

# **Children in Pa-aling and KubKub Fishing Expeditions**

An Assessment Report for the Deep-Sea  
and Fishing Sector Studies

ILO-IPEC Time Bound Programme

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## Introduction

### Drowning in Semantics or Lack of It?

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*Pa-aling* is the local name given to a fishing technology said to replace the once controversial labor intensive but highly profitable commercial fishing venture, the Muro-ami. Muro-ami, a Japanese fishing method first introduced in the Philippines *circa* 1920-30 (Olofson 2000a: 227; ILO-IPEC/CUI 2001:1; Oosterhout 1986:76). A total ban on Muro-ami fishing was gravely advocated sometime 1986-89 due to a number of pressing issues set forth emphatically by concerned environmentalists, civic and religious groups and government agencies.

Serious and major considerations included undesirable Muro-ami externalities such as environmental damage and the exploitation of child labor. The Muro-ami phenomenon was found to have unrecoverable negative impacts to coral reefs as it destroyed living colonies of coral polyps (Oosterhout: 76). It also heightened public awareness brought about by the increasing number reports of inhumane living and working conditions and of death tolls brought about by the hazards of Muro-ami work particularly among children, i.e. the media exposure of more than 100 bodies were found in a graveyard in Palawan mostly belonging to children. The children were entangled in the nets after diving (Dungog 2000).

Fisheries Administrative Order (FAO) 163 through the Department of Agriculture (DA) and its Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) placed a complete ban on Muro-ami in December 1989. Due to the dislocation of hundreds of Muro-ami economically dependent families, "*the issuance of a permit to continue Muro-ami in its modified version called Pa-aling*" was justified (ILO-IPEC/CUI: p.2). Pa-aling, as a fishing technology, is considered to be safer and environment-friendly since it uses air bubbles from a compressor to drive fishes out from the coral reefs as opposed to Muro-Ami described as "using stones tied on the ends of scarelines which when raised and lowered by swimmers often struck and damaged coral reef, making sounds to scare fish into the net" (Olofson et.al. (2000a: 244). This is also known as the use of *seroscas* (ILO-IPEC/CUI 2001:1-2).

While these improved developments are recognized, continued reports of "escapes", abusive and brutal living and working conditions on board keep flowing in too. Recent news coverage, website sources, journal articles, all contribute information leading to the questions "Is Muro-ami back?" or "Is Pa-aling and Muro-ami one and the same?" (ILO-IPEC/CUI: 2). Olofson et.al. (2000a: 227-249) provided an excellent early historical account of Muro-ami as the successor of

*oikomi-ami* or “drive-in-net” brought by Japanese migrant fisherfolk from a village known as Itomon, Okinawa, back in the 1930s. Pa-aling, according to Olofson, is also known as *otoshi-ami* or *otoshi* means “to drop” and *ami* (fishing) net. *Otoshi-ami*, the successor of Muro-ami, has been referred to thereafter as the “New” Muro-ami, “*an old dog with a new name*” (244-245).

Hence, it is believed to this day that Muro-ami still exist under the semblance of Pa-aling. *Oikomi-ami*, *Muro-ami*, *Otoshi-ami*, are not just a matter of semantics. These are also about the state of technology and its environmental, resource, social, economic and moral consequences. More importantly, it is about the plight of the dispersed and invisible children sea-laborers. Powerless children hardest to reach for they are almost unknown in both space and time. Ironically, some of the largest groups of child laborers are found in this category (DOLE: A12). Olofson et.al. could not have said it better (2000c: 499):

*“ Muro-ami continues to this day, with an expected return of the use of child labor, animalistic living conditions on board, medieval forms of cruelty, attempts to pass itself off as something new and different to “old” muro-ami, and negative environmental consequences, allegedly including now the use of cyanide to force fish out of the coral reefs”.*

This paper intends to assess child labor in deep sea and fishing sector by reviewing available information particularly on Muro-ami, Pa-aling and Kubkub fishing technologies. This includes details on:

- Operational Terminologies
- Print-media exposes
- Empirical studies review that cite:
  - Estimates of the incidence of child labor
  - General profiles of households
  - Profiles of unmarried household members
  - Household members perspectives on gender issues and children
    - Children as fish workers
      - Profiles
      - Working conditions
      - Other related information
- Knowledge about operators
- Recruitment schemes
- Fishing technologies
- Past and present interventions
- Covenants and Agreements
- Review of past related studies

## Defining Terminologies

Giving Meaning to certain Words and Describing a number of Concepts

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This Report uses the following terms and concepts and their definitions:

- A. Source: Republic Act No. 8550 otherwise known as "The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998" as published in the Official Gazette Vol. 94 No. 28.

**Commercial fishing** - the taking of fishery species by passive or active gear for trade, business or profit beyond subsistence or sports fishing and further classified as small-scale, medium-scale and large-scale (p. 25).

**Small-Scale Commercial Fishing** - fishing with passive or active gears utilizing fishing vessels of 3.1 gross tons (GT) up to twenty (20) GT (p. 25).

**Medium-Scale Commercial Fishing** - fishing utilizing active gears and vessels of 20.1 GT up to one hundred fifty (150) GT (p. 25).

**Large-Scale Commercial Fishing** - fishing utilizing active gears and vessels of more than one hundred fifty (150) GT (p. 25).

**Fisherfolk** - people directly or personally and physically engaged in taking and/or culturing and processing fishery and/or aquatic resources (p. 27).

**Fisherfolk Cooperative** - a duly registered association of fisherfolk with a common bond of interest, who have voluntarily joined together to achieve a lawful common social and economic end, making equitable contribution to the capital requirement and accepting a fair share of the risks and benefits of the undertakings in accordance with universally accepted cooperative principles (p. 27).

**Fisherfolk Organization** - an organized group, association, federation, alliance or an institution of fisherfolk which has at least fifteen (15) members, a set of officers, a constitution and by-laws, an organizational structure and a program of action (p. 27).

**Fishery Operator** - one who owns and provides the means including land, labor, capital, fishing gears and vessels, but does not personally engage in fishery (p. 27).

**Fishing Gear** - any instrument of device and its accessories utilized in taking fish and other fishery species (p. 27).

**Active Fishing Gear** - is a fishing device characterized by gear movements, and/or the pursuit of the target species by towing, lifting and pushing the gears, surrounding, covering, dredging, pumping and scaring the target species to impoundments; such as, but not limited to, trawl, purse seines, Danish seines, bag nets, paaling, drift gill net and tuna longline (p. 27).

**Passive Fishing Gear** - is characterized by the absence of gear movements and/or the pursuit of the target species; such as but not limited to, hook and line, fishpots, traps and fill nets across the path of the fish (p. 28).

**Fishing Vessel** - any boat, ship or other watercraft equipped to be used for taking of fishery species or aiding or assisting one (1) or more vessels in the performance of any activity relating to fishing, including, but not limited to, preservation, supply, storage, refrigeration, transportation and/or processing (p. 28).

**Fishworker** - a person regularly or not regularly employed in commercial fishing and related industries, whose income is either in wage, profit-sharing or stratified sharing basis, including those working in fish pens, fish cages, fish corrals/traps, fishponds, prawn farms, sea farm, salt beds, fish ports, fishing boat or trawlers, or fish processing and/or packing plants. Excluded from this category are administrators, security guards and overseers (p. 28).

**Municipal Fisherfolk** - persons who are directly or indirectly engaged in municipal fishing and other related fishing activities (p. 29).

**Municipal Fishing** - refers to fishing within municipal waters using fishing vessels of three (3) gross tons or less, or fishing not requiring the use of fishing vessels (p. 29).

**Municipal Waters** - include not only streams, lakes, inland bodies of water and tidal waters within the municipality which are not included within the protected areas as defined under Republic Act No. 7586 (The NIPAS Law), public forest, timber lands, forest reserves or fishery reserves, but also marine waters included between two (2) lines drawn perpendicular to the general coastline from points where the boundary lines of the municipality touch the sea at low tide and a third line parallel with the general coastline including offshore islands and fifteen (15) kilometers from such coastline. Where two (2) municipalities are so situated on opposite shores that there is less than thirty (30) kilometers of marine waters between them, opposite shore of the respective municipalities (p. 29).

**Purse Seine** - a form of encircling net having a line at the bottom passing through rings attached to the net, which can be drawn or pursed. In general, the net is set from a boat or pair of boats around the school of fish. The bottom of the net is pulled closed with the purse line. The net is then pulled aboard the fishing boat or boats until the fish are concentrated in the fish bag (p. 30).

**Trawl** - an active fishing gear consisting of a bag shaped net with or without otter boards to open its opening which is dragged or towed along the bottom or through the



water column to take fishery species by straining them from the water, including all variations and modifications of trawls (bottom, mid-water, and baby trawls) and tow nets (p. 30).

- B. Source: Fisheries Administrative Order No. 163. Series of 1986. Subject: Prohibiting the operation of "Muro-ami" and "Kayakas" in all Philippine Waters.

**Muro-ami**- (drive-in net) - means a Japanese fishing gear used in reef fishing which consists of a movable bag net and two detachable wings effecting the capture of fish by spreading the net in arc form around reefs or shoals and with the aid of scaring devices, a cordon of fishermen drive the fish from the reefs toward the bag portion of the whole net (p. 1).

**Kayakas** - (Tagalog, Bahan, Bahig Lukay, Lukayan, pukot likom-likom (Visayan), Bahan (Bicol) - means the local version of the Muro-ami but smaller in size using bamboo/trunk of trees as scare devices aside from coconut or other leaves or materials as scarelines to drive the fish out of the coral reefs (p.1).

**Scarelines** - (Serosca) - means a device made up of ropes usually #5 (2.5mm Ø) to #7 (3.5mm Ø) measuring 30 to 60 meters long with Styrofoam, bamboo or synthetic materials used as floats at both ends of the rope, and stones, lead or iron chains of about 2 to 5 kilos as weight. Along the ropes to which the weights are tied are 8 to 10 white plastics measuring 1" by 3 feet long or coconut or other leaves or materials tied at one meter intervals starting from the weight (p. 1).

- C. Source: Fisheries Administrative Order No. 190. Series of 1994. Subject: Regulations governing "Pa-aling" Fishing operation in Philippine waters.

**Pa-aling** - refers to a fishing gear consisting of a net set at coral/shoal reef areas whereby fish are driven towards the net by means of air bubbles produced by compressors (p. 1).

**Pa-aling fishing operation** - refers to the use of a mother boat and supported by airboats, net boats and a group of fishermen (p. 1).

## Escape: A Remaining Wager to Survive

Print Media Speaks

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Does Muro-Ami still exist? Is Pa-aling similarly as hazardous to children sea-workers? Is Pa-aling a misnomer? Who are the victims? Where are the victims? Who are the concerned government agencies? Who are the employer-operators? Are NGOs and LGUs actively involved in combating the ill-effects of this phenomenon?

Over the recent past, a number of news articles hit local and national headlines pertaining to Muro-Ami/ Pa-aling related incidences. A partial list of recent exposes include:

❖ **Muro-Ami remains sea scourge; 35 flee**

Thirty five fishermen 10 of them minors from Negros Oriental escaped from their fishing vessel in Palawan February 9 because they could no longer endure the inhuman treatments they were getting...The 35 were workers of FB Unity I owned by Unity Fishing Corporation based in Dauin town, Negros Oriental. On February 9, they were instructed to gather firewood on a nearby island. But they did not return and instead proceeded to Barangay Caruray to seek help. The reason for their escape was that they could no longer endure the inhuman treatment they were getting from their master and his men. They claimed that they were made to dive to the sea as early as 4am and would take their breakfast four hours later. Sometimes, the fishermen were beaten up or hit with a paddle by vessel officials even if they were sick (Gomez C. et.al., PDI, February 16, 2001).

❖ **Firm denies 'muro-ami' raps, maltreatment**

Dumaguete City - Unity Fishing Corporation has denied allegations that it is involved in the destructive 'muro-ami' fishing method and is hiring minors. The UFC branch manager belied reports that their fishermen were maltreated. He said that as a policy their company does not allow inhuman treatment otherwise no one would work with them. This was a reaction to reports of 35 fishermen escaped from FB Unity 1 on Feb. 9 because they could no longer stand the inhuman treatment they were getting. The branch manager further argued that their company is not hiring minors since this was unlawful. He said that representatives of the labor department, the Coast Guard, the BFAR and other concerned agencies conducted inspection before their vessels were allowed to sail (Amarado R., PDI, February 18, 2001).

❖ **Muro-Ami escapees: poverty indicator**

Vice-Governor Edgar Y. Teves said Friday that, the plight of some 35 Muro-Ami fishermen from Negros Oriental who escaped from a fishing vessel in Palawan is an indicator of the poverty of the people in the province. He scored the high unemployment in Negros Oriental the main culprit that forced local folks, children and adults to join the Muro-Ami fishing even if they are subjected to inhuman living conditions in the high seas (Fontelo D., Negros Chronicle: February 18, 2001).

❖ **Muro-Ami fishers won't press charges**

Exhausted and sick, ten muro-ami fishermen are now recovering from their sea ordeal in Barangay Mandaragat, Puerto Princesa City in Palawan. These men were among the 35 who escaped from FB Unity I of Unity Fishing. The fishermen are now resting because they are sick. They have fever due to starvation and strong winds while at sea. The fishermen, however, are scared of retaliation and will not press charges against the fishing firm (Dungog F., Cebu Daily News, February 18, 2001).

❖ **Muro-Ami recruits are mountain folks (Men Can't Swim)**

Mayor Valente Yap of Bindoy town admitted he was helpless in preventing the men of his town from working in fishing vessels engaged in Muro-Ami or Pa-aling operations. He said that most of the men who join these fishing operations from his town are farmers from the mountain village of Nalundan who do not even know how to swim. He also disclosed that even if some of them may know how to swim because they probably learn to swim in the river, but they are not really used to swimming in the ocean.

Some of the 35 fishermen escapees from FB Unity I in Palawan were from Bindoy, the rest were from the town of Sta. Catalina and the cities of Dumaguete and Bais. The branch manager of Unity Fishing Corporation however denied that the company was hiring minors and was maltreating their fishermen. He also denied that the company was practicing Muro-ami, instead he claimed that the company was into Pa-aling as the fishing methods since this is under the approval of the BFAR. But in Puerto Princesa, the fishermen stood pat to their story. They even identified the name of one of their tormentors and the name of their recruiter. This recruiter promised them a good job in the fishing vessel even though they were not told how much they would be earning. The fishermen however got 1000 PHP each as cash advance.

In the ship, the fishermen said that they scared fish out and drove them into the waiting nets with ropes that had lead rings tied to their ends. The fishermen added that they were also told to use cyanide to force the fish out. Some of the fishermen said that they were not aware that what they were doing was illegal. The fishermen added that they were forced to dive even when they were sick. When they stopped diving because they were sick, their master would hit them by a rope or an oar. Sometimes, they were not even allowed to eat (Pal A., PDI, February 20, 2001).

❖ **Adults not minors bolt muro-ami**

The Local Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has denied earlier reports that some 35 minors from Negros Oriental have fled from muro-ami operators in Palawan. The DOLE Child Labor Coordinator in a long distance call to Palawan Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) said that there were no minors involved but that the 35 escapees were all adults according to their pre-departure records. In fact, the names of seven out of the 10 alleged minors were found in the pre-departure list in Maayongtubig, Dauin, Negros Oriental. In the list, the ages were all above 20 (The Negros Chronicle, February 25, 2001).

