July 2026

ESSENCE



PRRCFI

Danjugan Island Sanctuary

ACE
Actions for Communities and Environment

LMAX GROUP

COMMUNITIES for NATURE

ESSENCE

Project ACE
Endterm Report
July 2026 | no. 5

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Project ACE 01
Overview of the project's background, key pillars, and tripartite partnership that makes the implementation possible.

Impact at a Glance 10
A comprehensive look at the project's journey, key achievements, and community impact in numbers.

The Federation 12
The People's Organisations in Bulata unite to form a federation, signaling their collective growth as a community.

Slow Food Movement 26
Through the support of Project ACE, various stakeholders in the community were able to join a global movement advocating for good, clean, and fair food.

Advancing Education 30
Opening doors for the next generation through academic support, learning resources, and career-readiness initiatives.

Science in Action 42
Conducting vital marine research to protect ecological resources and secure the future of local livelihoods.

ABOUT PROJECT ACE

Project ACE (Actions for Communities and Environment) is a multi-year partnership between the Philippine Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation, Inc. (PRRCFI), LMAX Group, and Communities for Nature (CfN), working alongside coastal communities in southern Negros Occidental.

Now in its fourth year, the project continues to restore ecosystems, strengthen livelihoods, nurture the next generation of conservation leaders, and support locally led solutions that help communities thrive in the face of climate change and poverty.

Through grassroots partnerships, environmental education, sustainable enterprise, and community-led conservation, Project ACE is creating stronger, more resilient communities and healthier ecosystems for generations to come.

The Tripartite Partnership

LMAX GROUP

A global financial technology company that serves as the core private-sector corporate sponsor for multi-year sustainability and community-building initiatives in Barangay Bulata, Cauayan, Negros Occidental through Project ACE.

COMMUNITIES FOR NATURE

An international charity dedicated to supporting community-led environmental conservation, empowering local partners to build sustainable livelihoods, and protecting vital ecosystems worldwide.

PRRCFI

The Philippine Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation, Inc. is a non-stock, non-profit NGO, focusing on implementing community-based conservation and environmental education programs in Southern Negros.

VOICES OF PROJECT ACE



The very reason Project ACE came about is the absence of sustainable livelihoods. We have taught biodiversity conservation, and now we are expanding this by introducing alternative programs to empower Barangay Bulata.

At the moment, ACE is still touching only the tip of a huge poverty iceberg. It is our mission in sustainability - our legacy to save the island, the surrounding seas, and the community. What we need to see to fulfill our mission is to enable the people, educate them, and get their support. And with that, we need to support them too.

GERARDO "GERRY" LEDESMA
President, Philippine Reef and Rainforest Foundation, Inc.



AIDAN ALBERICO
Head of Corporate Sustainability, LMAX Group

We are proud to see our partnership with PRRCFI continue to develop and deliver tangible impact.

Their dedication to supporting communities is both inspiring and a reminder that when businesses and charities work together with a shared purpose, we can build stronger communities and a better future for all.

We are happy to see the growth that has happened in the last four years with Project ACE and how it has been able to build a community from a holistic standpoint.

With the partnership with PRRCFI and Communities for Nature, we are witnessing how the people involved are paying it forward to the community and the environment.

Project ACE TEAM

For us in the Project ACE team, the past years have been a journey of learning, growing, and working alongside the communities we serve. We have seen how opportunities, when matched with the commitment and leadership of local people, can grow into something much bigger.

What makes Project ACE meaningful to us is that it has never been only about delivering activities or providing support. It is about building relationships, listening to communities, and learning from both our successes and challenges.

As we continue this journey, we hope to build on what has already been started.

When we began Project ACE four years ago, our ambition was never simply to deliver a series of initiatives. We wanted to build something that could last: stronger communities, stronger local leadership, more resilient livelihoods and, ultimately, greater confidence among people to **shape their own future.**

Looking back from ACE 1 to ACE 4, I am incredibly proud of how far that ambition has come. ACE 1 was about laying the foundations: building relationships, listening to communities and creating the trust necessary for meaningful participation. In the years that followed, **we began to see those foundations translate into action.** Community organisations strengthened, new livelihood opportunities emerged, young people became more involved, and local knowledge, skills and leadership continued to grow.

For me, ACE 4 represents an important point in that journey. We are seeing a community that is increasingly not just participating in programmes, but organising, leading and creating opportunities for itself.

The establishment and strengthening of the Buligay Bulata Federation of People's Organisations is particularly significant. It gives community organisations a platform to work collectively, represent their interests and increasingly take ownership of shared priorities.

The continued development of PAHA-ULI as a community, enterprise and learning hub provides a physical home around which much of this work can grow. We are also beginning to see the results of years of investment in livelihoods and skills. Enterprises such as Dagyaw jewellery and other community livelihoods are developing their products, reaching markets and learning what it takes to build more sustainable sources of income.

Our work with young people, scholars, schools and the Bulata Library is creating opportunities that extend beyond today's participants to the next generation. These achievements matter. But perhaps what matters most to me is what sits behind them: **growing confidence, capability and ownership within the community.**

That is why ACE 5 should not simply be another year of activities. It should build deliberately on what the first four years have made possible.

Our next challenge is to help move community organisations and livelihoods towards greater resilience, strengthening the Federation as a genuine community platform; developing inclusive leadership, particularly opportunities for women and young people; helping enterprises become stronger and more financially sustainable; expanding learning and opportunity; and preparing families for the increasing economic and climate pressures facing coastal communities. This is also where our partnership matters. From the beginning, Project ACE has brought together LMAX Group, Communities for Nature and PRRCFI, alongside the communities themselves.

Each partner brings something different, but our shared responsibility is to ensure that the investment we make today creates capability and opportunity that remain long after a particular funding year has ended.

