

# Four Women and the Role of “Kulapu” in their Lives—Part 3

*This is the third part of the article entitled "Women in Kulapu." The first part was published in Volume 2 Issue 3 which identified the first of the 4 women. In this issue the author shares with us the story of Ms. Vivian Morecho, the third woman.*

## Mrs. Vivian Morecho, The Trader

Mrs. Vivian Morecho, 55 years old, married, and a mother of three professionals, is a native of San Jose, Northern Samar. Ma'am Vivian is the representative of the private sector – trader. She is a full-time business woman selling different marine products (e.g., octopus, sandfish, seaweed) and operating a catering service. “Kulapu” made her famous in many coastal municipalities of Northern Samar, such as Bobon, Biri, San Jose, Lavezares, and San Isidro. She is known as the sole buyer of “kulapu” in the Northern Samar since 2012 but stopped when FAO 250 was enforced. According to her, people were not that aware of the importance of “kulapu” or its commercial values until jeepney passengers in Barangay Geratag in San Jose noticed aquatic plants being dried along the street side with a strong foul odor. This started their curiosity until they learned that this seaweed was being sold at PHP5.00 per kilo, dry weight then. Ma'am Vivian, as her suppliers fondly call her, shared that the first gatherers were actually children with ages ranging from 6 years old to 15 years old. They sold her around 100 kg of wet “kulapu.” The fathers learned about it, and they themselves gathered “kulapu” from the wild, dried them, and sold to her. She said that they have bigger earning of PHP500 a day compared to pedicab driving or copra making, which earned them not more than PHP300 per day.



It was at this point that she started receiving positive feedbacks that aside from bigger income, it also reduced the incidence of stealing copra on the farm. A lot of women were also engaged into the drying of “kulapu” because they got better pay than planting palay or rice. She said that even idler or “tambay” were encouraged to gather “kulapu” because of good money. The gatherers brought dried “kulapu” in sacks and weighed and paid by Ma'am Vivian. She is quite strict in the quality of “kulapu” sold to her because she preferred harvest without sand or rocks. According to her, she did not gain too much in the selling of kulapu, but she just wanted to help the ordinary gatherers earn money to send their children to school or buy food for their sustenance. **(MFerrer)**

*Read our next issue for Part 4 of this article featuring the last woman and the story of how they were connected because of Kulapu.*

# GRaD

**GAD for Research and Development**

**WE WANT YOU EMPOWERED!**

Report Sexual Harassment at  
[bit.ly/NFRDICF2019](http://bit.ly/NFRDICF2019)

For GAD training needs fill out the form at  
[bit.ly/GADTNA](http://bit.ly/GADTNA)

Email us at [gadsec.nfrdi@yahoo.com](mailto:gadsec.nfrdi@yahoo.com)



For comments, suggestions and inquiries, please contact:

Information and Education Section, Training Division  
National Fisheries Research and Development Institute.  
Corporate 101 Bldg., Mo. Ignacia Ave., Quezon City 1103

Website: [www.nfrdi.da.gov.ph](http://www.nfrdi.da.gov.ph)  
Email: [iestd.nfrdi@gmail.com](mailto:iestd.nfrdi@gmail.com)  
Tel. No.: (+632) 8376-1178

 @NFRDIPhilippines

 @DA\_NFRDI