❖ **Firm gives side on muro-ami men's case**

Officials of Unity Fishing Corporation said only three of the 35 fishermen who were allegedly maltreated and escaped from a muro-ami fishing vessel in Palawan are their employees. The operations officer of Unity Fishing disclosed that they plan to sue these three employees for issuing derogatory statements against the company. The officer also suspects that business rivalry as the reason behind why they name of their company was "unnecessarily dragged" into the controversy inasmuch as Unity Fishing have been observing all regulations in commercial fishing. It is possible, according to the officer that the three were paid by their rivals to give

derogatory statements against their company especially that Unity Fishing owns the largest Visayan fleet operating in Palawan (Ramirez N., Cebu Daily News, February 23, 2001).

❖ **Muro-Ami charges dismissed**

Prosecutor says two fishing boats only using Pa-aling. Two of Prime A's fishing boats, the FB Prince Amigo and FB Megastar I, were allegedly caught off Palawan using the muro-ami method and employing child laborers. The Prosecutor dismissed the complaint of violation of the Fisheries Code against the boats' owner, captain, chief mate and recruiter since it was not proven that Prime-A used muro-ami but pa-aling which is not illegal under the law. To be noted too was that there is no witness from the BFAR that the fishing method used was muro-ami and not pa-aling. The prosecutor likewise said that the respondents could also not be charged by child labor despite the affidavits of some minors who gave testimonies.

One 15-year old boy claimed that he was to begin work in December 2000 until April 2001. He was given 1500 PHP which he sent to his parents in Ayungon, Negros Oriental. In his affidavit, the boy said that the boat's fishing net was hauled 10 times a day from 4am to 6pm. They rested only during meals. They ate dirty corn and drank waters obtained from the rivers. On December 24, 2000, the boat docked and allowed the children to disembark as it was Christmas eve. He later found out that many escaped. The witness said they could not bear the maltreatment and difficult situation aboard the boat.

The prosecutor however did not give weight to the testimonies of the witnesses. According to the prosecutor's resolution, the children were not recruited by that they presented themselves to the boat captain to get free meals and a "joy ride" during the trip. The minors, he added, presented themselves as of legal age. This 15-year old witness "joined the vessel so that he could have free meals. While on board, his activities consisted of eating, sleeping and sometimes swimming while the group was fishing".

NBI chief in Puerto Princesa expressed dismay over the resolution (Tesorio J., PDN, October 5, 2001).

❖ **Recruitment sites for deep-sea fishing named**

The Dumaguete based ILO-IPEC named the towns of Bindoy, Ayungon, Sibulan and Siaton as the province's major recruitment sites for child labor in deep-sea fishing. This was disclosed by the ILO-IPEC project coordinator during a Kapihan sa PIA forum. It was noted that Bindoy, Ayungon and Sibulan were the recruitment sites for Pa-aling, while Siaton for Kubkub fishing. On the other hand, the Chair of the ILO-IPEC Project Advisory Committee said that Pa-aling employs some 200 workers mostly minors whose parents are given some 2000 to 3000 PHP in cash advances (Abayon J.P., SunStar Dumaguete, October 18, 2001).

❖ **37 minors saved from 'muro-ami'**

The Dumaguete-based ILO-IPEC saved 37 children from San Jose and Basay from working in deep-sea fishing vessels last month. The ILO representative said that the children were saved from at least 20 Kubkub operators in the docking areas - barangay Hilocon, San Jose and Basay. Further, the ILO representative admitted that the Kubkub operators gladly handed over the minors whom they claimed persisted to join the deep-sea fishing activities. He also disclosed that some Kubkub operators did in fact send still an undetermined number of children home even before the IPEC team intervened (Abayon J.P., SunStar Dumaguete, October 17, 2001).

### **Fish Production and Fishing Technology Over Time** Various Studies

A good first start is to look at the state of Philippine fish yields and the associated fishing technology that has emerged over time. In 1976, Norbert Rau (199-218) observed that 68.9 percent of the fish catch sold in local Philippine markets was sold fresh and the rest cured. Aqua-culture, particularly milkfish, was developing substantially with a potential for developing eel aqua-culture with Japanese partners. Exports of ornamental fish were much higher than imports. Despite the fact that the Philippines, like Thailand and Indonesia, produced more than 100,000 metric tons of fish, it relied substantially on imports to meet local demand. But fish imports were declining annually. Aqua-culture generally does not address the protein requirements of poor Filipinos.

Technology-wise, historically, Alexander Spoehr (1984) noted that by 1900 the “sapyaw” (round-haul seine and the deep water fish coral was spreading across the islands of the archipelago. Improvements on old techniques followed, and the Japanese introduced “muro-ami” and the beam trawl in the 1930’s. By the end of WW II, the fish coral, prevalent before the war except where the beam trawl and “sapyaw” were preferred, began to lose prominence. There is a shift from passive (stationary) technology to active technology, which is mobile and can follow seasonal fish migrations.

Small-scale and medium-scale methods (respectively, native and Japanese pre-war technologies) make way for large-scale, capital-intensive trawlers and purse-seiners after WW II. By the early 80’s, it was assessed by experts that over-fishing was the case of the Philippines. Over-fishing leads to the depletion of fish stock. Resource competition between small-scale and more highly capitalized systems has led to the marginalization of the farmer in many localities. Habitat degradation by extensive trawling and the use of explosives have also had a negative effect on fish stocks.

Over-capitalization, leading to low returns on investment, known to have happened in Manila Bay as early as 1950, was true of the country as a whole by the 1980’s. According to Spoehr, the needs of the “future” include: management of fish stocks; alleviation of poverty and underemployment in small-scale fishing sector; studying capture fisheries in their totality rather than on a sectoral basis and, improved assessment of fish populations.

In terms of stocks and resources, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources identified several areas that have shown decreasing yields. They extend from Luzon to Bicol to the Visayas into Palawan and Northern Mindanao. In the Philippines, sodium cyanide which is used to gather ornamental fish in damaging coral reefs even in areas where fish are abundant. Decreasing yields generally result from over-fishing (Smith 1979). Smith further observed low productivity in that small Filipino fisherman catch less than seven (7) kilogram per trip. There is surplus of fishermen and lack of alternative income sources. While BFAR has encouraged ramification into oyster, mussel and seaweed farming, it turns out that the pioneers are not the small fishermen but, rather, teachers and government employees. Likewise, there are inadequate vessels and gears.

While not the general case for the Philippines, the disparity between large and small-scale fishermen is great. Small-scale fishermen rely on rudimentary equipment. In some cases, this has caused conflict. For instance, small-scale and capital-intensive fishermen have clashed violently in the Samar-Leyte area as a result of competition.

There is also lack of market power. In the Philippines, small-scale fishermen are like peasant farmers. They sell their catch to creditors and must do so to preserve the credit line. Naturally, small fishermen do not fetch good prices from their creditor-middlemen.

The study in San Miguel Bay done by Conner Bailey (1982) showed that unlike terrestrial resources, marine capture resources are not amenable to "crop management techniques" like irrigation, fertilizers, new plant varieties. Thus, exploitation of marine capture resources by intensive techniques, by open access, threatens depletion of fish stocks. Improved fishing technology is short-term; depletion is long-term. Resource management that controls resource exploitation is important.

An alternative to marine resource over-exploitation is finding other economic pursuits for the over-crowded small-scale fishermen. However, in many less developed countries, fishermen do not have adequate terrestrial (agricultural) resources or easy access to unskilled jobs on land because of population pressure and competition for land and jobs. These conditions apply in San Miguel Bay.

Turner et. al. (1994:213-14) likewise studied revenues and costs in Philippine pelagic fishery. A notable observation was that "...in 1960, the industry was catching around 300 000 tonnes of fish per year with about 100 000 horsepower. Towards the end of the 1970s the industry was

catching in the region of MSY (maximum sustainable yield) 500 000 tonnes with over 300 000 HP. By 1985 the industry had reached the open access solution: catch had fallen below 500 000 tonnes with 500 000 HP, five times the 1960 level of "effort". Costs and revenues were about equal, i.e. zero profit was being earned. After 1985, effort expanded even beyond the open access solution, revenues were less than costs". In addition, "maximum effort would run the risk of over-fishing...if total cost curve was less steep the open access equilibrium would get closer to the risk zone" (1994:208).

Information from IBON Databank (1997: 37)) also documented a related diminishing trend.

Table 1  
Fish Production by Sector, Growth Rates (in Percent)

Year	Commercial	Municipal
1990	10.05	6.76
1991	8.42	- 1.69
1992	5.92	- 1.29
1993	4.97	- 1.30
1994	4.73	- 1.76
1995	4.68	-
1996	- 1.58	-

Source: Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources

Table 2  
Volume and Value of Municipal Fish Production

Year	Volume (000 MT)	Proportion to Total
1990	733.38	35.74
1991	721.69	35.17
1992	668.13	32.56
1993	622.58	30.34
1994	601.24	29.30

Source: Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources

A profound understanding of the phenomenon of child labor in deep sea and other fishing ventures likewise starts from a good grasp of the nature, characteristics and *the* fate of its predecessor, Muro-ami. In principle, Muro-ami as a fishing technology should be passé if FAO 163 is to have been effectively implemented and regulated. Yet, the shadow of its past continue to hover as more and more fresh incidents of unfair labor practices, unjust and

inhumane living and working circumstances surface mainly from among new escapees and surveillance missions (mostly now from Pa-aling expeditions, the successor of Muro-ami). The existence of child labor in its worst form has been a recurring theme in deep sea fishing and diving.

This paper acknowledges five valuable and outstanding sources of empirical work to this date on the subject of Muro-ami (history, labor relations, child labor among others) as written by two main authors: Harold Olofson et.al. (1993, 2000) and Henk Van Oosterhout (1986). Salient points of these studies will be covered in the succeeding sections.

Related to this are studies conducted by the Cebu-based Community Unlimited Incorporated and the Silliman University Baseline Studies on Pa-aling Fishing. These studies were commissioned by the ILO-IPEC Dumaguete Monitoring Team and Project Advisory Committee, both offshoots of the ILO Sub-Regional Programme to Combat Child Labour in the Fishing Sector in the Philippines. To recall in 1994, the Government of the Philippines and ILO Manila forged a Memorandum of Understanding in the implementation of the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor or IPEC aimed at protecting the child from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's normal development i.e. child's physical, mental, moral, spiritual and social development. The Philippine-ILO Indicative Framework for Action identified a number of priority target groups of children among which are children in deep sea fishing and diving (ILO-IPEC Briefing Paper, no date).

These programs are implemented in various parts of the country where high incidence of worst forms of child labor have been recognized. The province of Negros Oriental was known to be the location where children are involved in Pa-aling fishing. Add to these events was the inclusion of "Kubkub" fishing as borne-out of the results of the rapid appraisal conducted by the ILO-IPEC Monitoring Team in December of 2000 where child labor in small and medium scale commercial fishing in Negros Oriental were also uncovered to exist.

What follows is a brief description of salient points obtained from the studies earlier mentioned. Due to limitations of time, it is not feasible for this Assessment Study to delve into greater length. Interested and concerned readers are strongly advised to seek out full copies of each article/reports. Details of publications are listed in the Works Cited section of this paper.

The main objective of citing these studies is have a clearer and better understanding of the basic information surrounding the phenomenon of child labor in Muro-ami, Pa-aling and Kubkub



fishing ventures. It is hoped that this knowledge becomes a useful tool in designing ILO-IPEC's Integrated and Time Bound Approach (TBA) towards the elimination of worst forms of child labor.

**The Muro-ami: Some Observations on Child Labor in the Fishing Industry**  
by Henk van Oosterhout, *Philippine Journal of Industrial Relations*, 1986:75-93.

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- Abines-Frabal Muro-ami corporation recruit sea-workers from the fishing-dependent (mostly Muro-ami fishing) coastal towns of Oslob and Santander, southern tip of the province of Cebu.
- The Abines family started Muro-ami fishing operation in early 1950s. The family has virtual control over the local economy hence most people residing in these towns are indebted to the Abines family.
- In Oslob and Santander, approximately 5,500 fishermen with 20,000 dependents are employed in the Muro-ami operations.
- Workers in the commercial fishing get cash advance "vales" privileges, access to credit lines in Abines-owned sari-sari stores, food and money for weddings, free hospitalization for families who cannot meet such expenses.
- These services are provided by the Abines Family but is done through their agents yet it is clear that it originates from them.
- In exchange, workers show loyalty and obedience as a sign of indebtedness (or *utang na loob*) to the Family.
- A typical Muro-ami family has 7-8 members or 5-6 children excluding parents. Women are engaged in agriculture, men in deep sea fishing. Two-three children are either in the fishing industry or domestic helpers.
- Incomes are hard to assess; fishermen do not receive full cash incomes since previous "vales" are deducted.
- Fathers and sons stay at sea for 10 months, family left behind approach Abines shops take credit in kind from Abines shops.
- Incomes are hard to trace due to daily expenses done through credit while cash incomes comes only once in a year after the 10-month trip. There is not enough left for savings partly also because of a lack of viable savings infrastructure hence the family goes back to the unending credit cycle once more.
- At peak seasons, 21 mother-boats with 126 bancas and 7 carriers. Annual profits estimated to be PHP 1M per mother-boat; gross income PHP 160M - 180M annually; 50-60 tons of fish is caught daily; part of the catch is exported to Singapore.
- Boats spend 10 months away from Cebu per trip. The fishing fleet is based in the island of Talampulan in the Calamian group of islands north of Palawan where they return during rough weather or for minor repairs. Fishing grounds are Sulu Sea and South China Sea.

- Shipping crew and fishermen compose the operations. The fishermen's hierarchy starts with the master fisherman or first manager (one for each vessel) who is in charge of recruiting fishermen. They set the labor standards, supervise all activities, give instructions to the whole fishing crew.
- Three assistant master managers supervise a group of 100 fishermen each. The checker keeps record of the catch and attendance of swimmers and divers. Finally, Yamadas are the go-betweens and relay instructions from master fishermen to the swimmers.
- A cordon of swimmers numbering 300-350 young boys age 12-14 years old drive the fish into the net. Each swimmer has a scareline - a rope with colored plastic strips. At the end of the rope a weight is tied. Divers are older than swimmers, they age 17-24 years old. There are 20-40 divers on each mother vessel. They set and retrieve the nets. They dive more than 80 feet to perform their most dangerous task.
- Recruitment of fishermen is done by the master fishermen, not any of the Abineses. Single fishermen who are members of a household get a cash advance of PHP 300 while those who are heads of households, PHP 750 after signing the contract. The master fisherman is provided with cash to shoulder these cash advances.
- Most fishermen originate from Oslob and Santander, others from Negros, Siquijor and Mindanao.
- Fishermen join Muro-ami either voluntarily, or influenced by their families. Divers and swimmers are sometimes influenced by friends.
- Children join the expeditions because they are encouraged by their parents to contribute to household income.
- Children are paid less, obey instructions easily hence, favored by the operator.
- Age structure shows 5% less than 15 years old, 45-55% are 15-18, and 30-40% are above 18.
- Details of work include swimming, diving, mending of nets, hauling of catch. They normally work 12 long working hours.
- Minimal diving equipments - wooden goggles, long-sleeves, long pants. Congested and unsanitary living arrangements, laundry once in 30 days, poor meal preparation practices, food consists of third class fish and corn grits. Meat seldom served.
- Diseases: typhoid fever, gastro-enteritis, "beri-beri", respiratory ailments, bronchitis, pneumonia, headaches, fever, cough, dysentery. Work-related illnesses and injuries include ruptured eardrums, damaged auditory nerves, shark/needlefish attacks. Average of 4-5 fatal accidents usually drowning occur during each trip.
- Illnesses are treated on board except in extraordinary cases where the patient needs hospital admission. Expenses incurred during hospitalization is the responsibility of the individual unless it is beyond their means, the Abines family will pay for them. These will eventually be deducted from their "incomes".