Four years ago, much of what we see today was still an aspiration. ACE 4 has shown us what sustained partnership, trust and community leadership can achieve.

As we move into ACE 5, our measure of success should therefore become increasingly ambitious: not only what we deliver for communities, but what communities are increasingly able to lead, sustain and grow for themselves.

"That, for me, is the real evolution of Project ACE, and the future we should continue to build together.



RHODA AVANZADO PHILLIPS
CEO and Chair, Communities for Nature

THE FOUR PILLARS

STRENGTHENING PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

By building shared support systems through a unified people's organisation, establishing a central community hub, and expanding sustainable local enterprises, this self-sustaining community-led governance empowers the people to achieve a collective impact.

01

EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION

Positioning young people as leaders, entrepreneurs and storytellers through knowledge sharing, accredited training, and mentorship programs to drive and propel the next generation forward.

02

ADVANCING CITIZEN SCIENCE FOR LOCAL EDUCATION AND CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Institutionalising community-based ecological monitoring through strategic partnerships to build local resilience for climate solutions. By embedding citizen science as a core conservation strategy, local community members take part in protecting critical ecosystems .

03

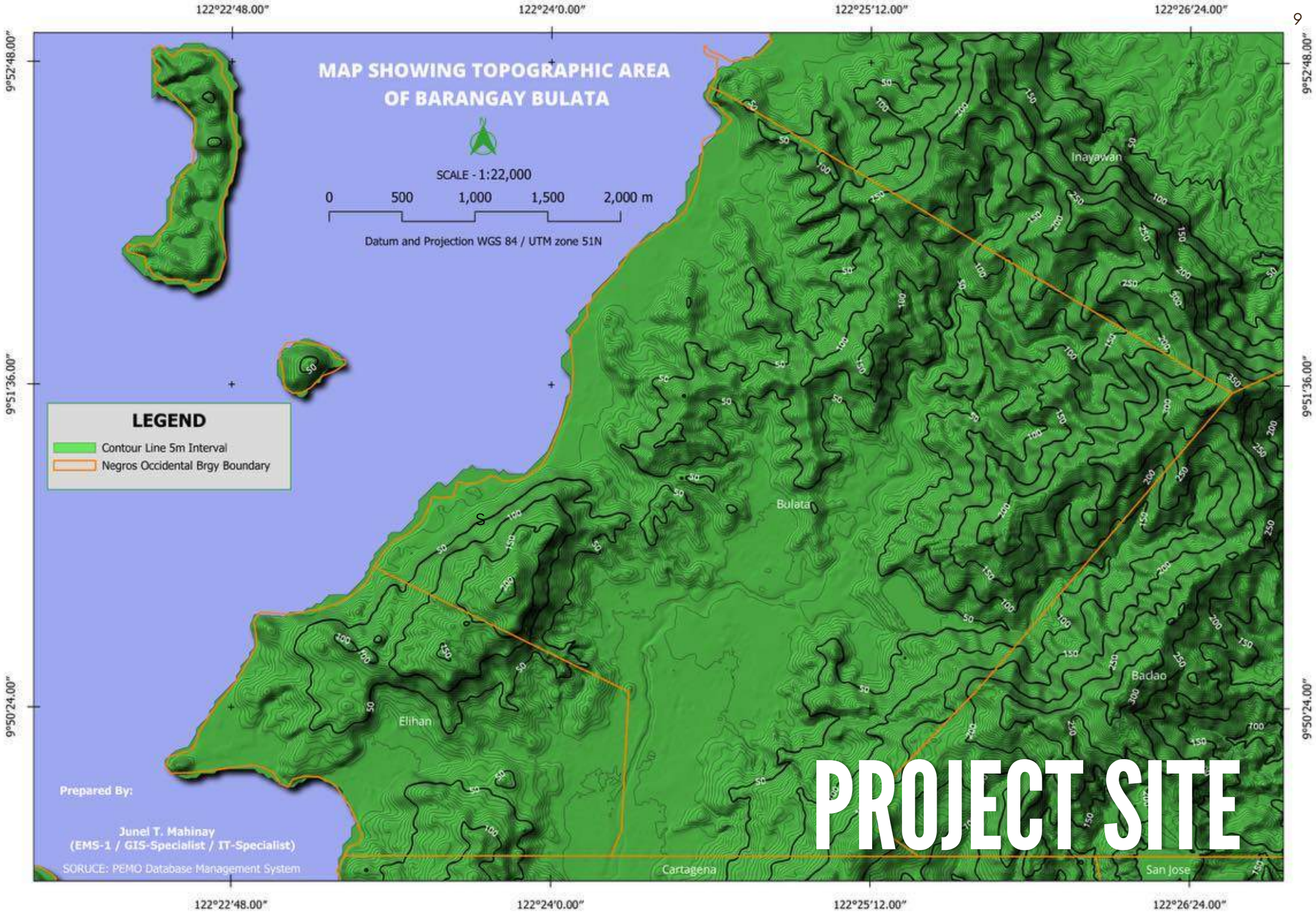
RESTORING LANDSCAPES, PROTECTING HABITATS

Using terrain-based mapping and local knowledge to guide targeted restoration while enhancing protection of critical habitats. By leveraging topographic data, this pillar restores and protects degraded habitat for environmental stewardship.

04

Building on years of community engagement, ACE 4 brings our core initiatives together into a cohesive ecosystem designed for resilience and inclusive growth.

Together, these four pillars ensure that local knowledge drives a self-sustaining future for both the community and the environment.



Located in southern Negros Occidental, the project site lies in **Barangay Bulata**—a coastal and terrestrial community that serves as a focal point for conservation and sustainable programmes. Spanning coastal waters, mangroves, agricultural land, and rolling upland terrain, the site is rich in marine and terrestrial biodiversity, vital watersheds, and coastal ecosystems.

