



Every Juan, Para sa Bakawan

Why Mangrove Matters and Why It's Urgent to Plant Now

Mangroves are more than just coastal trees. They are powerful protectors and life-support systems that provide immense ecological, economic, and social benefits, especially for the Philippines. However, these critical ecosystems are disappearing rapidly, making immediate action essential.



Nature's Coastal Defenders

With over 36,000 kilometers of coastline, the Philippines relies on mangroves to protect against storms, erosion, and sea-level rise, reducing the impact of typhoons and storm surges. As extreme weather becomes more frequent, this natural protection is more vital than ever.



Carbon Captors

Mangroves absorb up to 10 times more carbon than terrestrial forests, making them critical in fighting climate change. The Philippines, one of the most climate-vulnerable countries, stands to benefit immensely from this natural climate solution.



Life Support's System

Mangroves serve as nurseries for fish, crabs, and other marine life, sustaining biodiversity and supporting the livelihoods of millions of Filipinos who depend on coastal fisheries. Without them, food security and local economies are at risk.



Natural Water Filters

Mangroves trap sediments and pollutants, improving water quality and protecting coral reefs and seagrass beds. Without these natural filters, coastal waters become increasingly polluted, threatening marine ecosystems.



Ecosystem Restoration

Over the past 50 years, the Philippines has lost more than half of its mangrove forests. Immediate action is needed to restore this vital ecosystem and protect the communities that rely on it



Before and After Aerial Images of Mangrove Reforestation in Culion, Palawan

Legal Framework for Mangrove Conservation in the Philippines

To ensure the protection and restoration of mangrove ecosystems, the Philippines has established various legal frameworks:

Philippine Ports Authority Administrative Order No. 14-2020

Requires port operators, managers, and service providers to undertake mangrove planting and coastal rehabilitation as part of their environmental responsibilities.

Presidential Decree No. 705 (Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines)

Recognizes mangroves as critical forest resources and provides guidelines for their protection and conservation

Philippine Fisheries Code (Republic Act No. 8550, as amended by RA 10654)

Mandates the protection of fishery habitats, including mangrove areas, to ensure sustainable fisheries.

Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018 (Republic Act No. 11038)

Strengthens the protection of natural, biological and physical diversities of the environment, including mangrove ecosystems.



Mangroves are like people. When they're cared for, they grow strong, and so do the people who care for them.

DANIEL JAVIER
MANGROVE PLANTER
OF CULION FOUNDATION, INC.



Our Mangrove Project Implementation Scheme

In the implementation of environmental projects, CFI has established its implementation scheme that prioritizes the involvement of the community in the entire project duration, from the proposal development to the project closing phase. Due to the strong link of CFI to the communities in Coron and Culion, the project implementation scheme is a circular process in which community feedback is utilized to develop new project proposals and improve the implementation of existing projects.

1. Selection of Project Site/s

Environmental projects in Culion and Coron are identified through the learnings and community feedback from existing and past projects. Expansion to other sites is discussed after a thorough research on existing data to evaluate its feasibility.

2. Initial Assessment of the Project Site/s

During the proposal development phase, environmental and community needs are consolidated and evaluated through the conduct of Rapid Rural Appraisal or Community Needs Assessment to identify the needs and available resources within the community.

3. Consultation with Stakeholders

The proposed interventions will be presented to the relevant stakeholders such as local government officials, government agencies, and community leaders to gauge the alignment of the project objectives with the long-term goals of the community.

4. Participatory Planning

As the initial step of the implementation, project stakeholders, particularly the local government unit, community leaders, and government agencies will be actively involved in planning the

project implementation to effectively address the community's needs, improve project performance, empower the community, and increase the project's sustainability.

5. Close Coordination with the Local Government Unit and Other Key Stakeholders

During the implementation of the project, strong relationships with local partners such as the local government unit, community leaders, and officials from relevant government agencies are developed to guarantee smooth project implementation.

6. Capacity-building of the Community

To ensure sustainability of gains, part of the project's close-out activities involve building the capacity of the community with the goal of establishing local eco-warriors who will continue the environmental conservation efforts initiated by the project.

7. Monitoring Activities and Regular Feedback from the Community

Regular monitoring activities are executed and community feedback and insights are consolidated to enhance project implementation and identify gaps in services.