- Terms of employment, sharing mechanism and bonus payments are among the issues not clear at all to any fisherman.
- Other issues raised by fishermen include: low amount of payment, physical maltreatment, hectic working conditions, high risks involved i.e. accidents, drowning and death. The operator gives PHP 2000, some bags of rice/corn, candles and wood for the coffin to the family of the dead.

**"Plain Soldiers": Muro-ami Fishing in Cebu**  
by Harold Olofson, Ph.D. and Araceli C. Tiukinhoy 1992

Plain Soldier

- A first case related an informant who began as a swimmer or fish scarer and became a diver after four years.
- In the first year as diver, his manager ran away with the fishermen's wages, leaving him nothing to receive as wages. No protection against unscrupulous managers.
- There is a PHP 300 cash advance from the boat owner at beginning of employment, charged against fishermen's 25 percent share of the catch. A second PHP 300 cash advance is given three months later. For married men, this is too meager. This is why the informant ultimately quit after 14 years.
- For many recruits, PHP 300 was enough to buy goggles - not provided by the boat owner-operator.
- When the current is strong, there may be 10-14 fishing cycles a day which means 10-14 settings and dives. Fishermen are required to repair, sew and dye nets for free, after having worked for 14 hours and utterly exhausted.
- Reject fish are given to fishermen who then dry them. Fishermen may sell dried fish "only" to their manager, who then PHP 2 per kilogram. The manager in turn sell this to the ship owner for PHP 14 per kilogram.
- Floats and weights lost during the hazardous dives are for the account of the fishermen. New recruits, who need a month to get use to swimming with weights, are heavily fined.
- Sores from long exposure to sea water are treated by a fleet doctor who charges for consultation and medication.
- The 25 percent share of the catch due to the fishermen appears to have lowered to 20 percent (Oosterhout 1988).
- Meals are inadequate, sometimes delayed, lack of sleep in general.

A Poverty Generating Technology

- In addition to child labor, inhumane treatment of laborers, and destruction of coral reefs, Muro-ami leaves few fish for barangay fishermen to catch and this impoverishes small fishermen.

### Credit Bondage

- As reported by Oosterhout (1988) and Roperos (1986), cash advances needed to support a fisherman's family while the fisherman is out at sea, plus medical expenses, take a large chunk from the fisherman's earnings so that the fisherman is constrained to continue working on the ship to pay off debts.

### **A People in Travail I: Labor Relations History of Veteran *Muro-ami* fisherfolk in the Central Philippines**

By Harold Olofson, Ph.D., Bernie Canizares and Farah de Jose 2000

*Note: The next three studies deal with the following perspectives:*

- 1) *What happened to Muro-ami fisherfolk after the 1989 ban?*
- 2) *How practical would cooperatives or other associations be in providing alternatives to Muro-ami?*

### Early History of Muro-ami

- Brought by Japanese fisherfolk from Okinawa in the late 1930's.
- Used "oikomi-ami" or drive-in net which was shorter and shallower than present nets, and used coconut fronds tied together and stirred underwater instead of scare lines weighted with stones.
- 20 persons operated a boat.
- "Oikomi-ami" became "Muro-ami" by mid 1950's, also called "Otoshi-ami".

### Muro-ami Recruitment and Historical Antecedents in South and Southeast Asia

- Ship's laboring crew is called "kumpaniya" and is recruited by the "first manager" or foreman from within his home barangay.
- The foreman receives a PHP 1000 bonus for each recruit and offers cash advances to attract recruits.
- Reports of cruel treatment of recruits by foreman, and foreman's family extracting favors from fishermen's family while fisherman is at sea.
- Recruitment pattern follows South/Southeast Asian antecedents during 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries characterized by:
  - 1) "jobber" - a middle man/coolie, who recruits by offering cash advances.
  - 2) Coolie laborers doing work requiring physical exertion and who travel seasonally as a member of a team.
  - 3) Nature of work involves an enclave of capitalist production.
  - 4) Coolies "defenseless" in work site.
  - 5) Coolies often sought contract renewal to pay off debts.
  - 6) Coolies came from areas with abundant, unskilled and cheap labor.
  - 7) Coolies were punished for defaulting on loans, absences, laziness and impertinence.
  - 8) Coolies were grouped together and sent in batches to assembly points.

- 9) Jobbers who demonstrated skill in handling the coolies could become their foreman.
  - 10) The figure of the Muro-ami recruiter and his *modus operandi* is a continuation of much older South/Southeast Asian institutions.
- The persistence of a Muro-ami culture is due to “great expectations” on the part of fishermen who only see a rosy side of things, and its furtherance by local politicians (in Southern Cebu) who happen to be the ship owners themselves.

Muro-ami Work Histories of Muro-ami Laborers (INTERVIEWS)

- Previous occupations: almost half were farmers and barangay fishermen. One-fourth was children.
- Reason for first enlisting: Most common to help parents financially, to join a relative, or due to peer group influence.
- Age at joining: 66 percent began as children 15 years of age or younger.
- Number of expeditions experienced: More than half from 1-3 trips.
- Reason for leaving the job (prior to ban): Mostly due to physical and health problems.
- After the ban, reasons for leaving were similar.
- Ages at which laborers finally quit: 19 - 24 percent were aged 15 years old or below.

Employment of Muro-ami Laborers after the ban (INTERVIEWS)

- Only two out of the 52 interviewed were unemployed (1991)
- 26 of the 154 interviewed (1992) returned to the “New” Muro-ami or Pa-aling.
- Most laborers evaluated working conditions during and after Muro-ami as the same or “better” .
- Fears of unemployment after the ban were unjustified.

**A People in Travail II: ‘Livelihood Projects’, Slapstick ‘Development’, and Development Irony Among Veteran *Muro-ami* fisherfolk of Southern Cebu**  
By Harold Olofson, Ph.D., Bernie Canizares and Farah de Jose 2000

*This paper addresses the practicality of cooperatives and associations in providing alternatives to Muro-ami and is a continuation of the previous paper.*

- Of 29 livelihood projects organized to provide employment and income to post Muro-ami laborers following the ban, six were successful (one with qualifications).
- The reasons for the low success rate given are:
  - Faulty project design
  - Government bureaucratic failure
  - Political sabotage

- Minimal rank and file involvement in planning
  - Lack of management education
- Pig raising projects had the highest success rate

**A People in Travail III: Veteran *Muro-ami* Families in Cooperatives**

By Harold Olofson, Ph.D., Bernie Canizares and Farah de Jose 2000

- Of five cooperatives evaluated in Southern Cebu, with Muro-ami veteran membership, only one was successful, although another showed some promise. Both were multi-purpose in nature.
- The successful cooperative had the support of a foreign NGO.
- Political pressure on Muro-ami veterans, together with the concomitant lack of local financial and political support, contributed to the failure of the others.

Household Survey on the Incidence and Status of Pa-aling Fishing Among Children in Negros Oriental by Silliman University - Interdisciplinary Research Group, 2000.

Pa-aling Child Laborers in South Cebu: Household Conditions and Work Experiences. A Baseline Survey by Community Unlimited Incorporated, 2001.

Children of the Kubkub Fishing: Basic Information on Kubkub Fishing and the Involvement of Children as Crew in the Fishing Operations by Community Unlimited Incorporated, 2001.

Three ILO-IPEC commissioned reports provided comprehensive accounts of the Pa-aling and Kubkub fishing operations. In October 2001, Silliman University's Interdisciplinary Research Group (SU-IRG) completed a "Baseline Survey on Incidence of Child Labor in Pa-aling in Negros Oriental". Likewise, Cebu City's Community Unlimited Incorporated (CUI) packaged Rapid Field Appraisals (RFA) on Pa-aling (South Cebu Municipalities) and Kubkub Fishing (Siaton, Negros Oriental). These reports contain valuable information in regard the incidence of child labor, the nature and type of activities the children and their families are entangled in, general profiles, migration and work histories, among others. Other important sources of information are likewise acknowledged in this report.

#### **Estimate of the Incidence of Child Labor : Are Numbers Essential?**

Results of the SU-IRG and CUI Pa-aling and Kubkub Baseline Studies indicate a total of 800 children under the age of 18 are involved or at risk of hazardous work. In addition, 600 younger siblings of these children and 800 women family members of children withdrawn from the fishing sector are likewise also at risk (ILO-PAC/PIGLAS: 30 July 2001).

Obtaining absolute and exact numbers of how many children were in actual Pa-aling and or Kubkub service at the time of actual data collection is not a possibility. Inevitably, this was caused by the very nature of the Pa-aling and Kubkub work i.e. the children are at sea at the time of the interview and in some cases there was no means of identifying them nor locating them. This, coupled with the awareness of the illegality of minors doing work for these sectors further aggravated the difficulty of gathering numbers during the survey period. The CUI RFA alternatively opted towards qualitative studies after realizing that the quantitative approach was in fact formidable.

Of special note is the case of the Pa-aling baseline study done by CUI whereby Table 3 enumerates the number of child laborers in hazardous work in six municipalities of Cebu with their corresponding barangays. The numbers say clearly that these children are dispersed hence invisible. Interestingly, the numbers, location and spread evidence the fact that they exist, they are part of the sector, they are at risk, but it takes determination to seek them out.

Table 3  
Number of Child Laborers in Six Cebu Municipalities  
And Their Corresponding Barangays, 2001  
N= 527

MUNICIPALITIES IDENTIFIED IN SOUTH CEBU											
SANTANDER		SAMBOAN		OSLOB		GINATILAN		MALABUYOC		ALEGRIA	
Barangay	No.	Barangay	No.	Barangay	No.	Barangay	No.	Barangay	No.	Barangay	No.
Liloan	6	Dalahikan	1	Canangcaan	1	Calabawan	1	Looc	2	No Barangay	0
Talisay	6	Tangbo	1	Lagunde	1	Cambagte	1	Armenia	1	<b>Compostela</b>	<b>12</b>
Bunlan	8	Bonbon	2	Luka	1	Guiwanon	2	Salmeron	2		
Cabutongan	11	Colase	2	Manlum	1	Poblacion	1	Mahanlud	7		
Candamiang	15	Monteverde	2	Tan-Awan	1	Malatbo	2	<b>Sto. Niño</b>	<b>10</b>		
Liptong	19	Bulangsuran	3	Bangcogon	2	Palanas	7	Bry Dos	1		
Pasil	22	Jumangpas	4	Calumpang	2	<b>Mangaco</b>	<b>22</b>	Montañeza	1		
Poblacion	25	Basak	5	Cañang	2	Barangay Not Identified	2	Barangay Not Identified	18		
Looc	33	Camburoy	5	Daanlungso d	2						
<b>Canlumacad</b>	<b>38</b>	Suba	15	Hagdan	2						
Barangay Not Identified <sup>1</sup>	27	Poblacion	23	Bonbon	3						
		Cambigong	27	Cansalo-Ay	3						
		<b>Cañorong</b>	<b>27</b>	Tumalog	7						
		Barangay Not Identified	8	Poblacion	11						
				Can-Ukban	12						
				<b>Mainit</b>	<b>34</b>						
				Barangay Not Identified	15						
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>

Source: Baseline Survey on the Conditions of the Households of Children Working in Pa-aling Final Report, page 7. Community Unlimited, Inc. November, 2001, ILO-IPEC. The numbers in bold and in red are the names of barangays with highest numbers of children listed during the RFA.

Note: *Barangay not identified* means that Key Informants provided information but no specify names of barangays were given.

<sup>1</sup> Key informants were unable to identify the exact barangay locations/residences of some children. For others, it was only the sitio name that was identified.



### **General Profiles of Pa-aling and Kubkub Households**

Size, Gender, Education, Religion, Employment, Income, Mobility

The matrices that follow comparatively arrange salient points of the results obtained from the three aforementioned studies (for easier reference). Blank portions indicate absence of information.

General profiles of Pa-aling as reflected in Table 4 show that the average household size is 5-6 members in Negros and 7-8 members in Cebu. Males outnumber females and most males are single and are under 20 years of age. Most household members attained some level of primary education. Majority of the members do farming, with fishing second in importance. Most females find work in their respective barangays.

Some Negros households have been on the move in recent years while Cebu families are mostly born in the locality of their current residences. Monthly income is a little over PHP 1000; external assistance is minimal. Majority of Negros family members do not belong to farmers' or fishers' organizations. Cooperative membership is much more prevalent in Cebu.

Kubkub households average size is six members. The majority are fishermen. Average monthly income is PHP 1250. In contrast to Pa-aling households in Negros, Kubkub parents have a positive view of family planning.

### **Profiles of Pa-aling and Kubkub Unmarried Household Members Away From Home**

Gender, Education, Employment, Income, Farm Production, Other information

Pa-aling unmarried household members away from home tend to have their own identity. Table 5 lists down important details. The first observation is that most of these unmarried members are males working as fishermen in the Visayas and Palawan areas. Females generally work as domestic helpers in Cebu City or Manila. Age distribution tend to be teenage to early 20's. Monthly income approximately PHP 1600 and generally not remitted home. Males have schooling of 4-5 years while females, 5-6 years.

Table 4  
General Profiles of Pa-aling and Kubkub Households

	PA-ALING NEGROS	PA-ALING CEBU	KUBKUB
No. of Respondents	133 household heads 84 children	33 (32 parent, 1 grandmother of Pa-aling children). Plus FGDs.	Two FGDs. Total respondents: 15.
Ave household size	5.42	7.88	6.0
Age-Sex distribution of HH members	Males out-number females Majority 11-20 yrs old	Male to female ratio 1:76. Modal age - males 15-19 yrs. Old; females 10-14 years.	
Civil status of HH members	Mostly single; males	Majority of HH members are unmarried males.	
Religion	Roman Catholic		
Educational attainment	Within or has completed Basic Education years.	Most HH members are within grades 1-6 levels. Most HH members were also drop outs when they were younger mainly because of poverty.	
Employment of HH members	Majority - farming Next - fishing		Majority - fishing
Place of employment	Most females work within their barangays		
Estimated income/mo.	1,010.95 PHP		1,250 PHP
Practice of family planning	70 percent of couples do not practice FP		Parents have a positive view on family planning.
Geographical mobility of HHs	Only 20% of all HHs have migration histories of two moves	Majority of HH members were born in the same sitio as the current address of residence. Only parents may come from another province.	

Among Kubkub households, there are 16 children who are beneficiaries of World Vision, as well as their relatives. These children go to school away from home. Most assistance was in the form of books, clothing, allowances for school projects and supplies. Some received cash.

Table 5

Unmarried Household Members Away from Home: A General Profile

PROFILE OF UNMARRIED MEMBERS OF HOUSEHOLDS AWAY FROM HOME			
	PA-ALING NEGROS	PA-ALING CEBU	KUBKUB
Age-sex distribution	Mean age is 21; Mostly males	Majority are males and are working in Pa-aling; if not, they are also into other types of fishing work. Females into domestic work. Most of them are 16-25 years old. Two were 11-15 years old.	
Educational attainment	Males 4.48 years Females 5.52 years		
Types of employment	Males into fishing Females domestic helpers		
Place of employment	Majority outside Reg 7	51% are working in Palawan and Visayas area. Females are in urban centers i.e. Cebu or Manila.	
Estimated monthly income	1,641.13 PHP		
Sending remittances	Majority do not send money home		
Other related information			
Property ownership	55% owned houses of light materials and the homelot		
Farm and animal production	72% are farming (ave 2.94 ha) banana, root crops and coconut; chicken and pigs		
External assistance received by HHs	83% of HHs have not received any assistance	Only one received government support.	
Educ'l assistance recd	None		16 children are beneficiaries of World Vision. Relatives provide assistance too. Aid came in kind such as books, clothing, allowance for school projects and supplies. Some received cash as well.
Membership in livelihood organizations	15 HHs out of 133 are members of farmers and fishers organizations	One male and 11 females are members of coop.	

