

LOCAL REGIONAL STUDIES NETWORK

# Weaving Together Northwestern Panay

## A Proposed Inter-LGU Collaboration

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### Handicraft Weaving: A Shared Heritage

The *pagrara*, or the skills and methods involved in handicraft weaving, is a shared intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Northwestern Panay. Communities in the area produce similar weaving outputs, practice common cultural traditions, and face comparable challenges, such as declining number of weavers, resource constraints, and fragmented promotional efforts.<sup>1</sup> Current initiatives on the *pagrara*, such as local weaving festivals, exhibits and promotions, and skills enhancement training, are independently conducted by individual local government units (LGUs) in the area, resulting in uncoordinated and limited impact.<sup>2</sup> This situation highlights the need for a more integrated and collaborative approach to safeguarding and promoting the shared weaving heritage.

The project, “*Pagrara: Exploring Northwestern Panay Weaving Heritage*,” implemented by the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS) and the UP Visayas Center for West Visayan Studies, has engaged with Northwest Panay municipalities of Nabas and Ibajay in Aklan Province and Pandan and Libertad in Antique Province to facilitate conversations among stakeholders of handicraft weaving. Inputs gathered from stakeholders during initial conversations and interviews revealed that LGUs supported the promotion of local handicraft products in their respective areas by facilitating their participation in trade fairs and exhibits, as well as coordinating with national government agencies to implement programs related to handicraft weaving, such as skills training, product development workshops, and livelihood training.<sup>3,4</sup> However, it is observed that the role of the LGUs in handicraft weaving is largely focused on coordination and facilitation. While LGUs strive to increase their

<sup>1</sup> Sashah B. Dioso, “Local Government Units and the Handicraft Weaving Heritage in Northwestern Panay, Philippines,” in Proceedings of Project Stakeholders’ Meeting and Workshop Day 1 under the *Pagrara: Exploring Northwestern Panay Weaving Heritage* Project, held on June 18, 2025, Proceedings No. 2025-18. (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies, 2026): 8-10. <https://cids.up.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Local-Government-Units-and-the-Handicraft-Weaving-Heritage-in-Northwestern-Panay-Philippines.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Dioso, “Local Government Units and the Handicraft Weaving Heritage,” 6-8.

<sup>3</sup> Thania Margarrette O. Coronica, “Fostering Sustainable Weaving Heritage and Industry through an Inter-Local Government Unit Alliance in Northwestern Panay,” in Proceedings of the Stakeholders’ Dialogue under the *Pagrara: Exploring Northwestern Panay Weaving Heritage* Project, held on June 18, 2025, Iloilo City, Proceedings No. 2026-05 (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies, 2026), 3, <https://cids.up.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Fostering-Sustainable-Weaving-Heritage-and-Industry-through-an-Inter-Local-Government-Unit-Alliance-in-Northwestern-Panay-2.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Dioso, “Local Government Units and the Handicraft Weaving Heritage,” 6,7.

effort to assist the artisans, the entrepreneurs, and the whole handicraft weaving industry in their respective municipalities, there are no coordinated and unified efforts among them to address common concerns regarding this shared heritage.<sup>56</sup>

With the *Pagrara* project facilitating conversations since 2024, the LGUs have agreed to strengthen their efforts to initiate local policies related to handicraft weaving. Libertad, for its part, had included “Bariw Weaving and Conservation Improvement” under Special Purpose Appropriations for 2026 in its Programmed Appropriation and Obligation by Object of Expenditure<sup>7</sup>, while its Sangguniang Bayan had passed a resolution recognizing handicraft weaving as an intangible cultural heritage of the municipality<sup>8</sup>. The Sangguniang Bayan of Pandan<sup>9</sup> and the Sangguniang Bayan of Ibaday<sup>10</sup> had also passed similar resolutions, respectively, while Nabas had signified to follow suit. These resolutions contribute to setting the foundation for the proposed inter-LGU collaboration on handicraft weaving, in which representatives of the four municipalities themselves identified as a significant undertaking that would initiate a concerted effort to address concerns related to the said cultural heritage.<sup>11</sup>

