

The Making of *Batchoy*: The Stories That Bind Us

***Namit Gid!*: A Multi-Stakeholders' Collaboration
for Ilonggos' Batchoy Project Stakeholders'
Meeting and Workshop Day 2**

17 September 2024

University of the Philippines Visayas – Iloilo City Campus
Iloilo City, Iloilo

Prepared by Mary Rose Rebuena, PhD



UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
CENTER FOR
INTEGRATIVE AND
DEVELOPMENT
STUDIES



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"Servings of Batchoy, highlighting the importance of food heritage in community engagement"

Photo by Aprille Danilly Guintibano

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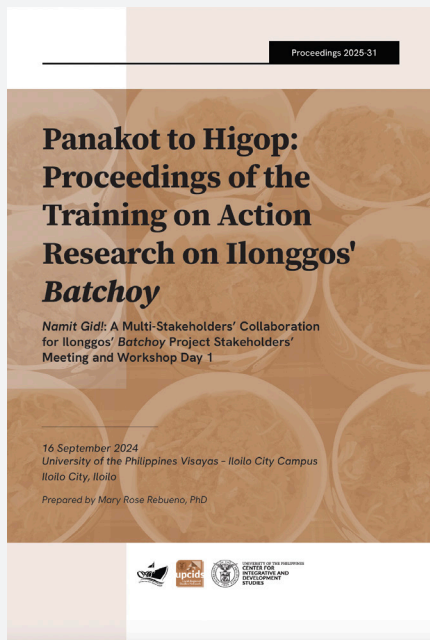
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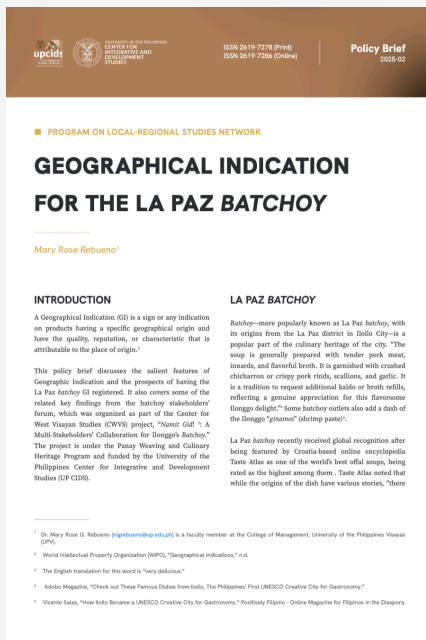
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About the Proceedings

This is a Documentation Report of the Batchoy Stakeholders' Forum and Workshop held September 17, 2024 at District 21 Hotel Iloilo City.

The Center for West Visayan Studies (CWVS) project entitled *Namit Gid! A Multi-Stakeholders' Collaboration for Ilonggos' Batchoy* is under the Panay Weaving & Culinary Heritage Program and funded by the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS). A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed on September 3, 2024, which was an essential step in forging the partnership between UP Visayas and the City Government of Iloilo. The project will focus on the history and cultural significance of Ilonggos' *Batchoy* in shaping its origins, evolution, and role in Iloilo's gastronomic identity.

With Iloilo City's designation as a part of the UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy in 2023, the city is experiencing a surge in tourism, driven by its rich culinary heritage. This recognition, with Iloilo City's popularity as a convention destination has significantly increased demand for local agricultural products. However, this demand outpaces the current supply, creating a pressing challenge for the sustainability of the tourism sector and the livelihoods of stakeholders within the agricultural value chain.

Thus, this action research project proposes a multi-stakeholder collaboration approach to address this challenge. By linking local government units (LGUs), academic institutions, and business groups, the project aims to:

- Scale up production: Enhance value-chain practices and resource management to increase the output of essential Batchoy production;
- Integrate local supply chains; foster collaboration and communication between Batchoy business owners and suppliers;
- Create Incentives: Attract more Batchoy business owners and suppliers to join the value chain by implementing supportive policies and programs.

Thus, a Stakeholders' Forum and Workshop was conducted on September 17, 2024, at District 21 Hotel, Iloilo City with participation from various representatives involved in the culinary heritage of Ilonggos' *Batchoy*.

