

LIPASECU... from previous page

habitats fetch a penalty of P100,000-500,000 and imprisonment at the discretion of the court.

The enforcement provision defines the sharing of collected fines among the four municipalities: 30% to the municipality that conducted the apprehension, 40% to LIPASECU for law enforcement activities such as attorneys fees, and 30% to barangay funds to support the FARMCS.

Conclusion

With the unified ordinance of LIPASECU, the Local Government Code, and the Philippine Fisheries Code are given meaning as the backbone of conservation and preservation of our marine resources through empowerment of resource users. It is meaningful to AQD in that these municipalities surround Malalison, AQD's site for its CRM project. The influence of Malalison on these municipalities may be indirect but it is good to think that there was a start and that start was Malalison.

LIPASECU's experience is not different from other CRM projects around the country. In a report titled *Study on the Management of Fisheries/Aquatic Resources at the Local Level in the Philippines* conducted by the Local Government Center of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, August 1996, the capability of LGUs to support and promote the principles of CRM, anchored on the Local Government Code is well documented.

Rose Dimamay attests to this. She says that "the success of LIPASECU lies in the supportive role of all the LGUs concerned." Based on the networks and linkages among the various players in the project sites, a common approach is the strong participation of the community thru the NGOs and people's organizations. Among the findings regarding funding, the Center recommended that the financial capacity of the LGU be strengthened by allocating to them shares from the national government collection from fishery charges. The Department of Budget and Management has been urged to look into this matter. ###

The lesson Malalison taught

By **RIY Adan**

In 1990, SEAFDEC/AQD scouted for an area for its CRM project. It was a good thing Malalison Island off Culasi, Antique was the most qualified site among the five areas considered.

The establishment of CRM project in Malalison brought many positive changes in the community, not only with regards to their coastal resources but most importantly to the human resources.

"The people of Malalison are now educated, responsible fisherfolk. They know that what they do now would benefit their children in the future," said Ms. Lorna Angor, Culasi's Agricultural Technologist.

When AQD formally turned over the project to the Malalison community on March 20, 1998, islanders were left on their

own. But this did not alter the residents' commitment and enthusiasm in conserving their environment. They continued strict implementation of ordinances, exercised TURF, apprehended illegal fishers, and went on with their surveillance of the island. The people now have the technical background especially in assessing their resources.

Although no data is yet available, people have noticed the evident increase of fish catch around the island. This, Ms. Angor said, encourages the residents more to continue doing all those things that AQD has taught them.

The Malalison CRM project now serves as a model to coastal barangays around Panay and most especially to nearby barangays in Culasi. In fact, residents of Batbatan, another island of Culasi, are hoping that their island would be the next CRM site should there be another project.

"They have seen the result of Malalison, and they want to follow suit," Culasi Mayor Linda Palacios commented. "The people on the island are already conscious of the effect of resource destruction. They are paying the price today for all those illegal activities they have done."

Batbatan residents now have to fish far from the island because fish supply is already dwindling and insufficient.

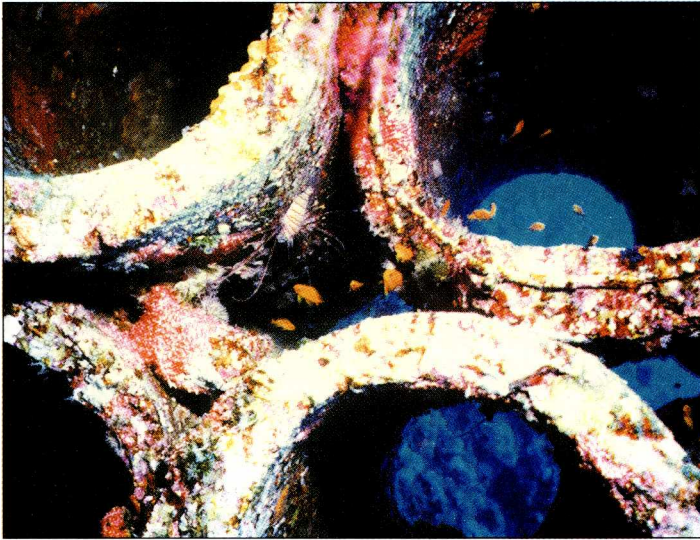
"That's why we want AQD to return. AQD has taught the people of



Mayor Linda Palacios of Culasi

Local legislator Felipe Dimacutac Jr and municipal agriculturist Edgardo Escobanez





Concrete artificial reefs in Malalison, part of the community's CRM approach learned from SEAFDEC/AQD. This is an example that neighboring barangays wish to follow

Malalison to be responsible; that by taking care of their environment, they are assured of continuous food supply," said the Mayor.