Existing legal and policy frameworks also provide a strong basis for inter-LGU cooperation and cultural development. Among these frameworks are the Local

Government Code (RA No. 7160), which provides LGUs with the authority to enter collaborative agreements for local development (art. 3, sec. 33)<sup>12</sup>, and An Act Strengthening the Conservation and Protection of Philippine Cultural Heritage through Cultural Mapping and Enhanced Cultural Heritage Education Program, Amending for the Purpose Republic Act No. 10066, Otherwise Known as the “National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009” (RA No. 11961) mandating LGUs to conduct a comprehensive cultural mapping of their areas of jurisdiction (sec.15)<sup>13</sup>. Also, handicraft weaving falls under the “Traditional Cultural Expressions Domain” under the Philippine Creative Industries Development Act (RA No. 11904, sec. 3(h)), which encourages coordinated initiatives to grow local creative sectors.<sup>14</sup>

## A Proposed Inter-LGU Collaboration

Collaborations among LGUs in Northwest Panay are not new. The municipalities of Nabas, Malay, and Buranga in Aklan, and Pandan and Libertad in Antique, together with government agencies, the academe, people’s organizations, and non-government organizations through their representatives, compose the Protective Area Management Board (PAMB), a multi-sectoral body that discusses and decides about activities affecting the protected area and surrounding

<sup>5</sup> Coronica, “Fostering Sustainable Weaving Heritage and Industry”, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Dioso, “Local Government Units and the Handicraft Weaving Heritage”, 12.

<sup>7</sup> Municipal Tourism and Cultural Affairs Office, Libertad, Antique. 2026. Programmed Appropriation and Obligation by Object of Expenditure for 2026. Municipal Tourism and Cultural Affairs Office

<sup>8</sup> Sangguniang Bayan of Libertad, Antique, A Resolution Recognizing Handicraft Weaving as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Municipality of Libertad, Province of Antique, Res. No. 125-2025 (28 October 2025)

<sup>9</sup> Sangguniang Bayan of Pandan, Antique. 2025. A Resolution Recognizing Handicraft Weaving as an Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Municipality of Pandan. Res. No. 373-2025 (18 November 2025).

<sup>10</sup> Sangguniang Bayan of Ibaday, Aklan. 2026. A Resolution Recognizing Handicraft Weaving as a Significant Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in the Municipality of Ibaday, Aklan. Res. No. 066-2026 (28 May 2026)

<sup>11</sup> Frances R. Andrea Redison, Sashah B. Dioso, and Thania Margarrette O. Coronica, “Weaving Policy and Tradition: The Role of Local Government Units in Sustaining Handicraft Weaving in Northwestern Panay,” *UP CIDS Discussion Paper Series*, no. 2026-09 (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies, 2026): 7. [https://cids.up.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Weaving-Policy-and-Tradition\\_The-Role-of-LGUs-in-Sustaining-Handicraft-Weaving-in-Northwestern-Panay.pdf](https://cids.up.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Weaving-Policy-and-Tradition_The-Role-of-LGUs-in-Sustaining-Handicraft-Weaving-in-Northwestern-Panay.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Local Government Code of 1991, Republic Act No. 7160 (October 10, 1991), [https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1991/ra\\_7160\\_1991.html](https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1991/ra_7160_1991.html)

<sup>13</sup> Republic Act No. 11961, An Act Strengthening the Conservation and Protection of Philippine Cultural Heritage through Cultural Mapping and Enhanced Cultural Heritage Education Program, Amending for the Purpose Republic Act No. 10066, Otherwise Known as the “National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009” (August 24, 2023), [https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2023/ra\\_11961\\_2023.html](https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2023/ra_11961_2023.html)

<sup>14</sup> Philippine Creative Industries Development Act of 2022, Republic Act No. 11904 (July 28, 2022), [https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2022/ra\\_11904\\_2022.html](https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2022/ra_11904_2022.html).

buffer zones in the Northwest Panay Peninsula Natural Park (NPPNP).<sup>1516</sup> Another is the Libertad, Pandan, Sebaste, and Culasi (LIPASECU) Baywide Management Council, a collaborative initiative established in 1997 for the four member municipalities bordering the Pandan Bay to act collectively to protect and manage its coastal and marine resources and address environmental and development issues that cross municipal boundaries.<sup>17</sup> These experiences suggest that a similar approach can be applied to the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, particularly handicraft weaving.