Participants

Resource persons

PJ Arañador is a UNESCO Iloilo City of Gastronomy consultant. He is an honorary member of Culture, Food, and Design in the executive committee of the Iloilo City Gastronomy Council. He is the Vice-President of Slow Food Panay and consultant on grassroots development for food at the Korean International Cooperation Agency in the Philippines. He is the first Filipino International lifestyle designer known as a multidisciplinary consultant, creative director, curator, cultural worker, and coach. His body of works spans across 45 countries for 30 years. He was a recipient of the Golden Shell Award in Design Excellence, the highest award bestowed by the Philippine Govt. A restaurateur and brand owner entrepreneur, PJ also teaches design and product development, food safety, food packaging and gastronomy at the Iloilo Science and Technology University.

Annette Balaoing-Pelkmans, Ph.D. is the convenor of the Escaping the Middle-Income Trap: Chains-for-Change Program (EMIT C4C) of the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies. She is also a Professorial Fellow of the UP School of Economics of UP Diliman and Research Fellow of the Partnerships Resource Centre of the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, The Netherlands

Jane Lynn D. Capacio is a senior research analyst of the Escaping the Middle-Income Trap: Chains-for-Change Program of the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies and a Visiting Fellow of the Partnerships Resource

Centre of the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, The Netherlands

The participants of the stakeholders' forum and workshop comprised representatives from the following:

- *Batchoy* owners
- Iloilo City Local Government Unit (LGU)
- Dept of Trade and Industry (Region 6)
- Private Sector Representatives
- Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE),
- Local Economic Development and Investment Promotions (LEDIP)
- Heritage Council, the academic community, and consultants for the UNESCO City of Gastronomy
- Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE)
- Local Economic Development and Investment Promotions (LEDIP)
- Heritage Council, the academic community, and consultants for the UNESCO City of Gastronomy

There were also participants present via zoom.

The *Batchoy* Project team included:

- Dr. Mary Rose Rebueno (Project Leader and Lead Writer),
- Febrey Bless Esclares (Senior Office Assistant),
- Aprille Danilly Guintibano (Administrative Aide IV),

and members of CWVS:

- Mr. Sashah Dioso (University Research Associate),
- Ms. Faith Saraza (Administrative Officer),
- Ms. Ophelia Baloga (Librarian)

Asst. Prof. Frances Anthea Redison moderated the event.

Overview of the *Batchoy* Project

“*Namit Gid!*: A Multi-Stakeholders' Collaboration for Ilonggos' *Batchoy*” leverages a collaborative framework among LGUs, academic institutions, and businesses to address challenges and opportunities in the *Batchoy* industry.

The project will center on dialogues with *Batchoy* business owners in Iloilo City and will feature the following key activities:

- Stakeholder Mapping – In partnership with the Iloilo City Tourism Office, this activity will identify key actors, processes, and information flows within the value chain.
- Inception Meetings – These will involve forging partnerships, securing commitments, and conducting interviews with key stakeholders.
- Field Visits – Scheduled visits to *Batchoy* production sites and retail locations.

The project's accomplishments from June to September 2024, included:

- Onboarding sessions
- Planning meetings with Iloilo City MICE Center
- Presentations to the Iloilo City Council and the Iloilo City Heritage Council (ICLCAC-ICHHC)
- Ceremonial Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signing with Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas and UP Visayas Chancellor Clement Camposano

WORKSHOP 1

What is *Batchoy* to you?

The workshop was facilitated by Asst. Prof. Redison. She asked the participants to complete the statement “*Batchoy* is _____.”

Responses included the following:

- *Batchoy* is ILONGGO PRIDE. It gives a sense of place regarding Ilonggos’ *batchoy* and represents Iloilo because *batchoy* is always associated with La Paz, Iloilo. *Batchoy* creates a sense of community for locals and people visiting Iloilo. The participant elaborated on this with the statement “You feel you are part of Iloilo when you eat *batchoy*.” Asst. Prof. Redison commented that *batchoy* is also a means of displaying the Ilonggo brand of hospitality. A participant present via zoom, discussed that *batchoy* owners may have different brands, but they share the same goal, which is to share *batchoy* to everyone, making Iloilo proud. “There is a market for everyone. Everyone should taste *batchoy*. It is for everybody.”
- *Batchoy* is NAMIT (delicious) – because of the blend of ingredients that gives *batchoy* a unique taste.
- *Batchoy* is TRADITION. A participant discussed how “*batchoy* has become embedded in the food culture.” Moments spent with family and friends through eating *batchoy* have always provided enjoyment and special bonding experiences.
- *Batchoy* is HERITAGE since it is handed down from the past and is also a family heritage.
- *Batchoy* is LIFE since *batchoy* businesses provide employment and means of livelihood.