Seeing the result of the CRM project, the mayor cannot help but wish for all barangays in Culasi to be like Malalison. This first term mayor, however, thinks that all it takes for this wish to become a reality is by teaching the people.

"I believe in the familiar passage that says: 'Give man a fish and he could eat for a day. Teach him how to fish and he could eat for his whole life.' We are after the poor – our project will not only give them the benefits but teach them how to acquire these benefits. The local government is behind the people. This," she said, "is the concept of our food security program for the municipality."

Culasi's thrust in food security

The municipal food security agenda are focused on the following areas:

Expansion and revitalization of the productivity program. For agriculture, there is rice production, seed production and dispersal, and upland vegetable gardening. The mayor plans to give the people technical background on raising upland vegetables like cabbage, carrots, sayote, etc. Bermuda onion and garlic, which are common produce of Mindoro, are another target commodities. Culasi has almost the same

topography with Mindoro, so the mayor thinks production of such will also be feasible in her municipality. Aside from this, there is an on-going livestock dispersal project.

For fisheries, there is the promotion of aquaculture through the establishment of more sanctuaries and the planting of mangroves. There are also plans on seaweed culture in Maniguin Island, mudcrab culture in Malacañang and grouper culture in Mala. Fingerling dispersal of tilapia is another activity of the program.

Culasi has an abundant supply of freshwater; and this is why Felipe Dimacutac Jr., *Sangguniang Bayan* member and former chairman on agriculture and fishery committee, wants to explore freshwater fish culture.

On the other hand, the Malalison project notably augmented fish catch, to the point that fishers sometimes have surplus. Thus, establishment of a fish processing center for this surplus is also envisioned.

Irrigation. Additional small scale irrigation projects and repair of irrigation facilities is planned to enhance the capability of the system.

Farm-to-market roads and related infrastructure. More roads will be constructed to facilitate and reduce transportation cost of market products.

Agriculture and fisheries R&D. The

mayor hopes to empower the people to initiate, lead and participate in R&D programs of the local government.

Extension, education and training. Farm or field schools and *magsasaka-seyentista* (farmer-scientist) programs will be extended.

Rural finance. The thrust is to strengthen rural financial institutions capability to better serve rural sector financing.

Food price stabilization. A municipal monthly price monitoring council meeting is proposed in this area.

Private sector participation and empowerment of farmers and fisherfolk. Re-activation of private agriculture and fisheries councils -- MAFC, BAFCs, MFARMC and BFARMCs -- will be done.

Eco-tourism destination

Apart from the food security program, Mayor Palacios also plans to make Culasi an eco-tourism destination.

Culasi has the Madjaas mountains and three islands to boast of. The mountain with its fantastic falls is already a favorite climb destination of foreigners, while the Malalison fish sanctuary is often visited by scuba divers. There are also reported sightings of hammer head sharks and dolphins in Maniguin Island which are additional attractions.

"There are so many programs that we have prepared – but we do not have funds to implement all these," noted Mr. Edgardo Escobañes, Municipal Agriculturist.

In fact, they only rely on 20% of the Internal Revenue Allotment for their Agriculture and Fisheries projects, which is very insufficient. This is the reason they have not implemented new programs but only continued implementing existing programs, with allocated budgets already.

Nevertheless, Mayor Palacios is very optimistic with the way things are. She vows to do everything so the people of Culasi can live comfortably. She knows they can make it because they are working hard. She bestowed this parting words for AQD: "I am still hoping for future togetherness." ###