The proposed inter-LGU collaboration on the *pagrara* is a practical approach in terms of how municipalities can work together in conserving and preserving the shared northwest Panay cultural heritage.<sup>18</sup> The collaboration, which could consolidate resources and strengthen cultural identity, is suggested to be formalized through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) among the four LGUs recognizing the *pagrara* as a shared cultural heritage and indicating their commitment to various initiatives.<sup>19</sup> Implementation considerations note, however, that the MOU is not legally binding and does not mandate LGU responsibilities. It only establishes a framework for collaboration and voluntary support, which may involve internal LGU resources, partnerships with national agencies, and engagement with local stakeholders. Participating LGUs may adopt parallel Sangguniang Bayan resolutions affirming their commitment to the collaboration. Also, lessons from prior inter-LGU environmental partnerships can guide the development of the weaving heritage collaboration and ensure effective coordination while respecting the autonomy of each municipality.

The MOU may then serve as a foundation for a future memorandum of agreement (MOA), which can strengthen and enhance collaboration among LGUs. With the MOA, baseline agreements could establish mechanisms for resource sharing, coordinated programs, and knowledge enhancement and skills training. Resource sharing may include pooled procurement of materials, shared data, and exhibition facilities, such as the one at UPV Antique Extension Facility in Pandan.<sup>20</sup> Coordinated programs, such as joint festivals and marketing initiatives, that can harmonize event calendars and establish branding strategies can be explored, while skills training and knowledge enhancement and skills training initiatives can be introduced using standardized modules led by culture bearers or skilled weavers to ensure the continuity of weaving skills.

Safeguarding the *pagrara* heritage of Northwest Panay entails a consistent and concerted effort among concerned LGUs, with the support of government agencies and various stakeholders. No single LGU can efficiently safeguard its heritage alone; it relies on solid collaboration and coordinated policy direction. The proposed inter-LGU collaboration to be formalized through an MOU is a meaningful step towards a local policy undertaking anchored on the economic viability and sustainability of a shared traditional heritage.

<sup>15</sup> Philippine Initiative for Environmental Conservation, "Cooperation w. DENR & Local Institutions." <https://philiincon.org/cooperation/denr>.

<sup>16</sup> Office of the President of the Philippines, Proclamation No. 186, s. 2002: Declaring the Mountain Ranges of Northwest Panay Peninsula Situated in the Municipalities of Nabas, Malay, Buruanga, Province of Aklan and Municipalities of Libertad and Pandan in the Province of Antique as Protected Area Pursuant to R.A. 7586 (NIPAS Act of 1992) and Shall Be Known as the Northwest Panay Peninsula Natural Park, April 18, 2002, [https://lawphil.net/executive/proc/proc2002/proc\\_186\\_2002.html](https://lawphil.net/executive/proc/proc2002/proc_186_2002.html).

<sup>17</sup> M. B. Surtida and E. Gasataya, "The LIPASECU Experience," SEAFDEC Asian Aquaculture 21, no. 6 (December 6, 1999): 14-16, <https://repository.seafdec.org.ph/bitstream/handle/10862/2853/SurtidaMB1999-LIPASECU-experience.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1>

<sup>18</sup> Redison, Dioso, and Coronica, "Weaving Policy and Tradition," 13.

<sup>19</sup> Redison, Dioso, and Coronica, "Weaving Policy and Tradition," 12.

<sup>20</sup> The facility houses a souvenir shop that displays and sells handicrafts made from bariw and abaca.

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