Table 6  
Household Morbidity and Mortality Prevalence

	PA-ALING NEGROS	PA-ALING CEBU	KUBKUB
Morbidity prevalence	Influenza, diarrhea, gastroenteritis, dysentery, cough and cold (top 5)		
Mortality prevalence	Fever, measles (among children), heart ailments (among adults)		
Cases of disappearances	3 out of 4 believed to have escaped from fishing boat and never returned		

**Pa-aling and Kubkub Household Members  
Perspectives on gender issues and children  
Deep-sea Fishing: With parental consent?**

On the matter of gender issues and children, Table 7 indicate that wives tend to lead in decision-making; decisions are made with husband and wife in agreement. These reflect Pa-aling household practices. Also, ninety-two percent of respondents allow members below 18 years of age to farm, do domestic chores and fish, while 71 percent are aware of the illegality of such members joining Pa-aling expeditions. Parents prefer farming and business for their children.

Kubkub (households) married couples consult each other but wives play the more important role in decision-making. Parents believe the ideal working age is 20 years of age. They claim that children decide on their own to participate in Kubkub to help their families. Parents are aware of the illegality of their children's jobs but cannot control the situation due to financial reasons. Parents are also aware of the hazards of deep-sea fishing, particularly drowning. Parents wish that their children could finish their studies, and that financial assistance is forthcoming for the purpose.

Table 7  
Perspectives On Gender Issues And Children

(Parents or elders views and perceptions)

	PA-ALING NEGROS	PA-ALING CEBU	KUBKUB
Household decision-making pattern	Although couples, husband and wife agree, wives tend to lead in decision making.		Couples consult each other but wives tend to play the more important role.
Perception on cases of violence	No violence related to rape, wife battering, child abuse, adult and child prostitution, sexual assault.		
Practice of allowing children in adult work	92% of respondents allow below 18 year olds to farm, domestic chores and fish		Parents think ideal age for children to work is 20 years old. It is usually children's own decision to join Kubkub to earn and help support family.
Knowledge about prohibition of children in deep-sea fishing	71% of respondents know the illegality of below 18 yrs old to join pa-aling/deep-sea fishing		Parents are aware of the illegality of allowing minors to join adult work but cannot control the situation due to the need to earn.
Preferred work for children	Farming and business		
Knowledge of hazards involved in deep-sea fishing			Most parents are aware that deep-sea fishing is hazardous. Accidents include children's feet are pulled by the net into the sea or trapped by the power take-off equipment. Daydreaming and sleepwalking also.
Parents dreams for their children			Finish studies. Help parents someday. Lack of money is main hindrance in achieving this.

### Children As Fishers

#### Children's Voices

With regard education, children from Pa-aling households have 5-6 years of primary education with great majority dropping out to support their families by way of enterprises such as Pa-aling. The cause of dropping out from school, absences, tardiness and mischief, is involvement in fishing activities. Fewer than half is interested in going back to school. These children possess skills such as swimming, diving, and net sewing but would like to acquire skills in automotive and electrical related tasks that are land-based (Table 8).

With Kubkub households, most of the children involved are from 10 to 17 years old. These children claim to be too lazy or tired to study, would prefer to tag along with their parents or earn money.

Table 8  
Profile of children involved in Deep-Sea fishing  
(As reported by the children)

	PA-ALING NEGROS	PA-ALING CEBU	KUBKUB
No. of respondent children	84		
Birth order and age	Third child, 14% are below 18 years old		Mostly 10-17 years old.
Educational status	5.27 years of schooling, dropped out due to pa-aling		
Perceived effects of fishing involvement to schooling	Dropping out from school, absent and being late in class, mischievousness, inability to cope with school demands including cost of schooling		Too lazy to study; too tired to study. Would prefer to tag along with parent and or earn money.
Dropping out school	Only 7 out of 84 are still studying. The rest have to stop school and earn to help support family.	Dropping out from school is a common feature not only once but more than once because of poverty-related reasons.	
Enrolling again	Less than half would like to go back to finish school and find a good job	19 out of 31 HH respondents (not necessarily children) said the children would like to go back to school.	
Skills possessed	Swimming, diving, sewing fish nets		
Training wanted	Driving, electrical work, automotive, land-based employment		
Reasons for joining the expedition		Need to support their families, influenced by peers, relatives and parents, no other alternative source of income. Some are encouraged by parents while others go out of curiosity and the need for money altogether.	

In addition, respondents ranging from 13 to 18 years of age, had spent 1.75 years (on the average) in Pa-aling. By the time they are 17 years old, they shall have joined two Pa-aling expeditions (on the average). This applies to Negros households. In Negros,

recruiters may be relatives or non-relatives and two children per household are recruited in general in the sample area (Table 9).

In Cebu, canvassers do the recruiting from coastal areas to the uplands, and the children are fetched by vehicles when the expedition is to start. Most children worked as swimmers or fish-scarers while a few worked as divers, or repairing damaged fishing gear, and doing other sundry jobs. In Negros, more than half of the children claimed that their last expedition took 9-10 months, with some children managing to escape. Maltreatment and poor working conditions are the lot of those who do not escape. In Cebu, work is from 3AM to 6PM (15 hours) daily. The routine of setting nets, scaring, diving, pulling, sorting and storing fish is repeated 7-10 times daily.

Eighty percent of the Negros respondents experienced skin diseases, cuts, wounds and body pains. Hazards feared were drowning, shark and snake attacks, maltreatment by the master, and accidents at large. Sixteen respondents reported impaired sight and hearing, paralysis and body burns. Many children were not attended to when they were ill.

To ease their homesickness, children resorted to writing letters, gambling, singing, guitar playing, and sewing torn clothes. Close to two-thirds of the Negros children stopped working because of maltreatment, harsh working conditions and low income, citing exhaustion as the common physical state. Some children reported still feeling the stress of the job after having quit.

In Negros, 85 percent reported that their families received a cash advance prior to the expedition, averaging a little over PHP 2000. Some advances were given in kind. Children with debit balances received no cash advances. Eleven out of 17 respondents recalled receiving PHP 827.75 per month over a six-month period, which they used to buy personal effects, pay off debts and give to their parents. No other benefits were received. During their free time away from home, most rested or slept most of the time, otherwise they were smoking, drinking or making trouble.

About two-thirds of the children knew the illegal nature of their jobs. The children rated the psychological, social and economic conditions of their work as BAD, although they rated the physical condition of the boat as GOOD. The children received no other assistance whatsoever. The children indicated that they prefer working as seamen, farmers, self-employed fishermen, drivers, electricians or mechanics.

Table 9  
Deep-Sea Fishing  
(Children's Views And Perceptions)

	PA-ALING NEGROS	PA-ALING CEBU	KUBKUB
Status of involvement of children	29% of 84 still consider themselves involved in pa-aling. Ave no. of times in pa-aling is 2. majority were 17 years old then; range is 13-18 yrs old; ave period in pa-aling is 1.75 years; 2 children per household join pa-aling		
Recruitment process	Poverty drove them to join pa-aling ventures; recruiters either are relatives or non-relatives	Starts with a canvasser who recruits from low lands to uplands. Those who can recruit 5-10 people can become an "opisyal" . Most "opisyals" are friends of the canvassers.	Sons join their fathers in these trips. Other children join on their own.
Departure for the fishing trip	Dauin, NO; Oslob and Santander, Cebu. They were usually fetched by vehicles and brought to departure areas.		Bindoy, Manjuyod, Amlan, San Jose, Siaton, Sta. Catalina, Basay, Hinobaan - all Negros Oriental.
Fishing tasks of children	86% of children worked as swimmers. Others were divers, fixers of damaged fishing equipments, checkers, drivers of service vehicles, in-charge of fish-scarers, operators of small motor boats and or assistant to master fisher.	Fish scarers, divers, compressor watch-guy.	Perceived most difficult tasks: pulling the nets, carrying and lifting coolers, pulling up anchor; loading ice to boat, operating the winch, pulling up the weights, arranging ropes, collecting the fish using scoop nets.
Fishing work schedule of children	52% claimed 10-12 hours of work each day. Ave is 11 hours fishing. 60% said that their last trip was 9-10 months. Ave was 6 months. Some children escaped due to maltreatment and poor working condition hence escaped.	3 AM till 6PM daily or 15 hours a day. Breakfast at 8AM, the routine of setting nets, scaring, diving, pulling, sorting, storing fish - is repeated 7-10 times a day, sometimes 12 times a day.	Leaves early evening and returns early morning the following day. Daily trips except during the Full Moon week.
Hazards perceived	Sickness (80%) i.e. complaints of body pains, cuts, wounds, skin diseases; maltreatment by master fisher were physically traumatic and psychologically degrading. They are scared of drowning, shark attacks, snake bites, land/sea accidents.		Sea-sickness cause vomiting and dizziness. Falling off the boat, drowning, burns, feet gets trapped in net, rope, winch and lose their limbs.
Health services availed of	36% did not have health		



children	care providers when they got ill.		
Physical disabilities and impairment of children	16 cases reported which included impaired eye sight and hearing, paralysis and body burns.		Lost of limbs.
Coping up with or responding to homesickness	48% write letters; 18% resort to gambling, singing, playing guitar, sewing torn clothes.		
Exhaustion and stress experienced	65% reveal the work is exhausting; 29% noted they "sometimes" feel the stress.		
Reasons why children stopped working in Palang	64% stopped because they could not stand the maltreatment and harsh working condition. Low income also is a reason for stopping.		
Modes of payment	Sharing (or balance) sharing scheme based on net income per trip. 85% receive cash advance usually given to their families prior to departure. Ave amount of cash advance is 2,088.45 PHP. Non-cash items are also received by some. Some children do not receive anything anymore after the trip due to negative balances or just even out.		50:50 and 10:1 sharing schemes are practiced. The latter is more common.  Shares are converted to cash after selling harvest.
Earnings during the last fishing trip	11 out of 17 recalls accounted an ave of 6,324.03 PHP as their incomes (or 827.75 per month of 6 months). This amount were either used to buy personal effects, pay debts, give to parents, saved for school or business. No other benefits were received.		
Free time activities for children	90% slept or rested. Otherwise, they smoke, drink, make trouble with other groups.		In Tambobo, a small cove in Siaton is the place for business and pleasure. There are restaurants, billiards, karaoke. It is the place for dry docking, repainting, repairs and net repairs too.
Rating of children of their working condition	Psycho-social, economic concerns were rated BAD. Physical condition of boat rated GOOD.		
Assistance provided to	No significant assistance		Multiple agencies

children	from any GO or NGO so far.		particularly ILO-IPEC Dumaguete conducts monitoring of sea-worker recruitments.
Knowledge about laws that concern children	67% are aware of the illegality of minors to work in deep-sea fishing. Only 7 children knew about laws and privileges.		
Children's work preferences	Seamen, fishers, farmers, skilled workers, drivers, electrician, mechanic		

That working children belong to poverty-stricken households, school drop-outs, work in order to help support their families yet continue to dream of becoming professionals someday is not unique among deep-sea fishing children. Studies on child labor in rattan manufacturing and other urban and land-base work show similar patterns (Remedio 1996:39-49; Remedio 1991)

Among Kubkub respondents, some children join their fathers in Kubkub expeditions, while others join on their own by traveling to one of many departure points in Negros Oriental. The most difficult tasks perceived are: pulling the nets, lifting coolers, pulling anchor, loading ice, operating the winch, pulling weights, arranging ropes and collecting fish.

The trips are daily except the full-moon week. The boat leaves early in the evening and returns early in the morning of the following day. Children complain of sea-sickness. Hazards known are falling off the boat, drowning, burns, getting entangled in the net or rope or winch and losing a limb. Many children survived with a lost limb.

Sharing schemes range from 50:50 to 10:1. The latter claimed to be more common. Shares are later converted to cash. Children spend their free time in Tambobo, a small cove in Siaton where there are restaurants, billiard halls and karaoke bars. It is also a dry dock and a place for repairing nets. Many agencies, particularly ILO-IPEC, conduct monitoring of recruits.

## Pa-aling Operators:

Who are they and how much do we know about them?

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There are at least three top fishing firms that serve as the major employers of Pa-aling fishworkers. These are: Unity Fishing and Development Corporation, Prime A Fishing Corporation, and ASB Fishing Corporation. Unity Fishing Development Corporation is located in Frabal Building, No. 84 North Bay, Navotas, Metro Manila. Prime A Fishing Corporation's location is entered as 101 Bel Air Apartment, Roxas Boulevard, Manila. ASB Fishing Corporation is registered as being located in Santander, South Cebu (Pa-aling Fishing Company Profile, ILO-IPEC Database 2000).

### Unity Fishing Development Corporation

Unity Fishing Development Corporation (UFDC) is owned by the Dee Family whose address of residence is located in Quezon City, Metro Manila. Mr. Gerardo Dee is the President while the Vice-President for Operations is Mr. Ramon Dee. It has acquired a recruitment license from the Department of Labor and Employment Region VII. As per company profile record, it has a total of nine vessels (e.g. Unity Peace, Unity Hope, Unity Patience, and six others). The pre-departure areas include the Municipality of Dauin in Negros Oriental and Barangay Ponong, Samboan in the southern part of the province of Cebu. Meanwhile the rest and recreation sub-offices are found in Barangays Panlaitan, Talampulan Island, Busuanga and the Calamian group of islands in the province of Palawan.

UFDC has a total of six fishing boats normally in operation each year. It is the largest Pa-aling fishing company in the country. In the beginning, UFDC was in joint venture with the Abines clan of southern Cebu. The Dee family provided the boats and working capital for the operations while the Abines family supplied the manpower. This was the supposed arrangement during the early days of the Muro-Ami fishing industry back in the early 1960's. One of the UFDC incorporators, Antonio Dee, is the estranged husband of Estudita Abines, the younger sister of Samboan Mayor Crisologo Abines (owners of ASB Fishing Corporation). Today, UFDC and ASB Fishing are said to be rival companies (CDN, February 18, 2001).

### Prime A Fishing Corporation

The most recent addition in the country's Pa-aling fishing industry, Prime A Corporation is Manila-based and is owned by real-estate businessman, Atty. Primitivo Garcia. According to the ILO-IPEC Dumaguete team, Prime A Fishing Corporation entered into a joint venture with one fisherfolk association based in southern Cebu known as the PUFASA. Initially, Prime A was to furnish the boats and working capital for operations. PUFASA on the other hand, would supply the manpower needed by the fishing expeditions. As per record, the company's pre-departure

site is located in Samboan, Cebu with a sub-office in Talampulan Island in the province of Palawan which is also its rest and recreation site.

ASB Fishing Corporation

The Manila-based Dee family formerly held major shares in a consortium known as the Frabal Fishing Corporation. During those times, ASB Fishing Corporation was a member of said consortium. ASB stands for Abines Sisters and Brothers, previously Abines, Santander and Oslob. The Abines family owns the entire ASB Corporation.

In south Cebu, the Abineses are known for its active role in the political scene. The list includes Apolonio Abines, the president of the corporation, was former vice-governor for Cebu. Crisologo Abines, an Abines brother and ASB incorporator was former congressman and incumbent mayor of the municipality of Samboan, Cebu. Encarnacion Abines-Go was former mayor of Santander too. Regino Abines, mayor of Oslob, Cebu and Emiliano Abines, vice-mayor of the same town. These two brothers Regino and Emiliano formerly owned Goldstar Fishing Corporation, a Pa-aling fishing company that closed down some two years ago. Another sister, Estudita Abines-Dee is related by marriage to one of the Manila-based Dee family UFDC owners, Antonio Dee.

The fishing firm is located in Santander, a municipality of South Cebu and the pre-departure area in barangay Mainit of the same town. Rest and recreation likewise is in Horse Island, province of Palawan.