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

Community Leadership and Opportunity

8 people's organisations united under one federation, creating a stronger platform for community action

1 community hub established as a shared space for learning, enterprise development, and community collaboration

3 livelihood enterprises piloted, creating new pathways for local income and enterprise development

20 federation members strengthened their leadership skills through peer learning and cross-site exchange

2 neighbouring barangays assessed, laying the groundwork for adapting ACE's community development approach

Education and Public Engagement

10 Sustainability Scholars supported to pursue higher education; now with 6 graduates, opening doors to professional careers

15 community members supported to gain employment-relevant technical skills through TESDA training

400+ children reached through the new Community Library, expanding access to books and learning opportunities

4 marine sanctuary information boards installed, helping residents and visitors understand and protect the DMRS

1 community recipe book produced, preserving local food knowledge while promoting sustainable food practices

22 community members equipped with topographic mapping skills, contributing local knowledge to future restoration planning

Ecosystem Resilience

41 citizen scientists trained, building local capacity to monitor reefs and contribute data for conservation

71 community volunteers mobilised for coastal action, removing 609 kg of waste from Bulata's coast and reef

3 priority areas identified for restoration, supporting future nursery and food-forest development

5 educational institutions engaged, connecting community conservation with research, science and environmental learning

Project ACE shows what can happen when communities, partners, and long-term commitment come together. From stronger community leadership to greater resilience, these milestones reflect what we have achieved together and the foundations we are continuing to build.

Uniting People's Organisations for Sustainable Community Growth

In a milestone that reflects trust and shared purpose, eight People's Organisations unanimously agreed to unite under one umbrella name—the **Buligay Bulata Integrated Livelihood Federation (BILFRED).** The federation name was adopted to represent the community identity. The root word *Bulig*, which means "to help," embodies the spirit of helping one another and moving forward together

With their own unique strengths, BUSFA, PIFFA, BUSPIVA, BWASSFA, BIDAFFSWISA, BUYFFA, BREBATGAWA, and the Bantay Dagat have been champions of community development. And now that their paths converge, they create a stronger force.

The organisations can now pool their experiences, share resources, and pursue common goals that benefit all.

Most importantly, the merging of all POs signifies a powerful step toward a unified, community-led leadership and long-term empowerment for Bulata, for its people, and for the environment.

01 | **BUSFA** Bulata Small Fisherfolk Association

02 | **PIFFA** Purok 6 Integrated Farmers and Fisherfolk Association

03 | **BUSPIVA** Bulata Solo Parents Integrated Vendors Association

04 | **BANTAY DAGAT**

05 | **BWASSFA** Bulata Watershed Sustainable Fisherfolk Association

06 | **BIDAFFSWISA** Biga-a Dam Fisherfolk Small Water Irrigation System Association

07 | **BUYFFA** Bulata Young Farmer and Fisherfolk Association

08 | **BREBATGAWA** Bulata Small Fisherfolk Association



In Photo: PIFFA Members showcasing their farm products during Market Day







Weekly Market Day Opens at Barangay Bulata

Barangay Bulata officially marked a significant milestone for local economic empowerment with the ceremonial opening of the federation-led market day program. With the Pahauli Center fully operational, members of the Buligay Bulata Federation can now showcase their products and crafts to the public.

This dedicated hub ensures that the economic benefits generated within the community remain within the community.

Moving forward, the Pahauli Center will host a regular Weekly Market Day every Wednesday. This convenient and accessible venue aims to encourage local trade and foster a self-sustaining circulation of income among residents.





THE MAKING OF DAGYAW JEWELRY

Waves, Craft, and a Living



Along the coastline of Bulata, gem-like pieces glimmer beneath the sun. The light that reflects from them catches the eye. Some shine brighter in crystal-clear and white, some blend into the sand in brown hues, and some stand out in shades of green.

These are sea glasses—a frosted material sculpted by the waves. They are the byproduct of old bottles, transformed by years of weathering. In a way, what was once made of sand finds its way back to the shores.

For years, these little pieces were simply a collection of what children would pick up for fun. But what began as an innocent curiosity would eventually become a source of livelihood.

The women of Bulata saw potential in its beauty. In the hands of the Purok 6 Integrated Farmers and Fisherfolk Association (PIFFA), these discarded pieces were turned into accessories. With support from Project ACE, the women, mostly solo parents, received training in jewelry-making techniques and the processes needed to transform their creativity into sustainable enterprise. They were provided with tools and equipment to give them better means to work.

From mainly sea glass material, they eventually explored other upcycled materials.

For Joevelyn Gelle, inspiration can be found even in the most unexpected places. While thrift shopping, she noticed old clothes adorned with pearls, beads, sequins, and other sparkling embellishments. Instead of leaving them behind, she began collecting these pieces and imagining new possibilities for them. Eventually, her handiwork created a pair of earrings, a pendant, and bracelet. A new batch and style, in addition to the sea glass line.

Today, their handmade creations are displayed at Danjugan Island and partner resorts in and around Bulata. It is in the spirit of giving things another life that sustains this craftsmanship and their extra source of livelihood.

With ten members, the Dagyaw Jewelry enterprise continues to showcase their artistry, where every piece of their creation carries a memory of where it came from. From the sea, the community, and the hands who made it.

When you wear Dagyaw Jewelry, you are not simply wearing an accessory. **You are wearing a story.**

BIGA-A DAM

A seven-hectare freshwater dam in Purok 5, Bulata, that drives community tilapia harvesting. It stands as a proud symbol of local stewardship, managed by BIDAFFSWISA.