- *Batchoy* is MEDICINE for the body and soul. The participant shared that he grew up in La Paz and he was made to eat *batchoy* when he was not feeling well.
- *Batchoy* is EVERYONE, EVERYTHING, EVERYWHERE all at once. Ms. Jane Capacio shared that her engagement with Iloilo food was mostly with “laswa” (an Ilonggo soup with boiled vegetables). For her, *batchoy* is really Iloilo’s gift to the world, having been designated as part of the UNESCO Creative Cities for Gastronomy.

It is worth noting that *batchoy* used to be called the poor man’s soup because it was served as food for laborers. But now “regardless of your status in life and your preferences, you can eat *batchoy*. So *batchoy* is for everyone. “

The answers showed that the participants basically share the same notion of what *batchoy* is.

Presentation on *Batchoy* and Ilonggo Gastronomy

PJ Arañador

Mr. PJ Arañador started his presentation by sharing that the logo of Iloilo City as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy depicts the *batchoy* in a bowl (Figure 1). This manifests the batchoy being an anchor to Iloilo City's gastronomic identity.



■ Figure 1. Logo of Iloilo City as City of Gastronomy

The logo further presents Iloilo City as a food bowl with abundant fresh produce from the upland and mountains, lowland, and coastal areas. The color in the logo as a UNESCO City of Gastronomy is in earth tone to depict the environmental and sustainability efforts of the Ilonggos. Mr. Arañador also asked the participants to take note of the Baybayin alphabet, which is the original written language of the Philippines being integrated in the logo to symbolize Iloilo City as the first UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy in the Philippines.

Mr. Arañador then proceeded to discuss the Ilonggos' fondness for "*sabaw*" or soup. He narrated that there used to be the tradition of "*pacaldo*" where, as a child, he would go with his family to Valeria, Iloilo City and immediately he will be served "*caldo*". But this is not practiced anymore.

He noted that most of the *batchoyans* are family-owned, and there are challenges in terms of succession. *Batchoy* recipes are secret recipes of these families. He underscored the importance of food safety and sanitation, because problems regarding these can have a negative impact not only on the food businesses but to Iloilo or the community itself.

He also gave emphasis on the cost of doing business. He discussed the importance of efficiency in operations to reduce costs and increase the return on investment. He asked the *batchoy* business owners their source for their noodles. It would be cheaper, according to him, to produce the noodles like "*miki*".

Mr. Arañador then discussed the importance of declarations on ingredients for customers because some specifically inquire on these due to allergies. That is why according to him, it is vital that front liners of *batchoy* outlets are well-trained to handle customer queries regarding *batchoy*. There might be possible allergens like *patis* and MSG. He also explained why *puto* wrapped in banana leaves stay longer or have a longer shelf life. Banana leaves have antimicrobial qualities and essential ingredients which is why it is also sometimes called "nature's own refrigerator."

Popular narratives on *batchoy* state that it originated in La Paz. But he also discussed the possibility that this also had roots in the first Chinese settlements in Molo. Mr. Arañador also discussed the possibility of having the La Paz *batchoy* registered for geographical indication. For instance, Guimaras mango has been officially declared as the country's first geographical indication, as approved by the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines.

He further explained that Ilonggo food has both a sense of place and sense of origin. Iloilo Gastronomy includes the following:

- Kadios, Baboy, Langka (KBL) – Ilonggo stew with pigeon peas and jackfruit
- Rice (can have *valenciana* for lunch and *suman latik* for dessert)

- Diversity in food during gatherings especially during fiestas
- “*Sabaw*” (soup in every meal)
- Artisanal Food (made by hand)
- Family serving (the heart of Filipino food)
- *Merienda Cena* (Sumptuous Iloilo heavy afternoon snack)
- “*Panyam-is*” – (dessert where popular desserts are made of sticky rice with coconut milk or “*gata*”)
- Tasty Ilonggo Food (because Iloilo is abundant in fresh ingredients)
- Indigenous