Zeroing in on mangrove interventions: The CFI's Experience

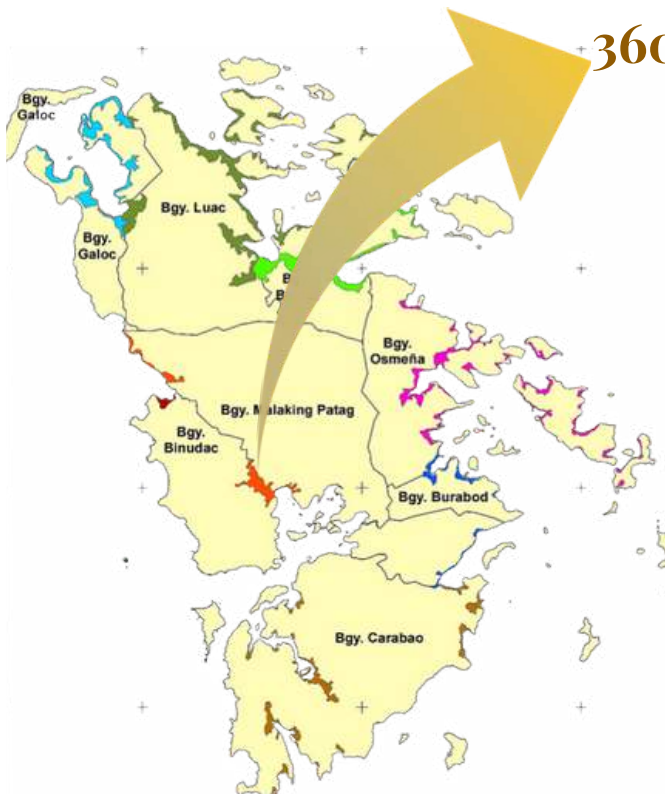


Seedling Propagation and Mangrove Planting

- Established mangrove nurseries and planted 360,000 mangroves, reaching over 200 beneficiaries including women, fisherfolk, and indigenous cultural communities.
- Covered nine (9) barangays in Culion and eight (8) barangays in Coron.
- Collaboration with local stakeholders to ensure long-term success and impact.



360,000 mangroves planted across 136 hectares



CFI's areas of operation (highlighted in bright colors) spans the entire Culion Municipality in Palawan.

Mangrove Reforestation Integrated with Sustainable Livelihood

- Awarded livelihood projects to seven (7) CFI-organized Peoples Organizations (POs) based on comprehensive needs assessments.
- Livelihoods directly proposed by POs through community consultations, including fisherfolk, farmers, women groups, and IPs.
- Notable support: Provided Php 60,000 worth of fishing nets and a boat to IP families in Sitio Matalbong, Malaking Patag, shifting them away from deforestation-causing charcoal-making to sustainable livelihoods.
- Awarded six (6) POs a start-up capital of Php 100,000 each, through the support of G-Xchange, Inc., and supplemented by capacity-building workshops to promote organizational growth and self-reliance.
- Installed five (5) Piso WiFi stations powered by Starlink and constructed market hubs for three (3) POs, boosting economic resilience.



CFI provided biodiversity-friendly livelihoods to peoples organizations

Mangrove Reforestation Integrated with Advocacy and Community Education

- Engaged children of planters with educational materials to promote environmental consciousness.
- Supported awareness-raising for conservation, rehabilitation, and protection of mangrove forests with LGU support.
- Conducted IEC campaigns through CFI-trained eco-warriors to build long-term community support for mangrove conservation.



CFI installed IEC materials to deter mangrove-cutting



CFI actively involves women and indigenous communities in mangrove reforestation initiatives, recognizing and amplifying their critical role in environmental conservation

Mangrove Reforestation and Community Empowerment

- Established peoples organizations and provided them with capacity-building in organizational development, officially recognized by LGUs through oath-taking ceremonies.
- CFI-organized POs facilitated conservation information campaigns during out-planting activities and led the monitoring of the growth and survival of the mangroves.
- Produced and installed IEC materials at reforestation sites, complemented by social media promotion.



CFI facilitated the Peoples Organization Capacity Building Workshop, aimed at empowering local organizations to drive community-led development and sustainable growth in Culion, Palawan.

Gender-Sensitive and Culturally Appropriate Approaches

- Designed interventions that respect local culture and promote gender equity and with strong local support.
- Prioritized the involvement and empowerment of marginalized groups such as women, youth, and the indigenous communities in capacity building sessions and the management of marine protected areas in Culion and Coron Palawan.



Balisungan Marine Protected Area (MPA) and the Shalom Women's Biodiversity Conservation Association awarded during the 2024 PEARL Awards and 3rd Palawan MPA Summit.

