their market is Boracay.

In the case of Ibajay LGU, Lyn Ilinon, the Licensing Officer and the Municipal Tourism Officer Designate of the municipality shared that in terms of training, these were provided usually by the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Agrarian Reform, and the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority. Ilinon also shared that Ibajay has been showcasing their communities' local handicrafts in trade fairs and exhibits. In terms of marketing, she mentioned that though handicrafts can be marketed through

online platforms, it is still preferable for potential buyers to see the actual products, their size, and design to match expectation and reality. Specifically, in terms of quality, buyers can decide whether to buy or not if they see the actual products. Furthermore, according to Ilinon, in-person transactions are better as potential buyers can clearly explain the specifications of the products they need. She added that as a practice, every time handicrafts from Ibajay are showcased in trade fairs and exhibits, contact details between their office and potential buyers are exchanged and the latter can then place their orders through her. There were also instances that buyers visit the community for the products or to place orders.

In terms of local legislations, most LGUs have no ordinance or resolutions aimed at preserving and promoting the weaving heritage of their respective municipalities.

It is also noted that as these LGU representatives are also in constant contact with the weaving communities, they were asked to share their insights on the current situation of handicraft weaving in their municipalities. Their answers mainly centered on challenges faced by handicraft weaving. These were:

#### *Low price of handicrafts*

Ilinon of Ibajay LGU said that even though there are skilled weavers, they receive low compensation. It is the middlemen who profits more than the weavers and processors. The Nabas LGU said that weavers do not see their craft as a gateway to success as for years of weaving handicraft, their lot has not improved. They doubt in the economic viability of concentrating on weaving, when there are economic opportunities outside their communities or abroad.

#### *Lack of technological interventions to ease the process of weaving*

Way back in 2017 or 2018, the Nabas LGU partnered with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) on to discuss how to soften bariw through pressing. The technology introduced, however, was not effective in making the bariw leaf smooth.



### *Dwindling supply of raw materials*

Mary Anne Janoya, Municipal Agriculture Technologist under the Municipal Agriculture Office of Nabas, mentioned that bariw production is low. She noted that while there are bariw plants in the wild, they are not adequate. She pointed out that as bariw plants get old, they become less viable for weaving. Thus, according to her, there should be a sustained source of bariw. Janoya added that although they had identified existing areas where there is a concentration of bariw, the municipality's focus under Farmers Information and Technology Services (FITS) Center, they still have no data on production per year. Nef Inocencio, Sangguniang Bayan Member, Ibajay said that the dwindling supply of nito is also a concern as there is the preference for nito that grows in the wild. In fact, the supply of raw materials in Ibajay is not enough because weaving communities sourced them from other towns. Junrey Italia, Punong Barangay of Barangay Monlaque and Liga ng mga Barangay President of Ibajay affirmed that there were those who tried growing nito, but observed a difference in growth as compared to its naturally-grown counterpart.

### *Lack of interest among the younger generations to continue the weaving heritage*

According to Ilinon, in their area, just like others, weavers get old and those who are next in line supposedly have no interest. She added that the next generation is more interested in opportunities such as going to other places.

In the case of Libertad, this lack of interest had contributed to the dwindling supply of bariw. According to Unilonggo: *“Ang pinaka bahol gid namon nga problema is ang bariw. Ang production tang bariw naga kidit, kasi naga kidit ang mga weaver, weavers mismo ang naga kulang, kasi ang mga kabataan kaya daw wara run kang interest, bukon run sanda it interested sa amon karan. So ang lupa kang iba, ang gina ubra nanda is ga tanum sanda kang ginger which needs nga gina sunog ang lupa. Amo ran ang anda. So ang bariw naton nagapatay gid. Indi gid sanda maka tuloy tuloy nga makapaduro tang naturally grown.”* (Our greatest concern is the bariw. Bariw production is dwindling due to the decline in the number of weavers because children in our area these days seem to have no interest. With these, there are people who opted to plant ginger, which requires clearing the land through burning, and in effect eradicating bariw plants. Thus, growing bariw naturally could not be sustained).

Sanchez of the Pandan LGU shared that he observed that children lack interest and knowledge in weaving. He believed that the younger generations have no idea of weaving's benefits, so he believed that if innovative designs will be explored, they will be interested and get engaged with the craft which in turn can provide them economic benefits.

### *Limited or repetitive design of woven products*

Sanchez pointed out that generally, handicrafts in Pandan maintained the same designs for decades. He opined that there is a need to innovate and explore new designs based on trends and preferences of customers. Ilinon also shared the same observation in Ibajay. According to her, weavers in Ibajay would prefer traditional methods and designs that they were familiar with. For example, placemats are very common products and weavers can easily make them if they have a mold to follow. But when it comes to larger orders, such as when the LGU orders big jars for display in offices or to bring to trade fairs, no one makes them anymore because they find it difficult to produce. If you are a buyer, your supplies must be delivered, and you cannot fully meet the specifications of your designs if they cannot follow through.



■ **Figure 3.** Discussion during the FGD



# Ways Forward

With the challenges presented, participants were asked to share what could be the possible ways to address them and to strengthen the handicraft weaving in their municipality. They suggested that there is a need to create an inter-municipality council or network that would preserve and promote the handicraft weaving heritage.

According to Sanchez, the council or network is needed as Northwest Panay shares culture and resources. They can share the products but the designs should be diversified. He added that if they can innovate, they will have these strong markets such as Boracay. Engaging the academic institutions such as the University of Antique, Aklan State University, and the University of the Philippines can also help in terms of research and innovations related to product designs and marketing.

In terms of local legislation, they agreed on the need for resolutions and ordinance related to the handicraft weaving. Lastly, they recognized that LGUs also need to increase their efforts in engaging weaving communities to assist the latter in sustaining their heritage and source of income.

---

# 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