INDIGENOUS AND GRASSROOTS

Mr. Arañador then highlighted Ilonggo food as being indigenous and grassroots. For instance, he presented the *tinagbakan nga Bisaya nga manok* (native chicken stew with edible young shoots of *tagbak* plant with *alumpiran* leaves with food prepared by a cultural bearer of Panay-Bukidnon). He also discussed the traditional food culture, with traditional cooking methods in Iloilo like “*hanig*”, “*suam*”, and “*binakol*”. Ilonggo food is also known to use traditional cooking implements like the *kaang pugon*, *kawa*, and *caldero* (Figure 2a-c). Iloilo food is also popular for the use of traditional containers like the coconut shell (Figure 2d).



■ **Figure 2.** Traditional food containers a) *kaang pugon* b) *kawa* c) *caldero* d) coconut shell

Mr. Arañador described Ilonggo food as exceptionally flavorful or “*marimisrimis*” in Hiligaynon, with its various blend of ingredients that gives the food a distinct taste. Ilonggos have unique spices for food. Souring ingredients like “*batuan*”

is abundant in Iloilo compared to other areas. Furthermore, Ilonggos are quite innovative, being able to replace ingredients that are lacking based on what is available.

He then proceeded to discuss that indeed, gastronomy is deeply ingrained in Iloilo's culture, heritage, and economy. He reiterated his previous discussion on Iloilo being a food basket, with its food chain sourced from the upland, or mountains and hinterlands, lowland and rivers, and coastal areas. Food is abundant, intimately served in family servings at home and generously shared with others in the popular fiestas in Iloilo. These fiestas in Iloilo capture the spirit of Filipinos, celebrating, caring, and sharing of bounty through food.

Mr. Arañador encouraged everyone as *batchoy* stakeholders to continue to improve towards greater efficiency, innovation and band together to preserve cultural heritage and in the process, contribute to initiatives for sustainable development—all of which encompasses what they are part of—the UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy.

To sustain the city's designation as part of the Creative Cities of UNESCO, he stated the need to keep on finding better ways of doing things and innovate.

OPEN FORUM

Common Service Facility

A *batchoy* business owner asked if it would be possible for a huge piggery or a group of piggeries to act as a common supplier for all *batchoy* outlets someday. *Batchoy* outlets will buy from them and whatever is left will be sold to public markets. Mr. Arañador responded that this is one of the key directions of the city while it is currently upgrading the slaughterhouse. It is important to consider the logistics and how the pork from piggeries is transported to the city. With a common service facility, there can be control in prices. In some cities, the city government absorbs part of the price as protection to consumers from price fluctuations. In the context of the *batchoy* industry in Iloilo, there might be more efficient ways to purchase pork particularly in time of swine fever or other contagious hog diseases. There can also be a common service facility for meat processing. Since this will entail a huge investment, the city can avail of grants offered from organizations abroad that provide funds for grants and in a way, UP can help the city government with the proposal.

WORKSHOP 2

Ilonggo *Batchoy* Conversations

Dr. Balaoing-Pelkmans emphasized that the workshop session is particularly addressed to the various *batchoy* businesses present. The floor in this session is for them to share with the group how they can be supported, how they can draw strength from the fact that they have a strong network of roots supporting their growth.

She emphasized that it is a SAFE SPACE for *batchoy* business owners, and no trade secrets will be asked. The goal is to synthesize and document to act on anything that could be done moving forward. If there are other stakeholders that need to be drawn in to be able to address these, they can be brought in the next phase of this project. Business owners were then asked to share their business experiences.

NEED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/TRAINING ON BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Batchoy Owner 2 mentioned that his business was just accidental during the pandemic due to unemployment. He shared that the *batchoy* they serve has no bagoong unlike other *batchoys*. *Batchoy* owner 2 mentioned that he needs help in the operations aspect having no background in business. The business started from scratch and pricing is based on observing other business owners.

Dr. Balaoing-Pelkmans emphasized that his experience shows that the market for *batchoy* is big, and with the UNESCO designation of the city, demand will surely increase for *batchoy*. The challenge now for the government is how to support young entrepreneurs who enter the market.