Feature

Community-based Mangrove Rehabilitation in Coastal Communities in Coron, Palawan

Stories of challenges, of hope, of recovery

In the coastal areas of Coron, Palawan, fishing has long been a lifeline, a way of living passed down through generations. But in recent years, that lifeline has frayed. The ocean, once teeming with fish, has grown silent. Fisherfolk like Daniel Javier of Barangay Tulda have found themselves returning from the sea empty-handed, their nets bare and their hopes dimmed.

Illegal fishing, deforestation, and the growing threat of climate change have all taken their toll. For many, the struggle to survive became even more dire during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these setbacks, stories and efforts to restore and protect coastal ecosystems have quietly gained momentum and offered a path toward recovery.

Planting a Solution: Mangroves as a Lifeline

For Daniel Javier, the Chairperson of the Municipal Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (MFARMC) in Brgy. Tulda, change began in 2017 with the FishRight Project, a United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded initiative. Initially involved in training sessions and community monitoring against illegal activities, Javier witnessed the shift from enforcement to restoration when mangrove reforestation was introduced. The mangrove initiative was then further sustained through the collaboration of CFI with G-Xchange, Inc. (GXI) and its GForest app, a sustainability initiative within the GCash mobile wallet application in the Philippines.

Daniel and his fellow fisherfolks began to see tangible changes. As 15,500 mangrove seedlings took root across 6 hectares of coastal areas, marine life slowly returned. Fish, crustaceans, and shellfish began thriving among the roots, offering an alternative for fishermen like him, especially vital when strong amihan winds made fishing impossible.

The routine now includes tending to the seedlings, clearing debris, monitoring for algae, and rescuing those stressed by storms. It's not an easy task, but for Daniel, it's deeply rewarding.

A Woman's Place is in Conservation

In Sitio Balinsungan, Barangay Tagumpay, another transformation quietly took root. Imelda Mazo, President of the Shalom Women's Biodiversity Conservation Association, is no stranger to struggle or growth.

When asked if her group can manage a protected area, their response was simple and determined: *"We can do it."*

With support from CFI and other stakeholders, they trained in mangrove nursery management, breathing life back into a failed marine reserve. Today, this once struggling patch of coastline thrives as a Women-Managed Marine Protected Area, a living testament to resilience and recovery.

The mangroves brought more than just ecological recovery. They became a refuge.

"During the pandemic, this place became our home," she says. *"Even just watering the seedlings helped us cope. It gave us something meaningful to do."*

Their perseverance has not gone unnoticed. The group has earned awards like the Pearl Aware and Para El Mar, secured grants, and even launched a rice retail project. These were all born from small beginnings and steadfast commitment to environmental conservation.

"Back then, even though the income was just enough for us, I keep on telling and encouraging my colleagues, let's be patient. If we keep dreaming, blessings will come," Imelda shares, her face glowing with pride.

Bridging Communities and Nature

Both Daniel and Imelda understood that true conservation means collaboration, not conflict.

In Tulda, Daniel noticed some mangroves being cut for building materials when other options,

like mountain logs, weren't available. Instead of confrontation, he chose a path of understanding. They spoke to the community, shared knowledge about the role of mangroves in coastal protection, and invited them to be part of the solution.

"We understood that monitoring against mangrove cutting here is still limited," he says. *"So, we explained why they [the Tagbanuas] matter in terms of mangrove rehabilitation and encouraged them to join the project."*

In Sitio Balinsungan, Imelda took a similar approach, focusing on those directly impacting the coastline. *"We started with violators,"* she explains. *"Now, they're the ones helping us, because they've come to understand the value of the mangroves."*

What emerged was a powerful and inclusive conservation movement, where former violators transformed into dedicated protectors of the environment. This effort is part of CFI's broader initiative to convert violators into eco-warriors. To date, CFI has trained over 60 eco-warriors, empowering them to become stewards of their communities and the natural resources they depend on.

Mapping Mangrove Survival

Mangrove restoration in Coron, Palawan, has taken root through the collective efforts of CFI, G-XChange, Inc. (GXI), FishRight project, local government units (LGUs), Marine Protected Area (MPA) management teams, women's groups, fisherfolk organizations, indigenous cultural communities, youth associations, and other coastal stakeholders. At the forefront are



leaders like Daniel and Imelda, whose commitment has ensured sustainability of these vital ecosystems.

In Barangay Turda, a total of 15,500 mangrove seedlings were planted across a 6-hectare MPA, achieving an impressive 97% survival rate, thanks to the dedicated work of 20 local planters.

In Barangay Tagumpay, the WMA-MPA in Sitio Balinsungan led the planting of 17,500 seedlings across a 7-hectare MPA, reaching a 96% survival rate, supported by 21 committed planters.