Another list included the following.

- ASB Fishing and Development Corporation
- Bonanza Fishing and Market Resources
- Delmar Agri-Resources Inc.
- Frabelle Fishing Corporation
- Jimenez Marine Corporation
- Irma Fishing and Trading Inc.
- L.V. Fishing Enterprise
- Lynvil Enterprise Inc.
- Mar Fishing Inc.
- Maria Fe Fishing Corporation
- Marlsan Fishing Corporation
- Mercidar Fishing Corporation
- McFish International Fishing Corporation
- Neri D. R. Fishing Inc.
- Philman Gold Fishing Corporation
- Poseidon Fishing
- Rav Realty and Fishing Corporation
- RBL Fishing Corporation
- Royale Fishing Corporation
- TPJ Fishing Corporation
- Unity Fishing Development Corporation

## Kubkub Operators

Much is Not Known

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According to an ILO-IPEC report (2000), Kubkub, is a traditional type of fishing being practiced in the province of Negros Oriental. In response to a recommendation made by the ILO-IPEC Monitoring Team, a mission was sent off to the municipalities of Amlan, San Jose, and Siaton of Negros Oriental to conduct reconnaissance work. The said random and rapid appraisal was set out to find out the incidence of child fish-workers in small and medium scale fishing operations. Kubkub and Likom-likom fishing methods are known to take place in the said three municipalities whereby children are also said to be employed as divers and fishing tasks. The findings of the mission paved the way to a more formal baseline survey that took place months later by the Cebu-based CUI Team.

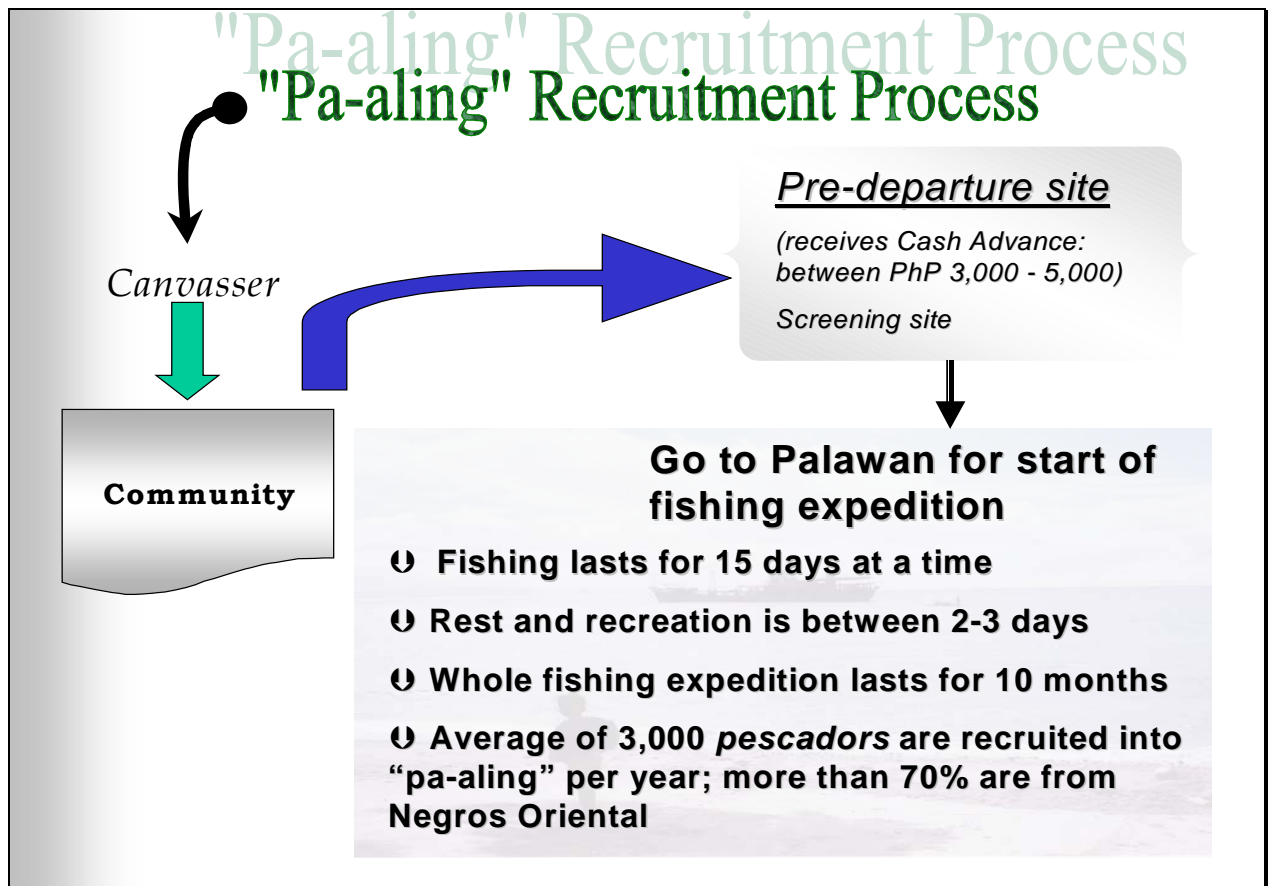
In a separate section, what is known about the Kubkub as a fishing technology is discussed at length. A number of valuable information was obtained during the ILO-IPEC reconnaissance mission. It was established that there are two points where Kubkub fishing operate in the province of Negros Oriental. In the southern part, the municipalities of Siaton and Sta. Catalina were noted. In the northern portion of Dumaguete City, Kubkub operators originate from Amlan and Tanjay, while docking sites include Amlan and San Jose.

A cooperative said to be activated by Kubkub operators is named the Negros Oriental Fishing Boat Cooperative. While membership of this cooperative includes some 24 member-operators, the total number of fishing boats involved in Kubkub fishing totals 40 implying that some members owned more than one boat.

Recruitment Scheme  
Pa-aling Fishing Operation

Canvassers go to chosen communities offering cash advances ( 3000 to 5000 PHP ) as incentives. At the recruitment or pre-departure site, applicants are screened. The recruits are taken to Palawan, where the fishing expedition is to begin. The expedition takes up to 10 months, each active fishing operation lasting 15 days, followed by 2-3 days of rest and recreation. An average of 3000 fishworkers are recruited every year, more than 70 percent coming from Negros Oriental.

**Figure No. 1**  
Pa-aling Recruitment Process

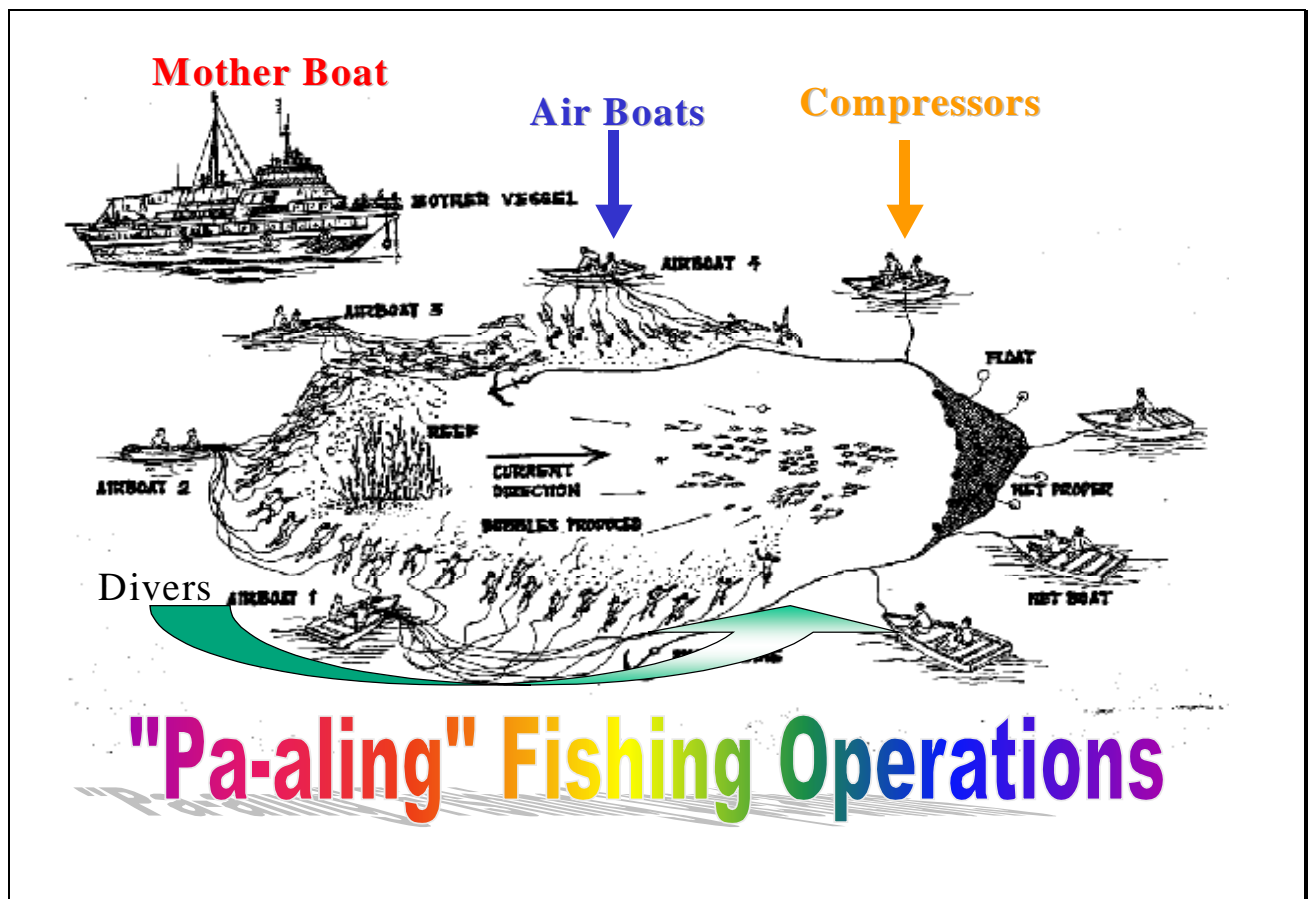


SOURCE: ILO - IPEC DUMAGUETE TEAM, 2001

Pa-aling  
As a Type of Fishing Technology

A mother vessel carrying boats and fishing equipment sails to a fishing site. Up to four boats (airboats) with compressors and divers cordon off an area, the divers wielding hoses with compressed air and swimming towards a reef. The air pressure from the hoses creates current that drives the fish towards a large net supported by up to three boats.

Figure No. 2  
Pa-aling Fishing Operations



SOURCE: ILO-IPEC DUMAGUETE TEAM, 2001.

**Kubkub**  
As a Fishing Technology

Kubkub is a fishing technique that employs the ring net method for commercial fishing. The term "Kubkub" is Cebuano as termed by early fishers. *Sensoro*, *Lantsa* and baby purse seine are variations of the term Kubkub as used by different fishing communities. Kubkub utilizes a mother boat, a ring net of 70-80 fathoms deep, a winch to close the net, strong-bright lights and "payao" or

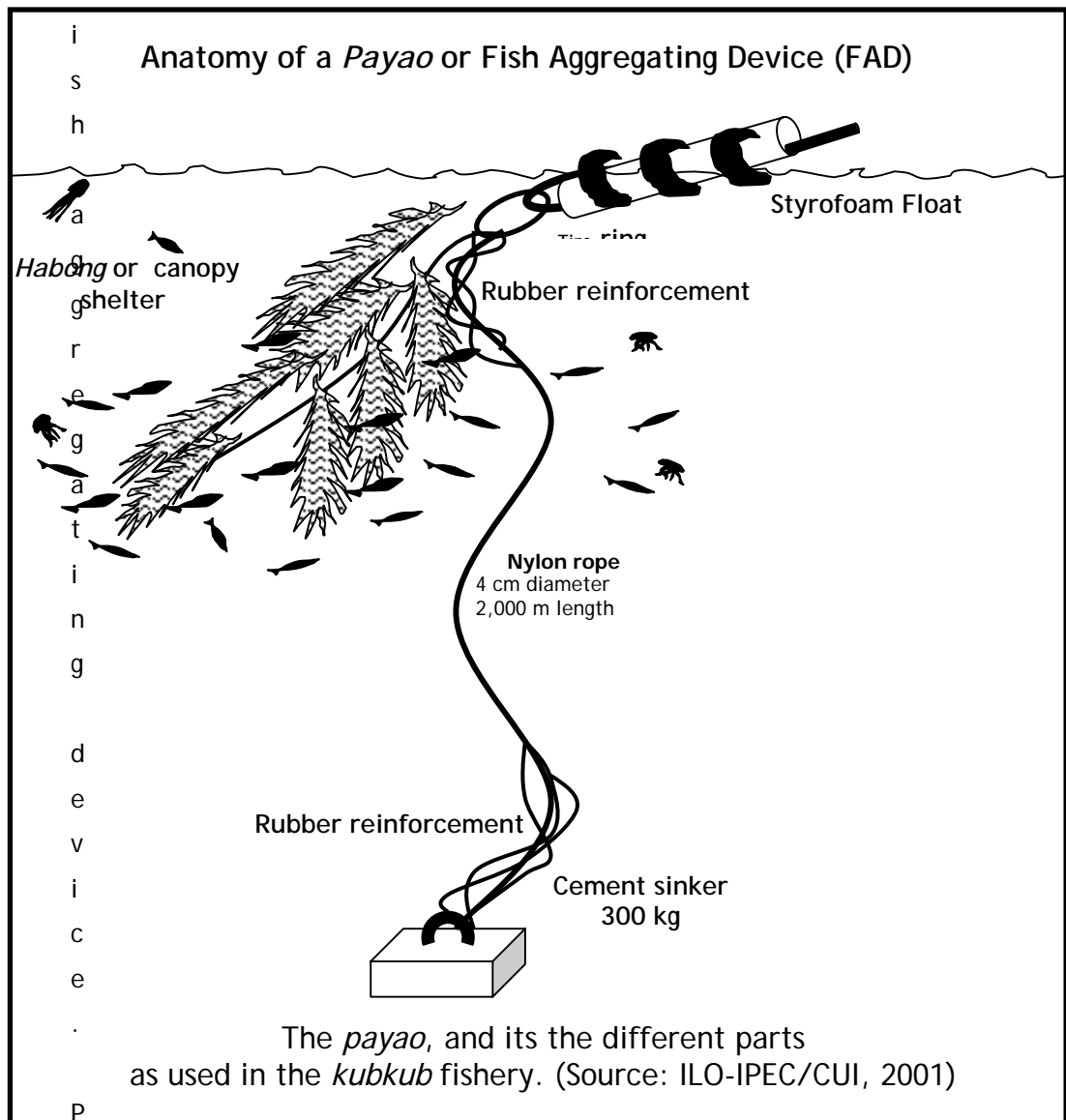
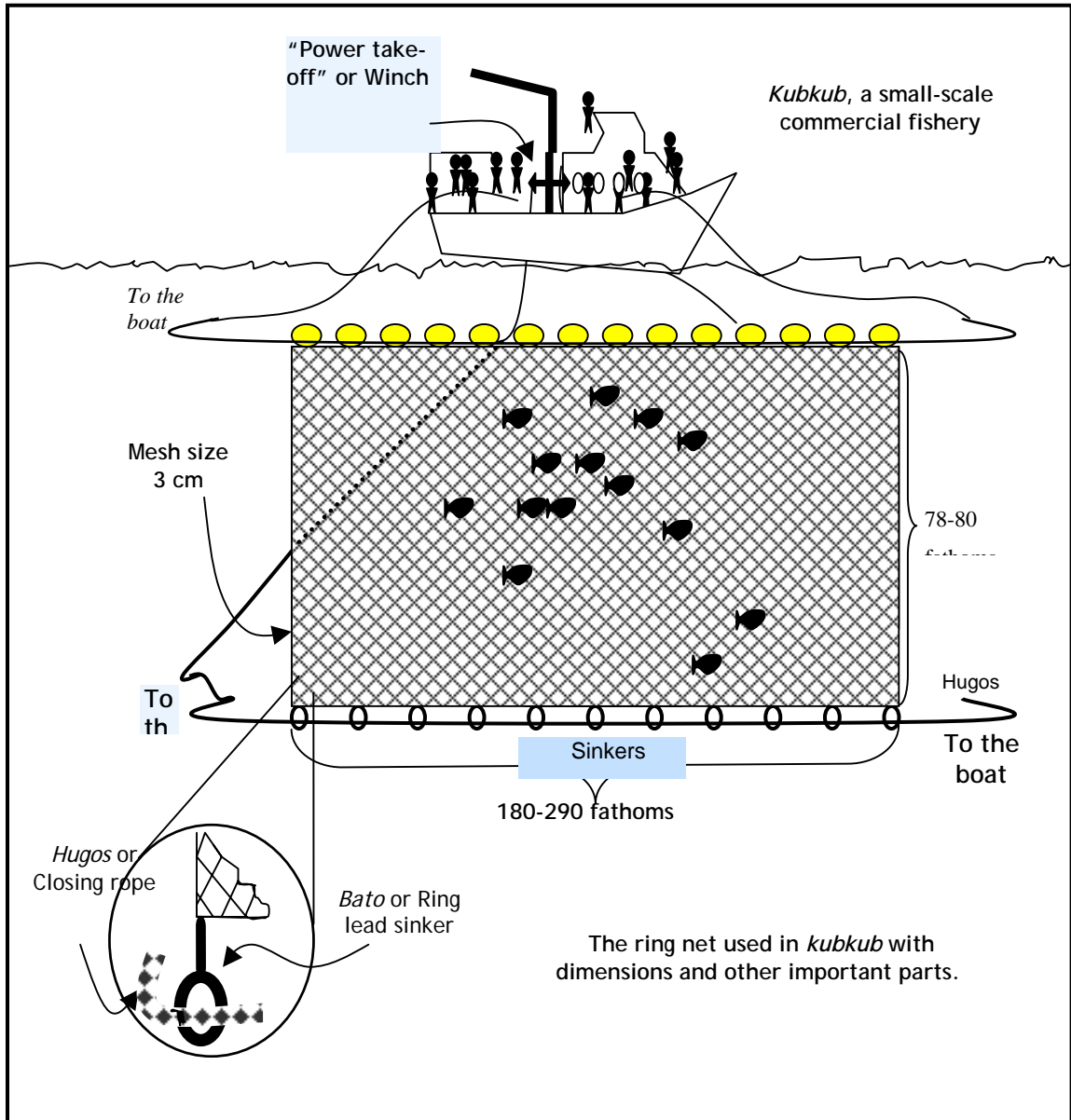