Dr. Rebuena shared that she learned about *batchoy* owner 2's business through Facebook posts of her students. She proposed that UP can help in terms of the

capacity-building because UPV also provides assistance to small and medium enterprises, which includes start-up businesses. For instance, they can help in pricing aspects because accurate computation of costs matters in proper determination of business income. The academe can help in other operational aspects as well. The government can help to facilitate communication between the private sector and the academe for trainings and technical assistance.

NEED FOR COMMON SERVICE FACILITY

Batchoy owner 1, hopes to have a common service facility for *miki* because not everyone makes their own noodles. He further suggested, perhaps one service facility can be available for pork also to meet the needs of *batchoy* owners. *Batchoy* Owner 3 also proposed this given that they buy *miki* in retail which is more expensive.

NEED FOR MARKETING SUPPORT

Batchoy owner 1 further added the need for assistance in terms of marketing. For tourism purposes, those *batchoy* businesses who will be accredited by the city government can have their names in a list of *batchoy* options in the city. There can be marketing as collaboration of *batchoy* owners with the city government. For instance, he suggested that Iloilo Airport can have a display of various *batchoy* options in the city.

Dr. Balaoing-Pelkmans said that they learned that eating *batchoy* involves the entirety of the senses—not just the taste, sight, smell—but the whole sensory experience that makes it unique, which is why some prefer to eat right in the market itself. She also highlighted the value of clustering, not only in terms of space but also in terms of information. If there is a common information system, people can know when exactly conventions are happening and when there is a surge of tourists. This would allow enough time to prepare.

VALUE OF ECONOMIES OF SCALE

Dr. Pelkmans added that it is in the area of value and supply chain where they can help. She highlighted the importance of economies of scale. There are ingredients that can be sourced in bulk which can reduce costs, including

logistics. Bulk purchasing does not only mean a consolidated purchase, but also the engagement of others in logistics. She underscored that everything that is efficient with scale and does not affect competitive position will be of great benefit to a business. Having a common service facility is vital particularly when there is a shock in the market, like when there is swine fever or there is scarcity in the market. She stressed that enough inventory is an investment because the investor will not invest unless he/she is certain that there is a link with the market. She states: "There is a need to have a stable supply. A supplier, on the other hand, will not invest on more scale if they are not sure that the business is a stable buyer. There is a need to have relationships so that the supply-demand is in a stable relationship."

Dr. Balaoing-Pelkmans noted that the government's role is to trigger the parties in consolidation—the one that really consolidates the logistics and the purchasing.

Mr. Arañador inquired about instances when there are shortages in supply when there are many customers. *Batchoy* Owner 1 answered that in this instance, they just have additional supply delivered. He further added that puto is limited in supply and swaps it with pandesal when there is no supply.

Dr. Balaoing-Pelkmans added that if there is anticipation that they can sell more because they have the capacity, there can be a routing system in place so that in case there are buses of tourists not everyone will go to just one branch. She also added that it's good if *batchoy* owners can consolidate and get supplies from a common service facility. One of the reasons why Jollibee is successful is its size. This allows it to attract suppliers who can offer them a lower price. If owners are individually fragmented, they only attract traders and it is an opportunity for them to sell at a higher price. Thus, she explained that if *batchoy* owners can organize so that its direct from business to business, that will improve their margins.

LACK OF *BATCHOYAN* OUTLETS IN THE AIRPORT

The Daughter of *Batchoy* Owner 4 commented on why there are no *batchoyans* in the airport pre-departure lounge such as having lechon in Cebu Airport

or sisig in Pampanga. Since *batchoy* is the gastronomy image of Iloilo, it was suggested that there should be *batchoyans* in Iloilo Airport.

Ms. Capacio added that the same problem in the airports in Mindanao was observed because there is no halal food for Muslims in airports there. The problem is not unique to Iloilo, and she agreed that the airport in Iloilo should have *batchoyans* as a gastronomic hub.

A Department of Tourism (DOT) Representative responded that they had a proposal for the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) to provide a space for the stakeholders of the Iloilo City MICE Alliance. This would be a lounge with stores inside offering Ilonggo products. However, they were told that the space was already taken. She stated that there are now efforts to get a space in the arrival area which is managed by the Provincial Tourism Office for a lounge with Ilonggo delicacies.

