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**Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for Development
(STRIDE)**



Developing New Patterns and Designs for the Local Weaving Industry In Paoay, Ilocos Norte

GRANTEE: Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU)

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Prof. Lawrence A. Eclarin

INDUSTRY PARTNER: Nagbacalan Loomweavers Multi-Purpose Cooperative, Inc. (NLMPC)

GRANT PERIOD: September 1, 2015 to August 31, 2016

GRANT AMOUNT: Php 1,620,080 (approximately USD34,470)

Revitalizing the weaving industry with new patterns

The *Abel Iloco* is an integral part of the culture and arts of the *Ilocanos*. It is a collective term that refers to the local weaving process (*abel*) and the woven product (*inabel*). *Inabel* is classified into different types: *banderado* (from the term *bandera*), consisting of colored stripes; *binakol*, with op-art swirls called *kosikos*; *nagkudil* or face-to-face, reversible designs; *sinukitan* or *insukit*, embroidered-like designs; and others. The materials used for *Abel* are mostly cotton, but they can also be derived from other raw materials like bamboo, *saluyot*, and even seaweeds. Products that can be developed from *Abel* are household items and clothing, to bags and other accessories.



Dr. Eclarin presents the new patterns that she and her team created

The study was conducted by MMSU, with support from USAID STRIDE to; a) aid in the development of new patterns and designs for the local weaving industry; b) innovate products for the *inabel* using the patterns generated; c) recruit and train loom weavers; d) produce enhanced *Abel* products; and e) formulate a strategic framework to sustain the local weaving tradition and preserve the *Ilocano* heritage.

Milestones

In the course of project implementation, existing patterns and designs of the *Abel Iloco* were documented; basic weaving steps were outlined; and tools needed in the craft were identified. Threading and treading drafts were also collected as a means to preserve the weaving tradition with references to facts and important details on weaving the *Abel Iloco*.



A member of the industry partner weaves on a weaving loom acquired through the USAID STRIDE grant

Under the research project, a total of 20 new patterns were generated using the computer application that was developed. Ten of these were used for final production. The woven cloths were used as materials for bags, clothing, and upholstery. Contemporary designs were employed to come up with innovative products. The woven cloths were evaluated and assessed. On average, all final products were rated satisfactory. Participants at the product launch appreciated the fabricated bags, clothing, and upholstery and expressed interest in buying and marketing them.

Modernization, industrialization, and globalization affected society's culture and traditions in various ways, resulting in a more competitive market for locally manufactured products. In order to match global standards, Philippine local industries must improve product quality. The collaborative research conducted by MMSU and NLMPC also established the importance of research in product development and innovation. The combined efforts and commitment of both collaborators were essential in the successful implementation of project activities. The project also highlighted how research can help preserve cultural heritage and seek solutions to problems facing local industries, such the development of a computer application for pattern generation for industrial designs.

Moving forward

For the weavers, the project introduced innovative ways of generating new patterns and designs for the *Abel Iloco* and other means of enhancing the handwoven products. The trainings enabled them to share and discuss techniques on weaving, which could help facilitate better production. Moreover, the results of the study provided new research directions and ideas for innovation.