Figure No. 3: Fish Aggregating Device



is made of buoys with rope anchored to the sea bed and tied with coconut fronds to attract fish.

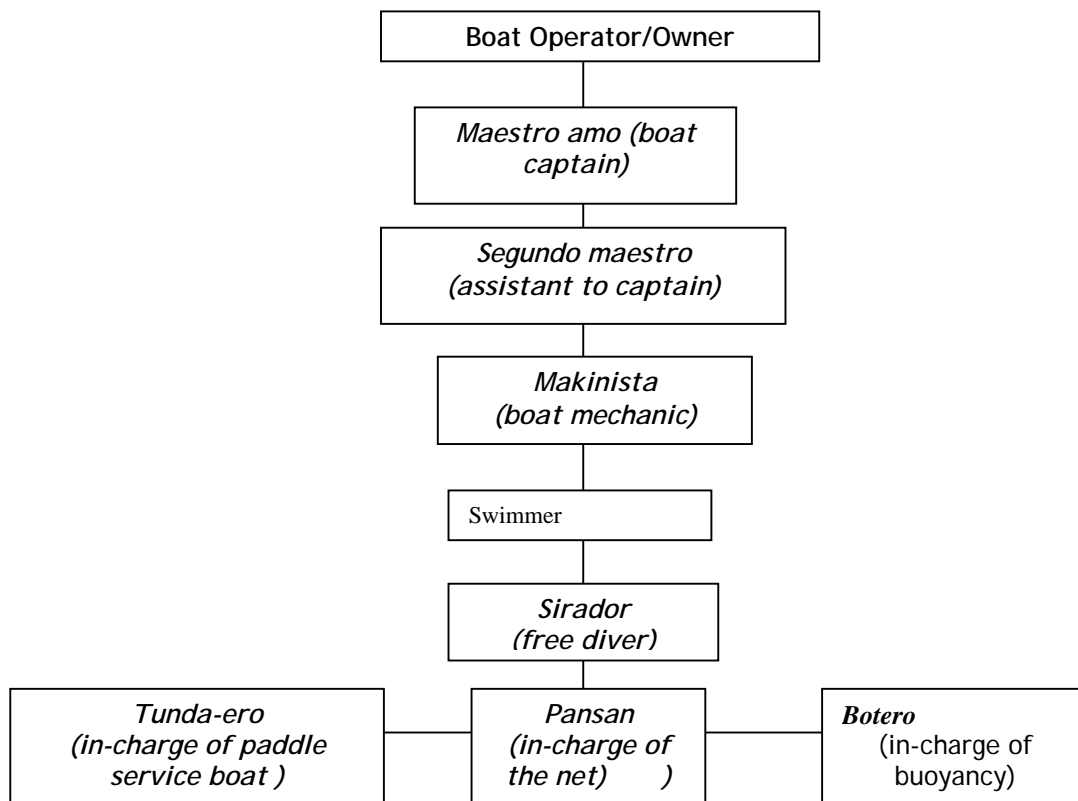
Figure No. 4 : The Kubkub Fishing Technology



SOURCE: ILO-IPEC DUMAGUETE TEAM 2001

Kubkub fishing may be done on a daily basis starting in the evening and involving 20-25 crew members on board a 15-ton boat. Preparation for the trip entails bringing fuel, food, water and other supplies to the mother boat prior to departure. The boat moves from 'payao' to 'payao' scanning the sea for fish before the net is cast.

The Kubkub crew is organized in its own hierarchy according to job functions. This structure also serves as the basis for the stratified sharing arrangement. There are two sharing schemes - the 50:50 and the *dies por uno* (10:1). The latter is the more common practice. In this arrangement, fishermen get one box for every 10 boxes of fish caught for the night. In half-sharing, the net sales is divided between the operator and among the crew. The crew may get paid on a daily, weekly or monthly basis depending on the operator's practice.



**Figure NO. 5**  
Organizational Structure of a  
Typical Kubkub Fishing Crew Operations

SOURCE: ILO-IPEC/CUI 2001

Children in Kubkub range from 10-17 years old. Most of them do not attend school anymore since they are either too lazy to study, too tired after fishing all night or believe that it is futile to continue studying hence it is better to join fishing and help their parents. Some children join their fathers who are working in Kubkub while others are independently trying their luck.

There are four types of Kubkub child laborers:

- (1) Those who are full-time and go fishing seven days a week.
- (2) Those who are week-enders - attend school during week-days and join Kubkub from Friday night until Sunday.
- (3) Those who choose to attend school and join Kubkub during the long summer breaks or the shorter holidays within the school year.
- (4) Those who are occasional workers. They join only when they want to.

The children perform varied tasks in Kubkub fishing including working as *maestro pansan* (over-all in-charge of the nets), *pansan*, *tundaero* (in-charge of service boat), waterboy, and other minor errands. They consider the following as their most difficult tasks: pulling the nets (*pagbira sa pukot*), carrying and lifting the coolers (*pag-alsa sa cooler*), pulling up the anchor (*pagpasaka sa angkla o pundo*), carrying ice to the boat, operating the winch (*pakaon ug hugos*), pulling up the weights or sinkers (*bira sa batuan*), harvesting or gathering the fish using large scoop nets (*sikpaw*), and arranging the ropes (*likaw sa hugos*). Usually, the tasks of a *makinista* (boat mechanic), swimmer or *sirador* (free divers) are not assigned to minors.

#### Risks and Dangers of Kubkub Fishing

Like Paaling and Muro-ami, children in Kubkub are also exposed to work hazards. Most of the time, the first experience in this work is very tough especially for children who get seasick. Sometimes, they just vomit the whole night and get dizzy all the time. Initially they are afraid of falling from the boat or that they fear that a storm might suddenly come. Most children say they are often weak and find their work difficult at the start. As they get used to the work they start to feel stronger and more capable of performing their tasks. They also consider this as a training ground for their future.

Children are also exposed to risks and dangers. The most common accidents include (1) falling off the boat, (2) drowning, (3) getting burned due to skin-machine contact, (4) a foot or leg gets caught in the winch or other similar machines in the boat, and (5)

getting entangled with the ropes. Some of these accidents could be fatal such as drowning. Sleepwalking or getting thrown out of the boat and into the sea sometimes happen to children who fall asleep. Those whose extremities get caught in the winch or other machines may also lose part of their limbs. These accidents leave scars in the memories of the parents and the children. Those who lose one of their limbs have to live with this impairment for the rest of their lives.

Negative effects on the children include being Children are deprived of school because they are too tired to attend school after fishing the whole night. They are attracted to the idea that money is easy to come by although they are very much under rated in terms of the share of the income. Some children are also influenced at an early age to drink, smoke, or gamble since they have money.

Working in *kubkub* may be considered by others as child's play but the truth is, because these children are not in school and have to work at night time, they are deprived of their right to a full education, a healthy mind and physical development, sufficient food, housing and medical care, immediate aid in times of disasters and emergencies, protection from cruelty, neglect and exploitation and most of all love, understanding and care.

**Figure No. 6**

A Snap Shot of Kubkub Children While Working



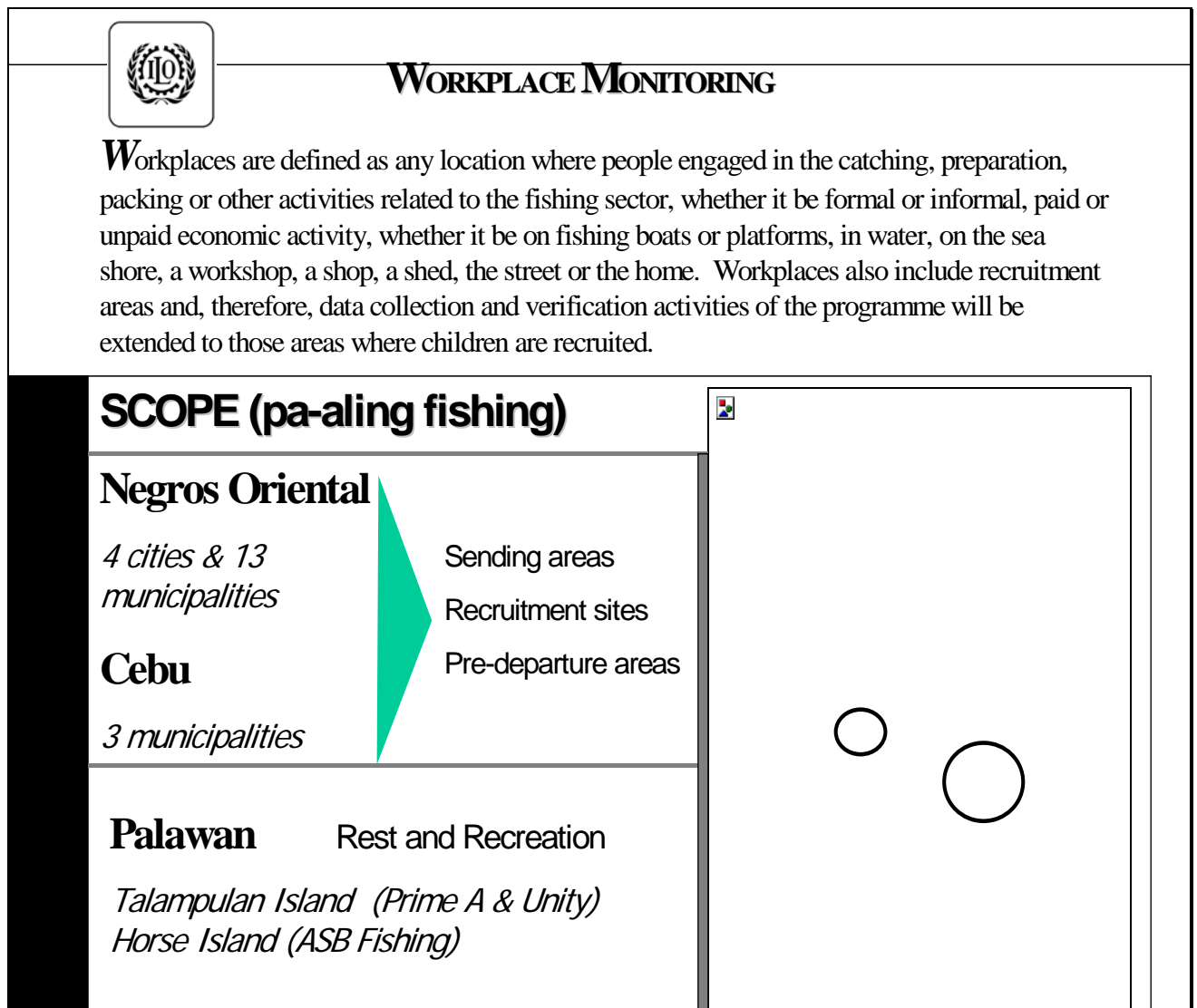
What are the laws that govern Kubkub fishing?

- The Bureau of fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) require *kubkub* operators to register to be able to monitor their activities and analyze fish catch. However in April 2001 only 56 of the more than a hundred operators have registered so far.
- BFAR also requires operators to submit a list of crew who join in their regular fishing trips. Although in the master list no minor is registered, in actuality they exist; some (3-4) minors are part of the crew in a *kubkub* operation.
- The National Law prohibiting commercial fishing within the 15-km municipal waters is not strictly followed by *kubkub* operators. The operators' main reason is that beyond the 15-km zone limit, their boat is not that capable of facing big waves in the open sea.
- Even if hiring of children below 18 is prohibited, operators are inclined to hire some kids on board because they are easy to deal with and are paid less than adults as they only do light work and are not married yet. Besides these children come from poor families and therefore need to earn to be able to help their families.

Department of Agriculture's Livelihood Enhancement Agricultural Development (DA-LEAD).

ILO-IPEC Dumaguete Team (Sub-Regional Programme to Combat Child Labor in the Fishing Sector in the Philippines 2001) has currently been very active in the pursuit of monitoring and obtaining more information in regard the status of Pa-aling and Kubkub fishing activities. For the year 2000 and 2001, the following reports below have been emphasized.