A New Chapter Rises in Bulata: The Opening of the Pahauli Center

Nothing marks a community's progress quite like having a space to gather with purpose. The time when people had to meet in borrowed halls is long past; the federation's shared vision now has a home of its own.

On November 23, 2025, a new chapter rises in Bulata as the Pahauli Integrated Community Farm Resource Center opens its doors. Made possible through the generous support of the German Embassy Manila, this hub symbolizes community resilience and sustainable development.

It will serve as a center for training programs, learning opportunities, and production support for income-generating initiatives for all members of the People's Organisation.

At the heart of the Pahauli Center is the belief that lasting development begins with people working together. By providing a permanent home for the federation, the center strengthens collaboration among the people.

Its name, *Paha-uli*, derived from the Visayan term meaning "to recover" or "to restore," speaks of renewal.

Every meeting within its walls represents another step toward a future where communities are empowered to lead, livelihoods continue to grow, and care for the environment remains at the center of development.

Moving forward, the vision for this center highlights a well-positioned space for a community-based eco-tourism economy in the locality. The goal is to use this local asset as an inviting platform to highlight the culture and environmental stewardship in Bulata to visitors.

This forward-looking approach ensures that conservation and economic growth reinforce one another. Under one roof, community empowerment will continue to drive Bulata's future forward.



In photo: Buligay Bulata Federation Officers and Community Development Officer preparing for the launching of the Pahauli Center

Grounded in Trust, Driven By Purpose

a leadership journey

To lead people is to walk beside them.

For an association that is built on grassroots initiative and shared purpose, success relies on the dedication of each member. One who particularly stands tall is the one who steers the ship with a steady helm—and at the Purok 6 Integrated Fisherfolk and Farmers Association (PIFFA), that person was Ricky.

Long before becoming PIFFA's President, Ricky Ordaniel had already spent years standing up for the marginalised communities. He believed that genuine leadership begins with trust, especially since he was selected for the role in August 2024.

His unwavering commitment to the cause was first shaped in Sipalay, where he worked for a mining company. He began as a checker, but his ability to connect with people affected by mining operations soon led him to a bigger role in community relations.

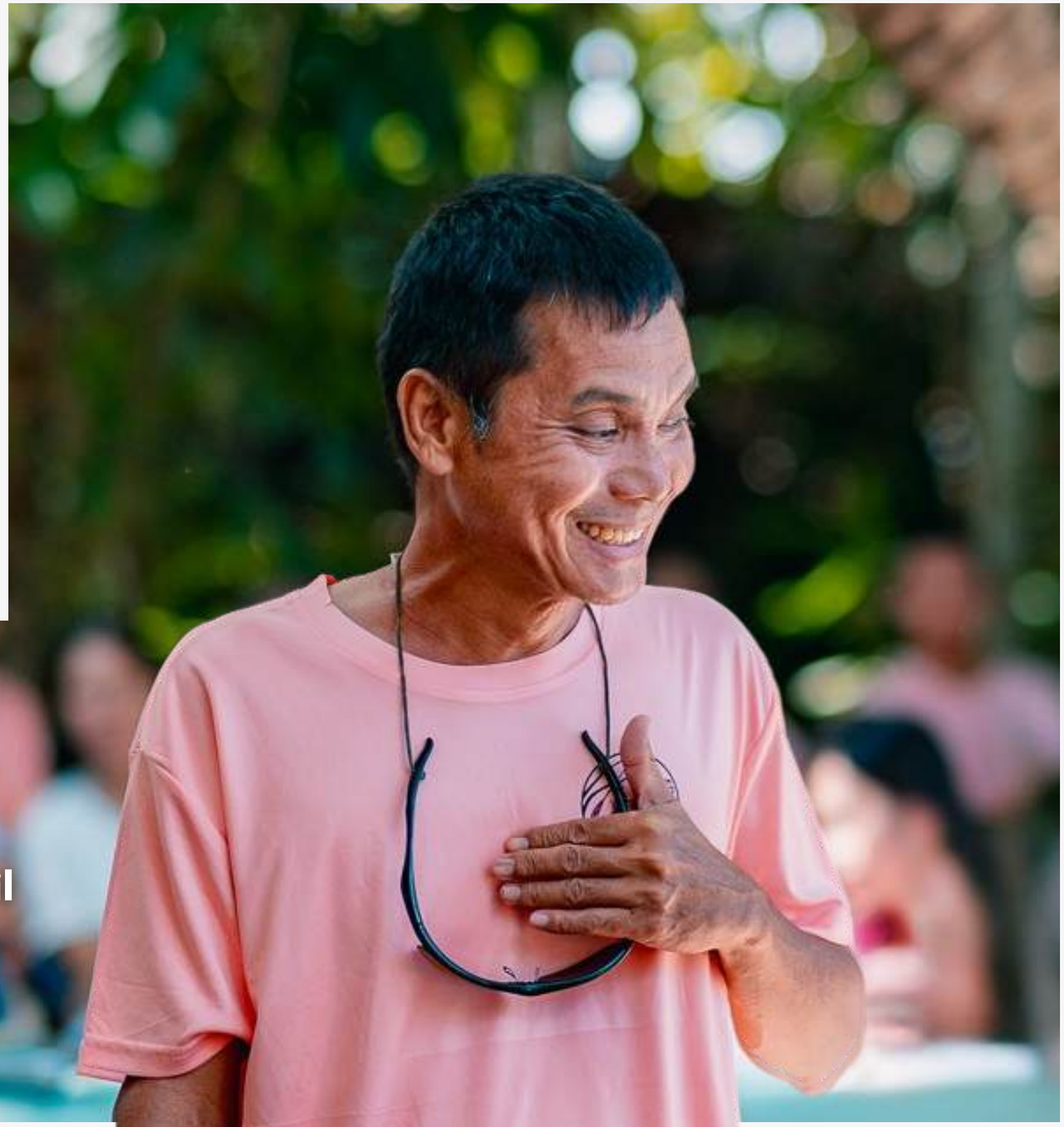
It was there that he learned leadership is rarely simple.