Dr. Hall added that they need to propose to have a meeting with CAAP and discuss this. The airport in Iloilo is the gateway for the City of Gastronomy but the gastronomic offerings are not offered within the premises. Dr. Balaoing-Pelkmans noted that there is a leadership function here and that the government should set the rules of the game for the good of everyone.

An Iloilo City Government Lawyer expressed that perhaps there is a need for a collective like manifesto or petition. It would be good to have a collective action on the concerns on the gastronomy experience in the airport. The lawyer added that the City Mayor has no power over the CAAP, but as a collective arm, perhaps they can influence it to cooperate with the Department of Tourism and the Gastronomy campaign of the city.

BATCHOY FOOD FESTIVAL

A Private Sector Representative (SM) informed everyone that they organized the First *Batchoy* Festival in Iloilo where different *batchoy* owners and stakeholders were invited. However, this was disrupted during the pandemic. They have already resumed this festival with the goal of having this festival during the Dinagyang week. This is their contribution to the city in support of its UNESCO designation as a creative city of gastronomy. Last year, they invited celebrities like Ms. Karen Davila who had *batchoy* conversations with

Mayor Jerry Treñas and other popular personalities. According to him, they are promoting *batchoy* as a member of the private sector and invited everyone who have not yet joined the *batchoy* festival.

Batchoy Owner 4 responded that they were not able to join SM's *Batchoy* Festival because of the expensive rate. Furthermore, she noticed that there are others in the *batchoy* festival who sell other items aside from *batchoy* to recover their expenses, but this destroys the essence of the Festival. She added that if the private sector can mount a *batchoy* festival wherein it will not cost them anything, they may consider. Mechanics should also be clear that only *batchoy* should be showcased. There should also be no pitting of *batchoy* against each other. She asked for everyone's understanding that their taste buds are different, and they are all there together as members of the *batchoy* industry.

The Private Sector Representative (SM) acknowledged the legitimate comment, but rates are handled by leasing. He reiterated that their presence in the forum shows that they are to gather this feedback. They can change the future set up or perhaps highlight *batchoy* in a specific area only.

Mr. Arañador added that there is a proposal to have a cluster of *batchoyans* at the Central Market, but it is too expensive. He suggested a solution probably to give incentives because it is the prime food image for the Iloilo gastronomy. The Private Sector Representative (SM) apologized for not being the right person to answer this.

Dr. Balaoing-Pelkmans mentioned that for private sector like SM, every unit will have their own targets." Purchasing, for instance, will also have their own performance targets. Every department will have its own targets. According to Dr. Balaoing-Pelkmans, "If everyone pushes their own targets, no one reaches their targets." For instance, if they increase foot traffic in their stores, there is a benefit to SM, but what corresponding benefits can it give to the tenants? In the same way, the government must consolidate and step in for the common interest. Finding commonalities is crucial as it provides a win-win situation for everyone.

BATCHOY HIGHLIGHTED OR INTEGRATED IN ILOILO FESTIVALS

Prof. Eric Divinagracia, one of the consultants during the Iloilo City bid to be part of the UNESCO Creative Cities for Gastronomy, mentioned that being chosen as a city of gastronomy does not mean that you have the best dish in the country. He gave emphasis that the designation as a Creative City of Gastronomy does not mean that Iloilo has the best culinary traditions, but more about linking gastronomy with development. To attain the sustainable development goals is to have sustainable cities, responsible production, and consumption. He stated that members of the *batchoy* sector are not only creating a beautiful dish but are also supporting the economy. He also mentioned being part of the Festivals Foundation and that they are presently preparing for a Theater Festival that focuses on theater and gastronomy. He asked the participants “How can we maximize these festivals so we can highlight *batchoy*? How can we include *batchoy* in the rest of the festivals?” They are open to suggestions so that together, Iloilo city’s designation as a creative city of gastronomy can be sustained.

Dr. Balaoing-Pelkmans pointed out that the forum shows that if you need coordination, it will not happen automatically. It must be systematized. The system should be created so that information can be brought to whoever needs the information. She added that there is a need to have a coalition of the willing and the coalition of the needed so they can get things done and break the status quo. But this can only be accomplished through collective effort.

Asst. Prof. Redison highlighted that the goal of the UPV team is to collate and come up with the proceedings and policies from this workshop.