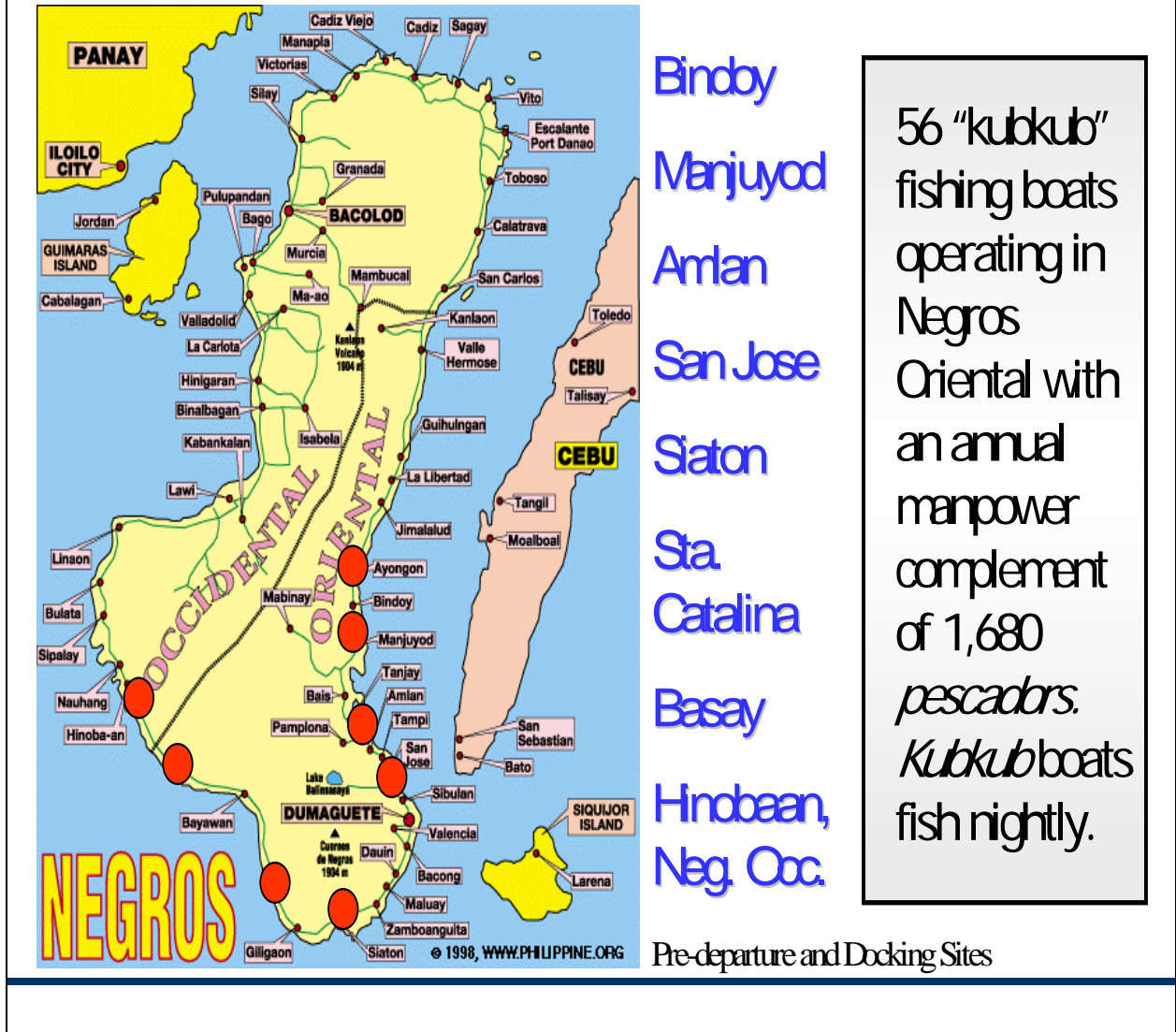
Figure No. 7



SOURCE: ILO-IPEC DUMAGUETE TEAM 2001

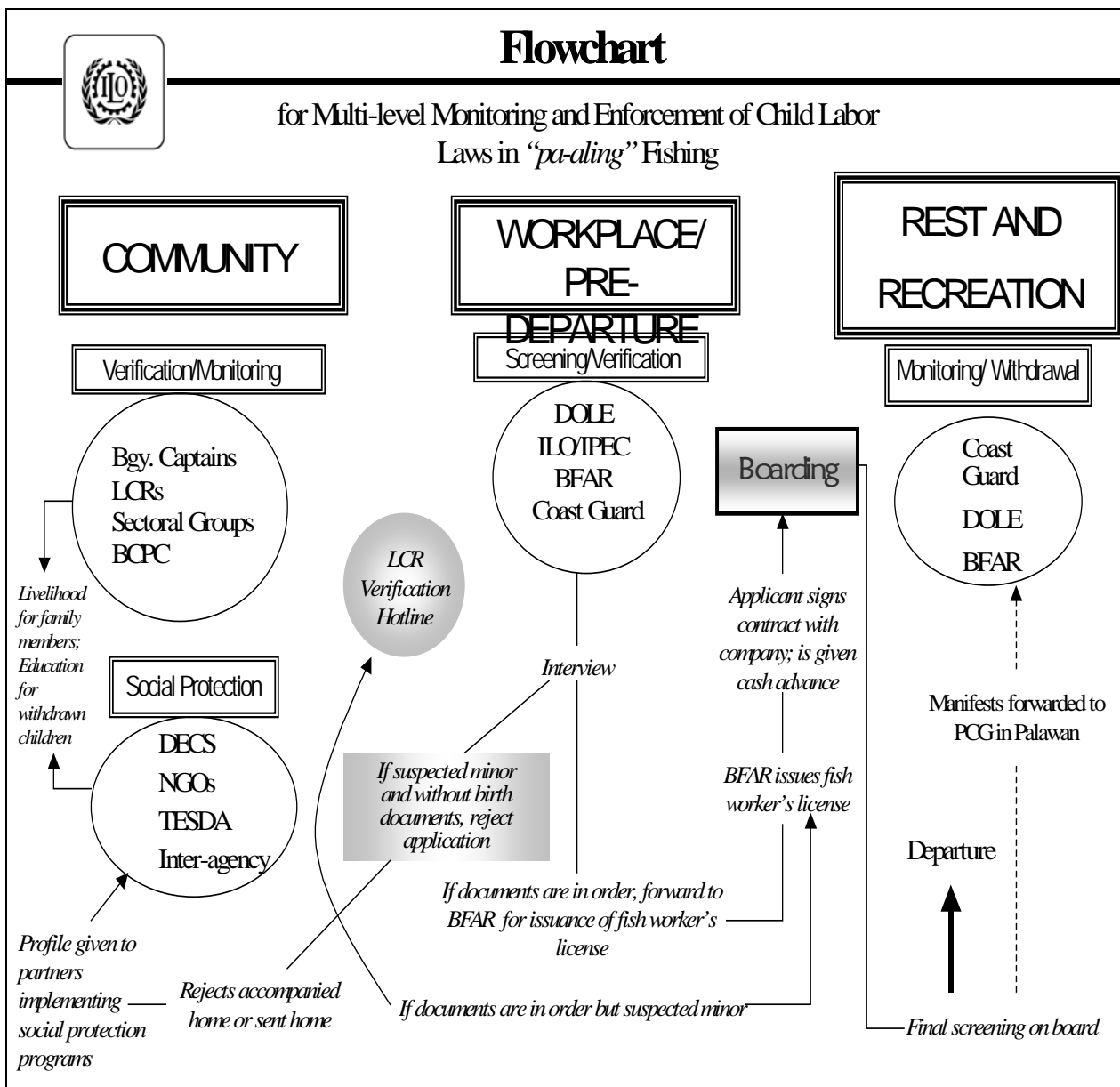
Figure No. 8  
Monitoring Coverage for Kubkub Fishing

# Monitoring Coverage-kubkub



SOURCE: ILO-IPEC DUMAGUETE TEAM 2001

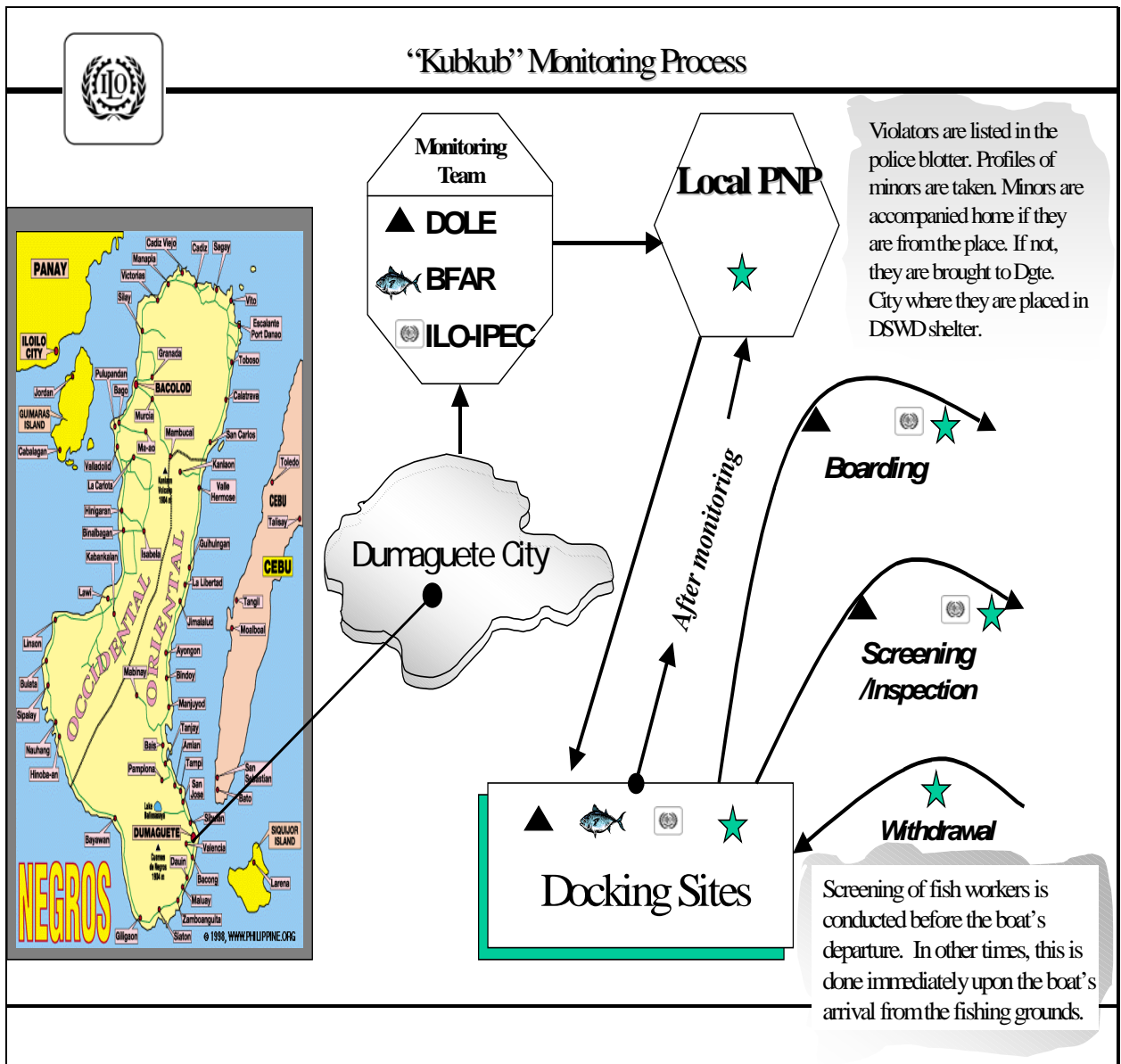
Figure No. 9  
Flowchart for a Multi-level Monitoring in Pa-aling Fishing



SOURCE: ILO-IPEC DUMAGUETE TEAM 2001



Figure No. 10  
Monitoring Process for Kubkub Fishing

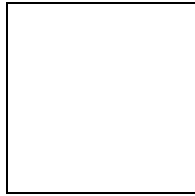


SOURCE: ILO-IPEC DUMAGUETE TEAM 2001

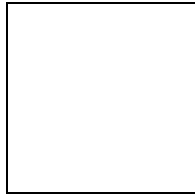
MAJOR ACTIVITIES/OUTPUTS OF

## ILO-IPEC DUMAGUETE TEAM 2001

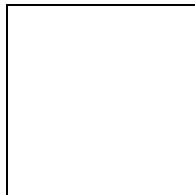
◆ **M**onitored a total of 15 "pa-aling" fishing boats and 21 "Kubkub" boats. One monitoring activity usually lasts an average of 2-3 days. As a result, 50 minors have been withdrawn and 100 more rejected/prevented. This involves screening activities for about 4,500 fishermen in "pa-aling" and 735 for "kubkub". The project holds a list of 1,119 names it considers as suspected minors (pa-aling) whose applications were supposed to have been rejected. 20 of them have already been confirmed to be minors by the LCRs.



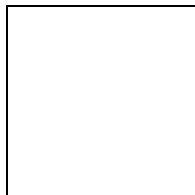
**C**onducted a total of 100 coordination meetings/negotiations with fishing operators and government agencies which resulted to the signing of agreements with NOFBOC, ASB, Prime A and the LCRs in Negros Oriental. These agreements were developed by the monitoring team. Another result of this coordination activities is the institutionalization of the fish workers manifest in "pa-aling" which was also developed by the team.



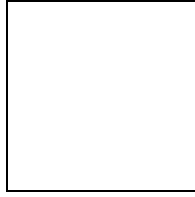
**E**stablishment of an inter-agency team on child labor in deep-sea fishing which is composed of DOLE, BFAR, ILO-IPEC and PNP in "kubkub" and DOLE, BFAR, Coast Guard and ILO-IPEC in "pa-aling". This team has jointly conducted monitoring activities covering 21 "kubkub" boats in 3 municipalities and 15 "pa-aling" boats in 2 provinces. This team meets regularly. This team has also conducted 5 orientation-seminars on child labor with management and staff of fishing operators.



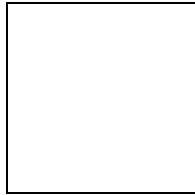
**E**stablishment of a fully operational database.



**C**onducted 2 rapid appraisals for "pa-aling" and "kubkub", the reports of which were made as bases for prioritizing social protection programs in 4 municipalities and the inclusion of "kubkub" as a target sector.



**P**rovided close support to the NPC in conceptualizing and developing action programmes as well as in the implementation of the activities of the inter-agency group on livelihood promotion.



**C**onducted 13 monitoring activities on the implementation of social protection programmes in the target sites.

## ILO Convention 182

In Reference

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ILO Convention 182 is concerned with the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor. The worst forms of child labor comprises:

- All forms of slavery or similar practices, including the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, forced or compulsory labor/forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.
- Child prostitution, using children for pornography or pornographic performance.
- Using, procuring or offering children for illicit activities, such as drug trafficking.
- Any work that is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children, as determined

by the national laws and regulations or by competent authorities after consultations with employers and workers, and considering international standards, particularly Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Recommendation 190.

Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Recommendation 190 specify, among other things:

- Work exposing children to physical and psychological abuse
- Work under water
- Work with dangerous machinery and equipment
- Work with unhealthy environment
- Work for long hours and during the night

All of which are common in deep-sea fishing. In addition, the child's health, safety and morals be fully protected, and that adequate training and instruction are provided. ILO Convention 182 is binding only on those members of the ILO whose ratifications have been registered with the Director General. In its implementation, Recommendation 190 states that the above-mentioned "Worst Forms Of Child Labor" be regarded as criminal offenses.

Implementation would very much depend on detailed information and statistical data on the nature and extent of child labor, particularly in regard to sex, age group, occupation, branch of economic activity, school attendance and geographical location. Exchange of information among members and communication of all data to the ILO, and coordination of activities is particularly important where international networks are involved.

Other recommendations are:

- Informing and scrutinizing the general public;
- Involving and training employer, worker and civic organizations;
- Training government officials, particularly inspectors and law enforcers;
- Providing for prosecution in offender's country even if the crime is committed in another country;
- Simplifying legal and administrative procedures among others.

The Convention acknowledges that the effectiveness of members in meeting its objectives will depend on enhanced international cooperation and/or assistance including support for social and economic development, poverty eradication programs and universal education/vocational training.