His role often placed him between company management and the people whose lives were disrupted. He witnessed how isolated communities, limited by access to education and information, could easily be overlooked. Faced with difficult choices, Ricky eventually fought for what he believed was right. He chose to stand with the people.

The experience left a lasting conviction: **communities deserve leaders and partners who never compromise the trust placed in them.** That same conviction continues to guide him today.

Today, Ricky leads the association's nursery operations, where thousands of seedlings supplied through PRRCFI are carefully propagated for landscape restoration efforts and farming livelihood sources.

Through the combined efforts of the whole association, they continue to prove that when communities lead their own stewardship, sustainable progress follows naturally.



And like every tree that begins with careful hands and patient tending, trust takes root quietly. Until one day, an entire community grows because of it.

Extending Our Reach: Getting to Know Neighbouring Communities for Community-Led Progress

As part of scaling up local community development efforts, Project ACE is laying the groundwork to extend its reach into nearby communities.

Currently in its inception phase, this expansion begins with establishing initial baseline assessments in Barangay Elihan and Barangay Cartagena. This is a crucial step to gather data and understand the distinct socio-economic and environmental landscapes of these neighbouring barangays.

By mapping out local resources, community needs, and existing grassroots leadership early on, we ensure that future interventions are grounded, responsive, and built on real community stories.

Barangay Elihan

Geographic Detail:
Lowland and Upland

Population:
4,980

Land Area:
23,345,700 sqm

Barangay Cartagena

Geographic Detail:
Coastal and Upland

Population:
5,234

Land Area:
13,350.800 sqm



3D TOPOGRAPHIC MAPPING



The 3D Topographic Mapping Workshop was conducted to address persistent challenges in land-use planning, disaster risk reduction, and natural resource management in Barangay Bulata, which arise from its complex terrain, expanding settlements, and increasing exposure to climate-related hazards.





Community Leaders Build a Barangay 3D Map

The increasing exposure to climate-related hazards continues to present challenges for land-use planning, disaster risk reduction, and natural resource management in Barangay Bulata. To help bridge this gap, a 3D Topographic Mapping Workshop was conducted from January 26-30, 2026, at Danjugan Island.

The said workshop brought together 22 participants (6 female, 16 male) from local government offices, environmental agencies, community organisations, and partner institutions.

With a forward-looking vision, this activity aimed to translate technical topographic data into a participatory, accessible, and community-validated 3D map.

Facilitated by the Philippine Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation, Inc. (PRRCFI) and the Philippine Association for Intercultural Development, Inc. (PAFID), this workshop strengthened shared understanding of Barangay Bulata's physical landscape and spatial features.

NEWS STORY

Bulata Teamplados Joins Terra Madre Asia and Pacific Showcase

The slow food movement in Bulata, named '*Teamplados'* participated in the Slow Food Negros Terra Madre Asia and Pacific on November 19-23, 2025.

This organised movement held in Bacolod City, Philippines gathered over 2,000 delegates from more than 20 countries. The invitation spanned grassroots community members, high-profile culinary figures, government bodies, and international groups.

This initiative provided a valuable opportunity for Project ACE team and PO representatives in Bulata in partnership with the Punta Bulata Beach Resort, a valuable opportunity to promote locally-sourced organic products for their food showcase.

During the event, Teamplados displayed products such as native chickens and eggs, organic vegetables, and root crops. The team also sold their own recipe of slow food and drinks, using only authentic flavors without the use of artificial seasonings or additives.

The event serves as a platform for networking, knowledge exchange, and collaboration with other farmers' groups, institutions, and buyers. It also promotes the Federation's ongoing livelihood initiatives supported by the program, encouraging more communities to adopt sustainable practices.

This effort supports the cause of promoting the value of natural, healthy, and sustainably produced food.

Php 91,500.00
gross income

Php 19,296.85
net income















Ecological farming protects local ecosystems and supporting local farmers ensures equitable livelihood

OUR STORY

Bulata Teamplados

COOKBOOK

A celebration of indigenous ingredients, traditional techniques, and the stories behind every dish.

LOCAL INGREDIENTS
Sourced from our farms and seas.

TRADITIONAL RECIPES
Passed down and preserved with care.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT
Supporting livelihoods and strengthening communities.

good clean fair

food for all



39

The future of slow food Bulata

Slow Food Bulata is a continuing journey - one that grows with the people, the place, and the changing times.

As we move forward, we remain committed to strengthening our local food systems by supporting farmers and fisherfolk, empowering the next generation, and protecting the natural resources that sustain us.

Through initiatives like Teamplados, food education, community gatherings, and partnerships, we aim to create more opportunities for livelihood, learning, and cultural exchange.

We envision a future where Bulata's food heritage is not only preserved, but actively lived - where young people carry forward the knowledge of those before them, and where our community continues to thrive through food that is Good, Clean, and Fair.

This is only the beginning.