WORKSHOP 3

SWOT Analysis

Workshop 3 aims to analyze the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of *Batchoy* in Iloilo. The workshop was facilitated by Asst. Prof. Redison. Participants were provided with metacards to write their answers for the workshop. Results are summarized in Table 1 that follows.

Table 1. SWOT Analysis of *Batchoy* in Iloilo

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Taste ■ Complete meal ■ Branding ■ Ilonggo identity ■ Unique dish ■ Authenticity ■ Legacy ■ Umami taste ■ Heritage ■ Soup or caldo refill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Weather ■ Manpower problems ■ Not Instagrammable ■ Needs teamwork in the <i>batchoy</i> industry ■ Pricing ■ Important that everyone should be Department of Tourism (DOT) Accredited and that the processing of accreditation be improved so it can be efficiently done ■ Marketing needs improvement
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Form an association of <i>batchoy</i> owners ■ DOT-accredited <i>batchoy</i> businesses ■ Involvement of more stakeholders ■ More <i>batchoy</i> varieties and Innovations ■ <i>Batchoy</i> Tour or <i>Batchoy</i> Crawl ■ Special incentives for <i>batchoy</i> Owners ■ Opportunities to avail of grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Brownouts ■ Water interruption ■ Rental increase ■ Inflation ■ Branding of La Paz Batchoy in processed food like Lucky Me ■ Price increase of major ingredients ■ Mainstreaming of the fusion of Ramen and La Paz <i>Batchoy</i> ■ Hard to innovate because of customers' perspectives

STRENGTHS

Batchoy strength includes its distinguishing taste. *Batchoy* already had the branding as it is well-known, popular. It is connected to the Ilonggo identity that relates to a sense of place. *Batchoy* is also a legacy. This is important particularly for businesses who have continued their family business. As part of heritage, there is the continued legacy of producing *batchoy* so that younger generations can also enjoy eating *batchoy*.

Batchoy is also authentic. It stems from our own experience on what is authentic. It is a complete meal in already one package, no need to buy rice. *Batchoy* is also a unique dish thanks to its caldo soup.

WEAKNESSES

“Weather” is one of *batchoy*’s weaknesses. *Batchoy* is served hot and is more popular during the rainy season or when there is cold weather. Another mentioned weakness is on manpower, given the lack of qualified employees and the high cost of labor.

It was also noted that there is a need for teamwork in the *batchoy* industry.

Batchoy is not “Instagrammable.” It is not appealing to the eyes since *batchoy* dish usually is not presented well for Instagram/photo ads. There is also a need to improve on marketing of *batchoy*. *Batchoy* owners can help each other here in terms of marketing as a *batchoy* sector.

Varied pricing of *batchoy* is also a weakness. Some groups cannot understand the differences in pricing. Costs differ depending on the manpower costs, lease, etc. It is also important that everyone should be accredited by the Department of Tourism and that the processing of accreditation be improved to make it more efficient.

OPPORTUNITIES

Looking into its opportunities, *batchoy* owners can form an association and aim for DOT accreditation. There is also an opportunity to create more *batchoy* varieties and innovations such as a healthier version of *batchoy*. More stakeholders can also be involved like the Cooperative Development Authority, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and business groups like the Chamber of Commerce to entertain more insights and suggestions. There is also an opportunity to promote a *Batchoy* Tour or *Batchoy* Crawl in Iloilo City.

Special incentives can also be given for *batchoy* Owners. These incentives may be offered through possible reforms with the investment code. There are also opportunities to avail of grants to make possible the proposed common service facility for pork and noodles.

THREATS

Threats in the *batchoy* sector include brown outs, water interruptions, increase in rent, and inflation increasing the prizes of major ingredients. Branding of La Paz Batchoy is also threatened by the production of processed food like the instant La Paz Batchoy of Lucky Me!. Mainstreaming the fusion of Ramen and La Paz Batchoy as distinction should be maintained. Lastly, innovation is hard because of customers' perspectives.

Asst. Prof. Redison mentioned that these are the threats seen and many of these are shared by everybody. Yet, there are also a lot of opportunities we can investigate as mentioned in this workshop.

