

## Environmental Degradation Roadshow, Philippines (2022) Case Study

*Period of Performance: JAN-OCT 2023*



**Practice Area:** South China Sea  
Community of Practice

**Donor/Client:** Dept. of State

**Partner:** Project V, Rosem  
Morten, Palawan State  
University

### Project Objectives

In early 2023, IMPL. PROJECT received a grant from the US State Department to design a multimedia awareness and capacity building program around the myriad of issues facing the South China Sea and the communities living and working in the region. Many issues stem from the incursion of foreign vessels into The Philippines territorial waters, depleting fisheries and even committing acts of violence against the fisherfolk.

- **Project Objective 1:** *Create a photography roadshow intended to spark discussion among viewers regarding Philippine maritime sovereignty and the negative impact of the PRC in the South China Sea.*
- **Project Objective 2:** *Film a fisherfolk-centric documentary featuring interviews with fisherfolk about their negative personal experiences with PRC vessels, ideally bringing greater awareness to an issue that many Filipinos know nothing about.*
- **Project Objective 3:** *Put on several iterations of journalism training for young Filipino filmmakers or film students to enhance their ability to tell the importance of the rules-based order in the South China Sea.*

## Program Design

(Not much about this on drive)

## Outcomes

- *Voices of the Waves*, The photojournalism exposition, was brought to life by Photographer Rosem Morten, and shown at three venues throughout the late Spring of 2023. This exhibit offered a glimpse into the lives of Filipino fisherfolk who brave the danger and uncertainty of the open sea to provide for their families. These local fishermen are also often faced with violence and depleted fisheries perpetrated by the PRC in Philippine territorial waters. Rosem Morten also spoke publicly about her series at two subsequent events, further spreading awareness of this serious topic.
- *Panatag*, which is also the traditional name of the Scarborough Shoal, was filmed To highlight the stories of our fisherfolk who are affected by the continuing aggression of China in the area and other parts of The Philippine's exclusive economic zone. It also calls attention to the current food insecurity of the West Philippine Sea (WPS) and provides concrete recommendations for the campaign for the protection of our fisherfolk and their right to fish in local and traditional fisheries.
- Project V trained 47 students in a two-day journalism workshop, imbuing them with the skills to tell meaningful stories about how the way of life of Filipino fisherfolk is threatened by Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

## Impact

- Throughout the dedicated exhibits and speaking events, the stories and struggle of the fisherfolk from *Voices of the Waves* have been transmitted to thousands of people through the medium of photography. Several news outlets, including Al Jazeera and Philstar, also covered the exhibition, augmenting the range of the message. At the time of writing, several museums and the US Embassy in Manila are in talks to host successive showings of the powerful photographs.
- At the time of writing, *Panatag* has been screened at the US Embassy's media night and at the FEU Institute of Law, with further screenings scheduled and pending festival submissions.
- So far, three grant training recipients have published their work online to a broad audience, and a fourth is set to be published shortly. Each piece is a poignant example of how foreign encroachment in the WPS affects daily life for thousands in The Philippines.