40

slow food cookbook contributors

EDUCATION OFFICER
Lloyd Kevin Guanzon

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
Marietta Gersaniva

COMMUNICATION OFFICER
Grace Divine Salumag

PROJECT SUPPORT
Sheina Parnoncillion

COMMUNITY MEMBERS
Annabelle Seminion
Carmelita Lontes
Mylyn Gantalao
Pelita Montes
John Lorenz Ongsoco
Rowena Lumabao
Andre Sequihod
Rellan Guanzon

SLOW FOOD ADVOCATE, OPERATIONS MANAGER (PBR)
Francis Jim Albano

BAR SUPERVISOR
Mark Anthony Reyes

CULINARY TEAM
Chef Jerry Ogoy
Chef Jimbert Montalba
Chef Mark Turco
Chef C-jay Padronia
Chef Andy Mollenido
Chef Jonel Alvarez
Chef Nathaniel Cabrobias
Ly Ann Kate Baralla
Connielyn Carbajosa

WITH SUPPORT FROM
PRRCFI
Project ACE
Communities for Nature
Punta Bulata Beach Resort and Spa



Turning Pages, Shaping Futures: The Bulata Community Library

The Bulata Community Library was born from a simple yet meaningful belief: **that every child deserves access to knowledge and the opportunity to discover the joy of reading.**

The idea took shape when **Ms. Rhoda Phillips, Trustee of PRRCFI and Founder and Chair of Communities for Nature,** visited Bulata Elementary School and saw a former science room that had been badly damaged by Typhoon Odette and remained unused. Where others might have seen an empty room, she saw the possibility of creating a space for learning.

Through a personal fundraising initiative, Ms. Rhoda, together with her family, friends, and supporters, mobilised resources to bring that vision to life. With the collective efforts of PRRCFI, the school, the community, and various partners and donors, the once-damaged room was transformed into the **Bulata Community Library.**

More than a school facility, the library was envisioned as a shared learning space for the children, youth, and wider community of Bulata—a place where books can spark curiosity, imagination, and new possibilities.

Its opening brought together students, teachers, community leaders, partners, and families in celebration of a shared investment in education. Since then, its collection has continued to grow through donations and partnerships.

From a room left damaged by a typhoon to a space now filled with books and possibilities, the Bulata Community Library is a reminder of what can happen when a community comes together to invest in its children.

Every book opened is another opportunity to imagine, learn, and dream beyond what we already know.

> ***The story of this library is a story of people coming together, all the way from the UK, in the Philippines, and the people from all walks of life to provide a learning space for the children in Bulata.***
>
> Rhoda Phillips, 2026









Before the shelves were lined with books, the room was simply an empty space. Today, it echoes with the quiet excitement of children turning pages and discovering new worlds.


The Nest
DepEd Division of La Union
Mik Zarzuela


Tomorrow
a
Leader Leader


CORALS
OF THE WORLD
GEOGRAPHIA
ENVIRONMENT AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
ATLAS
Merit
Students Encyclo
THE


April 7 2026





Skills for the Future: Building Careers in Hospitality Training



Across the growing tourism landscape of Southern Negros, demand for meaningful career opportunities is higher than ever. Every step forward for the local economy mean locals thriving within it.

Recognising this, the partnership between PRRCFI, Excelsius Technical and Vocational Training Center (TVTC), and Punta Bulata Resort & Spa (PBR) brought industry-recognized hospitality training directly to the community of Bulata through the **Housekeeping NC II Training Program.**

The 55-day competency-based course enabled **15 community beneficiaries—8 women and 7 men—to gain practical skills without having to leave their community.** By bringing the training directly to Bulata, the program made quality technical-vocational education more accessible while reducing the barriers of distance and cost.

Throughout the program, scholars developed competencies essential to the hospitality industry, including preparing guest rooms, providing housekeeping services, managing laundry and linens, maintaining public areas and facilities, delivering valet services, and responding professionally to different guest situations. They also gained actual workplace experience through supervised industry training at Punta Bulata Resort & Spa.

> **“Dako gid ang nabulig sang TESDA training sa amon, kay nakabalo kami sang mga skills and competency nga kinahanglan para makapangita obra.”**
>
> *The TESDA training was a huge help to us, because we learned the skills and competencies needed to find a job.”*

Having completed their training on July 13, 2026, the scholars are now preparing for their TESDA National Assessment, the next step toward earning their Housekeeping NC II certification.