Dr. Balaoing-Pelkmans mentioned the workshop as an experience where interest alignment can be seen. "She further discussed that the output from this forum is really something from the collective - consensus from stakeholders. For those in the private sector, there is the realization that it is difficult to address concerns if you just do it on your own, but there's the possibility of being able to do this if you do it collectively.

Synthesis

Ms. Capacio gave the synthesis for the stakeholders' forum. She explained that this is also an important aspect of trust-building or confidence-building because there is the need to know that one is heard correctly and that there is a chance that what one has said will be disseminated to the relevant parties concerned. She stressed that it will be up to everyone, especially the core group to push all these forward.

SUPPLY PART

A Common Service Facility for *batchoyans* particularly for pork and *miki* noodles. High cost of rental of spaces for *batchoy* businesses threatens the supply. Perhaps there can be lower rent for government spaces.

MARKETING CHANNELS

A conversation regarding provision of spaces for *batchoyans* particularly in the airport was discussed. A notable suggestion was to lobby for this to the CAAP. Furthermore, free or relatively cheaper spaces can be made available to showcase *batchoy*. Marketing strategies could also include a *Batchoy Crawl*.

OTHER TOPICS

There are branding concerns regarding La Paz Batchoy. The lawyer representative of the Iloilo City Government suggested applying for a geographical indication status similar to Guimaras mangoes with the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO). This can be obtained with the assistance of DTI. Moreover, another theme was the need for coordination among batchoy owners. *Batchoy* owners can create an association so that they can work together for common goals.

Another point was the need to improve food presentation. Mr. Arañador suggested the use of the five colors of the Japanese for presentation. UPV can also help in the capacity development particularly for new entrants in the

Batchoy Industry. Human resource matters were also highlighted, as there is a need for a supply of competent labor.

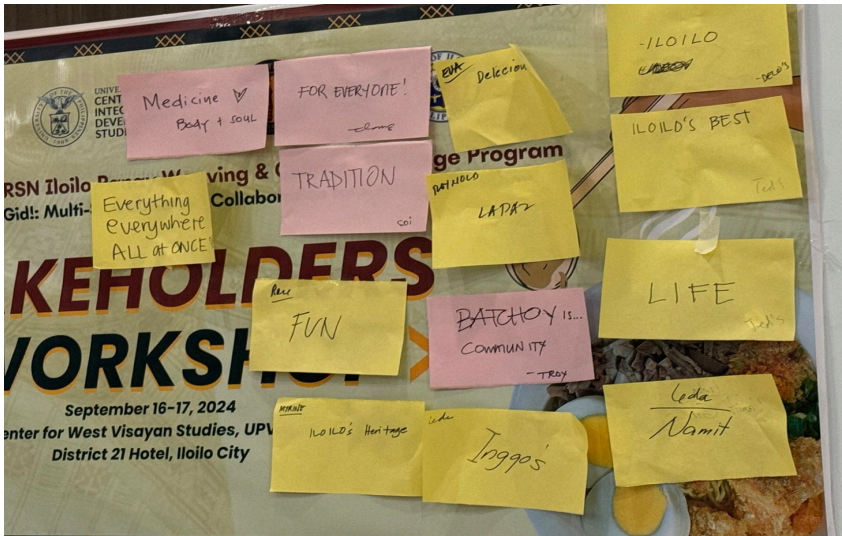
Furthermore, there is a need for a system of information such as when there is a surge of customers. Ancillary services for other *batchoy* stakeholders can be brought to the *batchoy* conversations such as electric and water companies, along with other government agencies and departments in the LGU. DOT accreditation should also be hastened and incentives for *batchoy* businesses can be made available through lobbying.

Mr. Arañador suggested that to apply for Geographical Indication for *batchoy*, there must be a formal organization. A precursor for registering the La Paz *Batchoy* is putting up an association first.

PHOTOS



■ Figure 3. Asst. Prof. Redison facilitated the activity



■ Figure 4. Activity Results



■ Figure 5. Mr. PJ Arañador discussing Ilonggo Gastronomy



■ Figure 6. The owners of Ted's Batchoy



■ Figure 7. The owner of Dak's Batchoy



■ Figure 8. The owners of Inngo's Batchoy



■ Figure 9. The owners of Deco's Batchoy



■ Figure 10. Stakeholders' Forum Group Photo

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