### A Review of Recommendations

Past Studies

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The outstanding contribution of Oosterhout (1986) on the phenomenon of Muro-ami points to the notion that basically improving Muro-ami operations is to improve it from the ecological and labor relations perspectives. Simply put, this could mean providing scuba diving equipments, use of horizontal tremor lines, replacing confrontation with cooperation with government backing and support, applying Labor Code as it applies to children, if not in its totality, or giving bonuses for swimmers, to name a few.

In the same vein, an article written by Aloysius M.L. Canete (2000), stressed that “ We can not make investigations into stable practices or changes in local fishing (or other) technologies outside the context of local social norms and cultural values that govern peasant communities” (199). This is a reinforcement of Oosterhout’s basic recommendations.

In comparison, Olofson et. al. (1992, 2000) takes a slightly different notion. Given that the authors' recommendations are founded on the observation that many fishermen have given up fishing due to the meager catch in their localities, these are some of the possibilities and opportunities identified:

- Since many fishermen come from impoverished farms, to upgrade agriculture by suitable new cropping systems could also be considered;
- Stronger efforts by government and NGOs to promote cooperativism;
- Strong effort at the national level to enable the "co-adventurers" in all capitalist fishing operations to organize and demand better remuneration, prerequisites working conditions.

## Combating Worst Forms of Child Labor in Paaling and Kubkub Expeditions Of Covenants and Political Will

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To this day, efforts at collective action in combating child labor in deep-sea and fishing sector, have been noted. These are evidenced by covenants and/or Memorandum of Understanding, regular coordination meetings, Commitment of Support - entered into and inked by various government and non-government agencies, operators and other concerned parties. These do not necessarily mean that child labor in the fishing sector henceforth will be eradicated, it is however a challenge, or at minimum, a step in the right direction. Some of these commitments include:

ILO-IPEC Dumaguete Major Accomplishments Report 2001:

- Institutionalization of Child Labor Program in the Fishing Sector in the province of Negros Oriental through an Anti-Child Labor Covenant signed by the Provincial Governor, City and Municipal governments, concerned line agencies, NGOs, academe, church, media and other interested groups (115 signatories). GOs and NGOs with commitments include:
  - Provincial Governor and Provincial Vice-Governor and its Sangguniang Panlalawigan and Provincial Planning and Development Officer
  - Department of Education, Culture and Sports
  - Department of Social Welfare and Development
  - City/Municipal Health Office
  - City/Municipal Nutrition Council
  - City/Municipal PDOs
  - City/Municipal Agriculture Office
  - Negros Oriental/Dumaguete City Press Club and PIA
  - Philippine National Police and PNP Maritime
  - DOLE Region VII (Dumaguete Office)
  - Kalauman Development Center
  - Habitat for Humanity International
  - Negros District Conference
  - World Vision Development Foundation
  - Philippine Independent Church
  - Roman Catholic Church
  - Other religious organizations
  - Office of the Provincial Board Members
  - Leagues of City and Municipal Mayors
  - Barangay Councils of the Towns and Cities
  - Kabataang Barangay Provincial Federations

- City and Municipal Federations
- KB Barangay Councils
- Dumaguete City government
- Bayawan City government
- Foundation University of Dumaguete City
- St. Paul College of Dumaguete City
- Silliman University Interdisciplinary Research Group
- Tanjay City government
- Municipal governments of Pamplona and Mabinay
- Local governments of Sibulan, San Jose, Amlan, Bindoy, Ayungon, Jimalalud, Vallehermoso, Canlaon City, Valencia, Bacong, Dauin, Zamboangita, Siaton, Bais City, Manjuyod, La Libertad, Tayasan, Guihulngan, Sta. Catalina, Basay
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- Creation of (PAC) Project Advisory Committee (Negros Oriental) - members include:
  - Department of Labor and Employment
  - Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
  - Department of Social Welfare and Development
  - Department of Interior and Local Government
  - Department of Education, Culture and Sports
  - Commission of Human Rights
  - Philippine Information Agency
  - PNP Regional Command
  - Dumaguete Labor Center
  - 702<sup>nd</sup> PNP Maritime
  - Silliman University
  - Philippine Ports Authority
  - City Prosecutor's Office
  - Local Government of Sibulan
- Formation and operationalization of Municipal Council for the Protection of Children (MCPC) and Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) in the eight target barangays with their corresponding work plans in support of the Program. This triggered the formation of a similar structure in the barangays of the four pilot municipalities. Cost is shouldered by the concerned municipalities/LGUs.
- Folk Theater Group composed of former deep-sea fishing children laborers from the municipality of Siaton was formed, trained and now have been performing theatrical



- shows as an alternative form of advocacy campaign against child labor in deep-sea fishing.
- Signing of Covenant Against Child Labor in the Fishing Sector with Silliman University Interdisciplinary Research Group (SU-IRG), 16 October 2001.
  - Orientation and Planning Workshop for Local Civil Registrars on Child Labor, Dumaguete City, 20-21 July 2001.
  - Letter of Agreement with DOLE, BFAR and the Negros Oriental Fishing Boat Operators Cooperative, 8 April 2001.
  - Palawan Educational Tour and Consultation with PIGLAS-Palawan, July 26-30, 2001.
  - Presentation of Current Programs, Services and Concerns - ILO-IPEC, PIGLAS-Palawan and PAC:
    - Target municipalities in Negros Oriental: Ayungon, Bindoy, Sibulan and Siaton;
    - Project beneficiaries:
      - 800 children under the age of 18 involved in or at risk of hazardous work;
      - 600 younger siblings of these children;
      - 800 women family members, of children withdrawn from the fishing sector;
      - staff/personnel of Gos/NGOs and community groups sensitized and trained to be able to provide specialized services in the prevention, withdrawal and rehabilitation of working children.
  - Creation of inter-agency collaboration to promote and implement livelihood projects in support to the existing ILO-IPEC Social Protection Intervention (BFAR, DOLE, TESDA, CVPC, DA, PAO, PVO, AWFCI, PUNLA, PSWD).
  - Commitment of Support with Prime A Fishing Corporation and Ponong United Fishing Arrastre Services Association (PUFASA) - October 2001.
  - Commitment of Support with ASB Development Corporation - June 2001.

## Salient Observations, Assessment and Concluding Themes

Deep-Sea and other Fishing Sector Studies

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All told, deep-sea fishing and the fishing sector as whole in the Philippines, is a multi-dimensional and multifarious complex phenomenon intricately woven as a fabric containing historical, ecological, social, economic, cultural and political fibers. This realization however should not prevent us from highlighting a number of salient observations obtained from limited sources at a particular period of time within the purview of the bigger spectrum of events.

### On Declining Fish Yields, Fishing Technology and Child Labor

- Over the years, Philippine fish yields is observed to have been declining despite increasing efforts in terms of more Horsepower needed to pursue the fish. Due to decreasing productivity, commercial fishing have shifted from passive to active gears which tends to put further pressure on fish yields. Declining yields and decreasing productivity presupposes increasing marginal costs or cost is increasing but harvest is decreasing. When it is possible to find ways and means to lower costs or maintain costs (hence making the total cost curve less steep), there is danger of exerting too much pressure on the resource and depleting the resource even further (risk zone).
- It is in this whole scheme of things where the factor productivity of labor may be one such means that can lower costs down i.e. the use of child labor. Child labor is cheap and abundant. Its use however compounds the risk of destroying and depleting fish stocks even much further to a point where the process becomes irreversible.
- Fish production in the context of a market-driven and market-based fishing sector is a complex phenomenon that requires a more in-depth and extensive study of not just yields, technology, factor productivity, but also price, consumption and distribution patterns over a specific period of time to be able to establish interrelationships and trends. This complexity is aggravated if the problem of resource depletion is likewise considered.
- There is an association between the problem of depleting resources and the use of cheap labor-intensive technology i.e. child labor. Despite the drastic “Ban” child labor has persisted thus the problem simply metamorphosed into something different but yet - the same. If this is the problem situation, the solution also lies in the problem. The persistence of child labor is part and parcel of the on-going phenomenon. The abolition of child labor also means preserving fish stock.

### On Pa-aling and Kubkub Fishing and Child Labor

- Muro-Ami in principle is passé. Pa-aling as a fishing technology has taken its place. Reports of escapes and interviews with Pa-aling households indicate the persistence of a similar informal working and harsh living conditions as during the Muro-ami days.
- Kubkub fishing, a daily fishing activity also documented the presence of child labor, and although the working conditions are much less difficult when compared with Pa-aling, it is likewise harzardous.
- Household profiles of both Pa-aling and Kubkub families show low incomes, very few economic opportunities, low educational attainments, and a generally poverty-stricken status. Fishing is the predominant source of living. Farming is secondary.

### The Children

- Pa-aling children are assigned as swimmers, divers, fixers of damaged equipments, checkers, drivers of service vehicles, in-charge of fish scarers, operators of small motor boats, assistant to master fisher, compressor watch-guy.
- Children in Kubkub perceive their most difficult tasks to include: pulling the nets, carrying and lifting coolers, pulling up anchor, loading ice to boat, operating the winch, pulling up the weights, arranging ropes, collecting fish using scoop nets.
- Pa-aling children work for an average of 11 hours daily. Some reported 3AM to 6PM or 15 hours daily. Breakfast at 8AM. The cycle of setting nets, scaring the fish, diving, pulling, sorting, storing the fish - is repeated 7 to 10 times a day.
- A number of Pa-aling children complain of body pains, cuts, wounds, skin diseases, eye and hearing impairment, paralysis, body burns, exhaustion, fatigue. They also reported that the maltreatment by the master fisher were physically traumatic and psychologically degrading. They are also scared of shark attacks, drowning, snake bites, land/sea accidents.
- Kubkub children reported that accidents occur when some children sleep-walk, daydream or when their feet are entangled by nets. Some also lost their limbs. Some children get sick-sea causing vomiting and dizziness.
- Most are school drop-outs. If they are now enrolled, many of them are regular absentees, late in class, too tired to go to study, lazy to study, mischievous, cannot cope with school demands, do not have money to spend on school requirements. They would rather continue to join their parents in the fishing ventures in order to earn money.
- They are recruited by relatives and or canvassers to join fishing ventures. Some parents also take their children along during these fishing trips.

- Poverty is the main reason cited for joining fishing activities. Most of the children would like to help support or provide financial assistance to their families.
- A number of payment and or sharing schemes are practiced for both Pa-aling and Kubkub fishing. In Pa-aling one study noted an earnings per month of PHP 827.75. No figure could be quoted for Kubkub.

### The Operators

- Three Pa-aling operators have been identified. A number of Kubkub operators have also been located. But much is unknown in terms of the economics of the Pa-aling and Kubkub fishing industry in the context of their historical/statistical data of fish catch, costs of operations, industrial relations, organizational structure vis-à-vis job description, qualifications, wage rates among others - from the perspectives and experiences of the operators themselves.

### ILO-IPEC Dumaguete Team

- The ILO-IPEC Sub-Regional Program to Combat Child Labor in the Fishing Sector in the Philippines as represented by the ILO-IPEC Dumaguete Monitoring Team in collaboration with the Project Advisory Committee has been successful in:
  - Identifying the municipalities where Pa-aling and Kubkub fishing exist and or originate;
  - Conducting surveillance and monitoring activities;
  - Conducting Pa-aling and Kubkub related studies to better understand the fishing technology, profiles of households, and the plight of the fish-worker children and other related issues/problems relating to deep-sea fishing;
  - Closely collaborating with government agencies, institutions, LGUs, NGOs, Operators and other concerned individuals and groups through media, entering into Covenants and Agreements, and other campaigns and advocacy work - with the elimination of child labor as their primary goal.

### Scope and Status of Deep-sea Fishing Sector Child Labor Problem

- During the Muro-ami days, a number of studies have been done to document the nature, characteristics and issue/problems related to its impact to the environment, child labor and employment conditions.
- After the banning of Muro-ami, a number of studies were also undertaken to document the plight of the dislocated Muro-ami families.
- Pa-aling has taken the place of Muro-ami. Although different in technology, the working conditions and the existence of child labor persist.

- Kubkub fishing has been identified to also hire children as fish workers and hence also a hazardous venture.
- In Pa-aling fishing, children and adults are known to work and live under sub-human conditions and very low/poor wage rates/sharing schemes, giving rise to a number of escape stories, accidents, and according to some reports - even death.
- A number of government initiatives i.e. livelihood projects have been undertaken to provide alternative economic opportunities to dislocated Muro-ami families. Most of them failed.
- The need to survive, the presence of operators, the ease in entry and exit, the possession of diving, swimming and other fishing related skills, weaknesses in current political/institutional state of affairs among others - together create the atmosphere conducive to the persistence of child labor in deep-sea as well as in other fishing sectors.
- Much is already known and said about the plight of children fish workers under worst forms of child labor. Yet despite what is known, numbers are elusive and their presence lack the visibility and conspicuousness that may be easily seen if they were furniture makers or market vendors or fire-cracker assemblers. And although stories can be extracted from their co-household members/families, in most cases, the numbers continue to be rough estimates, random and sporadic. This is because they are invisible (out at sea most of the months) and dispersed (they come from different barangays, municipalities and even provinces). Or even if they were physically present, because of the need for survival, and the absence of birth certificates - makes it a formidable task to truly seek them out. It is therefore not possible to obtain an accurate figure of how many deep-sea fishing child laborers are out there.
- Much is known yet much continue to be also unknown particularly the true social cost of child labor in the context of a market-driven fishing industry. One particular need is a clearer and a more accurate understanding of deep-sea fishing as an industry i.e. Pa-aling vis-à-vis fish yields and stocks. The persistence of child labor is also associated with depleting resources hence the abolition of child labor means an improvement in efforts to regenerate and conserve fish stocks. Without this consideration, any effort at abolishing child labor may miss out an important and critical reason for its existence.
- Despite this lack, there are current efforts to engineer the infrastructure towards the elimination of child labor i.e. monitoring and surveillance at departure areas, multi-sectoral (LGUs, GOs, line agencies, operators, academe, religious, civic, media, others) involvement, commitment, campaign and advocacy - particularly in Negros Oriental.

## Recommendations

### The Challenge

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Worst forms of child labor such as those in the deep-sea fishing sector must be eliminated and abolished in the soonest possible time. This is the main challenge. The strategies to attain such goal could include the following:

- Seek ways and means to continue to understand the circumstances surrounding the existence and persistence of child labor in this sector from the perspectives of both the household and community. Time and in-depth knowledge are two requisite necessities. Care should be taken to adapt measures that provide sufficient time to allow households and communities to pursue a knowledge-based set of strategies in combating child labor in its worst form. Initiatives undertaken by ILO-IPEC Dumaguete Team should by all means be sustained and supported in the years to come to be able to see through the effects and impacts of their current efforts i.e. Covenant signing, monitoring - surveillance at points of departure.
- Increase advocacy by addressing the root causes of the child labor phenomenon as seen and understood by the families, communities and other concerned parties. Any attempt at community intervention, or policy-formulation, or new government regulations - should at the outset seriously consider the fact that this is a market-driven and market-based industry hence the need for the operators to be an active collaborator in all the pursuits. How operators can include in their accounting process and decision making the realities of declining fish yields vis-à-vis the use of child labor, in other words, the true social cost - is by far the greatest challenge.
- Some priority areas that require either immediate improvement, immediate intervention or immediate understanding are:
  - Employment and working conditions (to include low wages, hazard pay, insurance)
  - Assessment of environmental effects (now or never especially for operators)
  - Overall coastal community economy of target sites (to include fish yields, fish stocks, small/medium/large scale fishing ventures over time)
  - Socio-political-cultural-economic impacts and alternatives of abolishing child labor (i.e. push and pull factors)

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