ACE SCHOLARS

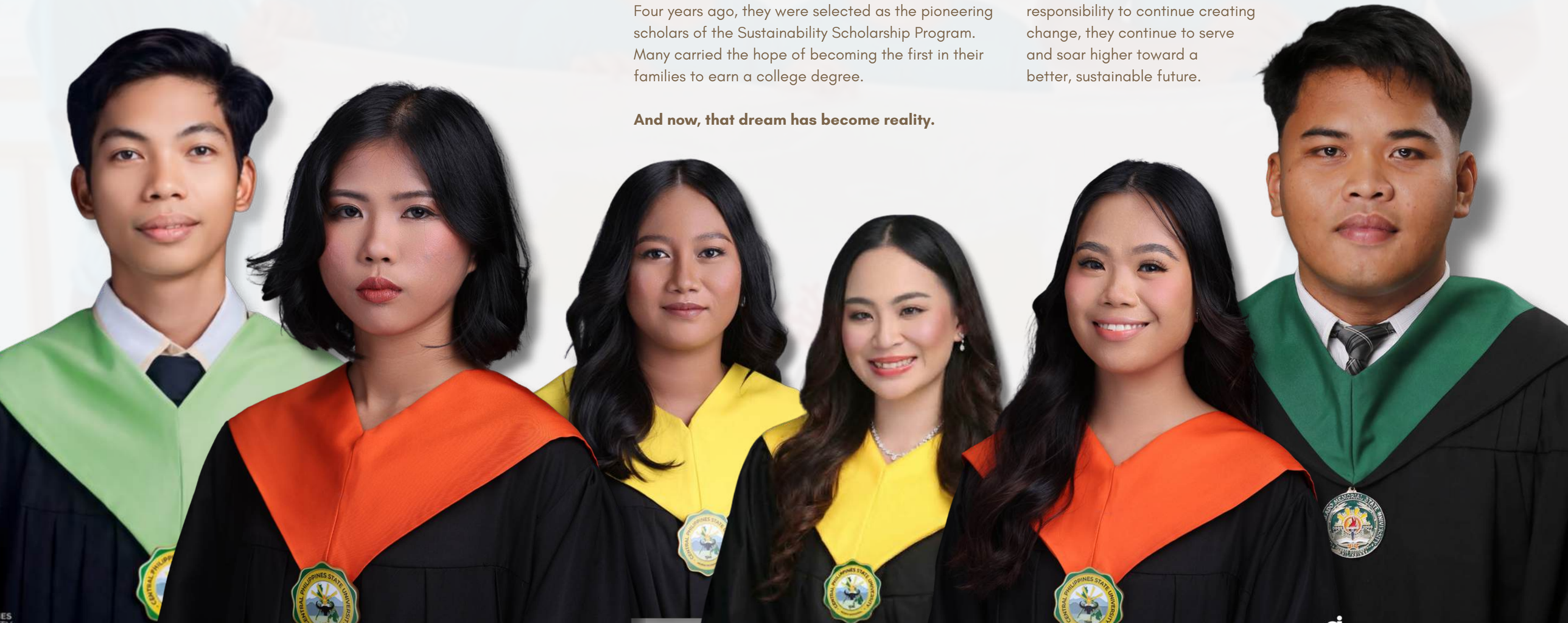
THE GRADUATES

Every graduation tells a story—but for these six scholars, it is the culmination of a dream that once seemed beyond reach.

Four years ago, they were selected as the pioneering scholars of the Sustainability Scholarship Program. Many carried the hope of becoming the first in their families to earn a college degree.

And now, that dream has become reality.

As these young dreamers turn their tassels and walk onto the center stage, they beam with pride. Remembering the sacrifices of their families, the faith of their communities, and the responsibility to continue creating change, they continue to serve and soar higher toward a better, sustainable future.



OUR SCHOLARS

The Next Generation of Stewards and Leaders



Angelica Nicole Entrealgo
BS Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering



Ryan Ellanic
BS Forestry



Kristian Myle Gascon
BS Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering



Rica Mae Cabanero
BS Agribusiness



John Christian Matia-ong
BS Fisheries



Christine Faith Alonte
BS Fisheries



John Lloyd Seminion
BS Education



Shara Gane Matulac
BS Education



Christian Gamao
BS Agribusiness



Angelo Donggon
BS Fisheries

10
Sustainability Scholars Supported

6
Sustainability Scholars Graduated

5
Courses Represented

3
Latin Honor Awardees

1
Shared Vision

The ACE Sustainability Scholarship Program

At the heart of Project ACE is a commitment to education, youth leadership, and nurturing local potential. As one of the program's key initiatives, the Sustainability Scholarship Program creates opportunities for deserving young people from Barangay Bulata and other communities in Southern Negros Occidental to pursue higher education while developing a deeper sense of responsibility toward their communities and environment.

The program goes beyond academic assistance. Scholars receive holistic support through access to technology, mentoring, hands-on training, volunteer opportunities, and immersive learning experiences.

Danjugan Island serves as a living classroom where scholars actively contribute to environmental education and biodiversity conservation efforts.

Beyond this, they also serve as dedicated volunteers in community-based programs. These future stewards are putting their knowledge into practice right where it matters most.

Now they're stepping forward not just as graduates, but as young leaders giving back, staying connected to their communities, and carrying the spirit of ACE into what comes next.



The Danjugan Island Marine Reserve and Sanctuary (DMRS) was established to ensure the long-term conservation and protection of marine biodiversity in Barangay Bulata.

As a Marine Protected Area (MPA), its general aim is to promote the sustainable use of natural resources through effective management and community stewardship.

To raise awareness and community support, informational signage has been installed across four strategic locations in Barangay Bulata to promote active public participation.



REEF SURVEY

Reefs are the vital lifelines for our seas and communities that depend on them. In Southern Negros Occidental, the people learning to protect them come from every corner—the locals, fisherfolk, bantay dagat, local officials, and even the private sector. All these people working together is exactly the premise behind the ALWAN and MPA-FishMApp Refresher Course.

Project ACE's latest push to put reef monitoring in the hands of the people closest to it aims to equip them with knowledge and skills to manage their own Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This year's session paired classroom refreshers with in-water surveys, enabling trained citizen scientists to efficiently log fish counts, coral cover, and reef health across priority sites.

The training was led by the PEW Marine Team: Czarmayne Escoro, Kim Maningo, and Raphael Toledo, under Dr. Rene Abesamis. There were a total of 41 citizen scientists (12 female, 29 male).

Representatives from the Southern Negros Coastal Development and Management Council (SNCDMC) attended, sending personnel to take part in the data management training for data collection.

As they become equipped for such endeavors, these efforts of independent reef survey will continue in their respective LGUs, in coordination with the SNCDMC.

THE CITIZEN SCIENTISTS



Theodore Señeres, Hinoba-an ENRO

It's a privilege to be able to participate in this refresher training. I have learned a lot, and it further deepens my interest in marine conservation and protection.



Lovejoy Tejido, Neg. Occidental PEMO

The in-water surveys were tiring, but it's fulfilling. It's interesting to apply all the technicalities we learned into real action.