Across six other barangay in Coron, including Tulda and Tagumpay, a total of 125,000 mangrove seedlings now stand tall in 50 hectares of MPA, tended by 165 local planters. These efforts, part of the Community-Based Mangrove Reforestation Project, have also achieved a remarkable 96% survival rate, reflecting the community's deep-rooted commitment to coastal restoration

Beyond Mangrove Rehabilitation

The impact of mangrove reforestation in Coron goes far beyond the environment. For Daniel, it reshaped his life. As a lifelong fisherfolk in Brgy. Tulda, there were days when he'd return from the sea with nothing. But through his partnership with CFI, Daniel found more than just a source of income he found a sense of dignity.

"Because of the incentives I earned as a mangrove planter, I was able to repair our home, invest to buy a motor for my boat, and

even purchased gadget, like cellphone," Daniel shared. "These might seem simple, but to us, they mean a better life."

Mangrove reforestation activities didn't just help him survive tough times; it gave him a new identity. No longer just a fisherman, Daniel became a steward of his coastline, leading his community to protect and nurture their mangrove nursery. He monitors seedlings, clears debris, and teaches others, including indigenous cultural communities, about the vital role of mangroves, supported by his colleagues and CFI.

Meanwhile, Imelda shared that her group's work opened doors they never imagined: recognition, grants, and a rice retail livelihood project for members. *"Back then, our income was small," she recalled. "But I kept telling my fellow women, 'Let's be patient. If we keep dreaming, blessings will come.'"*

Daniel and Imelda are proof that stories of hope and recovery don't always come from institutions or grand policies, but rather they grow from within people. Their stories remind us that when communities are empowered, when local knowledge is valued, and when small resources are matched with big trust, transformation happens.

They're not just protecting mangroves, they're rebuilding futures.

As Daniel puts it, *"Mangroves are like people. When they're cared for, they grow strong."*

And so do the people who care for them.





Our Strength

With over forty-eight years of experience in conceptualizing and implementing programs on environment, health, and social development, Culion Foundation, Inc. (CFI) has served more than half a million Filipinos.

Founded in 1976, CFI is a non-profit organization primarily established to assist patients affected by leprosy in the then Culion Leper Colony, one of the largest facilities in the world. As one of the moving forces behind the Culion Leprosy Control Program, we assisted in the elimination of leprosy on the island in 2006. Since the early 2000s, we have expanded our focus to other development programs, successfully launching thirty-five projects across more than ten regions in the Philippines.

Our expertise in program management is deeply rooted in our extensive environmental initiatives. Over the years, CFI has successfully managed small to medium environmental projects, including marine biodiversity conservation, mangrove rehabilitation, and sustainable fisheries management. We have worked on numerous community-driven environmental programs such as coastal resource management, climate change adaptation initiatives, and ecological

preservation efforts that have benefited thousands of Filipinos.

Our commitment to environmental sustainability is demonstrated through our partnerships with key government agencies, local organizations, and international donors, ensuring the effective implementation and long-term sustainability of our projects. Our ability to implement these programs is reinforced by strong institutional capabilities in both technical and financial management, enabling us to maximize resources and deliver impactful outcomes.

Equipped with a pool of experts with both passion and competence for environmental conservation, CFI boasts its expertise in biology, ecology, and conservation and management. These experts guide the proposal development, project implementation, and management to ensure future sustainability and alignment with existing ecological frameworks.

Through a holistic, community-driven approach, CFI integrates environmental sustainability with social welfare programs to foster long-term development. Our technical expertise, financial management capabilities, and established partnerships make us a trusted leader in implementing impactful programs that address both ecological and human health challenges in the Philippines.





WHY YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

Align with sustainability goals and climate action.

POSITIVE BRAND IMPACT

Be part of the global effort to protect natural resources.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Support local economies and improve disaster resilience.

LONG-TERM VALUE

Protect natural capital and reduce operational risks.

Help Us Restore Our Coastlines and Protect Our Future!

Partner with us in planting 1 million mangrove seedlings and make a lasting impact on the Calamianes Island Group in Palawan and beyond. By joining this campaign, you can:

Protect Our Shorelines

Reduce erosion and shield coastal communities



Nurture Marine Life

Create vital habitats for fish, crabs, and other species



Combat Climate Change

Capture carbon and reduce the impact of global warming.



Uplift Vulnerable Communities

Empower indigenous peoples, women, and fisherfolk.



Be a part of our “Every Juan Para sa Bakawan” campaign.
Invest in our environment today and be a certified
#EveryJuanGreenPartner