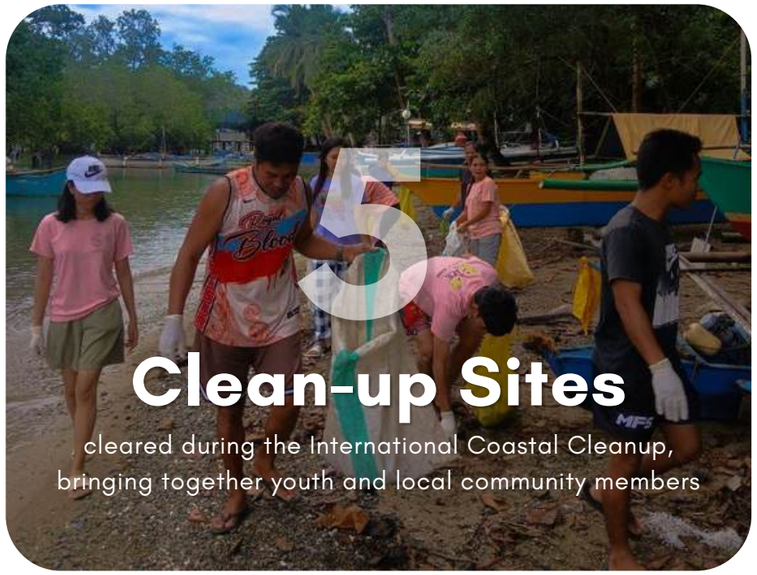


Oliver Edulag, Danjugan Island

There are times when the sea conditions or the reef itself aren't ideal for the survey, but we still do our best in gathering data. In cases like this, we all must help each other.

GRASSROOTS ACTIONS

for environmental stewardship



5

Clean-up Sites

cleared during the International Coastal Cleanup, bringing together youth and local community members



250 kg

Vermicompost

produced per month to enhance soil health and promote plant growth for the community garden



7000+

Seedlings and Mangrove Propagules

nurtured at the Antol Nursery for coastal restoration, reforestation, and livelihood generation

The Mudcrab Project



Can food waste help shape the future of sustainable aquaculture?

Project ACE and PRRCFI, in partnership with Carlos Hilado Memorial State University (CHMSU), are exploring that possibility through an experimental mud crab culture project.

The pilot study investigates whether repurposed food waste and plant-based protein alternatives, including vermicast, can serve as sustainable feed ingredients for mangrove crabs.

Traditionally, mud crab farming depends heavily on fishmeal-based feeds, which contribute to overfishing, rising production costs, and pressure on already vulnerable marine resources.

By transforming organic waste from island meal preparation into a valuable resource, the project embraces the principles of a circular economy while seeking more environmentally responsible aquaculture practices.

Although still in its experimental stage, the study aims to establish the feasibility and viability of these alternative feeds. If proven successful, the research could pave the way for sustainable mud crab farming that provides new livelihood opportunities for coastal fishing communities while helping conserve marine ecosystems for future generations.



MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Gerardo "Gerry" Ledesma
President, Philippine Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation, Inc.

Rhoda Avanzado Phillips
Trustee, PRRCFI
Funder Liaison with the LMAX Group
CEO, Communities for Nature

Sef Alba Carandang
Trustee, PRRCFI
Community Development and Gender

Kaila Ledesma Trebol
Trustee, PRRCFI
Conservation and Education

PROJECT ACE TEAM

Lloyd Kevin Guanzon
Project Lead
Education Officer

Bianca Nicole Lerma
Foundation Manager

Marietta Gersaniva
Community Development Officer

Selin Toker
Science Officer

Grace Divine Salumag
Communications Officer

Sheina Parnoncillion
Project Support Officer

You cannot protect what you do not know,
and you cannot love what you do not understand.

THE PROJECT ACE TEAM



THE PROJECT ACE COMMUNITY



Four Years of Project ACE

Four years of Project ACE have gone by, but the journey to this very moment is filled with stories of communities and partners joining hands and moving forward together.

There have been moments of achievement, challenges along the way, and lessons learned. But ultimately, what has grown strongest over these years are the relationships we have built and the confidence nurtured within the community.

Four years is not a long time. There is still much work to be done. But step by step, we have worked alongside the community to build their capacity, empowering them to take greater responsibility for the future.

Project ACE has become part of the story of Bulata. A small barangay that is now opening itself to new opportunities and possibilities. It is a reflection of how far its people have come.

T**his is the foundation.**
This is the progress.
This is the beginning of what comes next.





GROWING STRONGER

The journey continues, but the wheel takes a turn.

After four years of walking alongside the community, the next chapter is about gradually putting more of the journey in their hands.

ACE 5 builds on the foundation we have created together, with a stronger focus on community ownership and long-term resilience. Our ultimate goal is to see communities become more confident and independent, being able to recognise their own potential.

In ACE 5, we look toward a growing, stronger, and more resilient Bulata—and, with a hopeful vision, a future that extends beyond it.

Acknowledgments

This publication is a collective labor of love from the people of Bulata—our community leaders, sea wardens, educators, youth, and families who continue to safeguard our shared home and coastal heritage. We extend our deepest gratitude to the leaders and partners across Negros Occidental for walking alongside us in our commitment to community-led conservation and sustainable development.

We especially recognize that four years of progress under Project ACE were brought to life through the vital tripartite partnership between Communities for Nature, PRRCFI, and LMAX Group.

Most of all, we thank the entire community of Barangay Bulata; this milestone is a true reflection of your shared stories, your resilience, and your vision for a sustainable future.

Special thanks to

BUILIGAY BULATA FEDERATION
PUNTA BULATA BEACH AND RESORT
BARANGAY BULATA COUNCIL
PEW RESEARCHERS
ACE SCHOLARS
CITIZEN SCIENTISTS
LOCAL VOLUNTEERS
THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Photo Credits

Arsen Carl Vargas
Jericho Dela Ostia
Divine Salumag
Sef Carandang
Kaila Trebol
Ryman Armada
Jackson Groves
Carlos Obidas
Francis Alejandro
Kervin Barreto


What the sea
once carried,
now carries
hope.
wear a story
PRRCFI
ACE
LMAX
GROUP
COMMUNITIES for NATURE