

VOICES FROM THE SHORE:

Women's lived experience as leaders in fisher organizations in Bolinao, northern Philippines

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE:

I. Rationale and Context of the Study

II. Findings of the Study

III. Insights and Lessons Learned



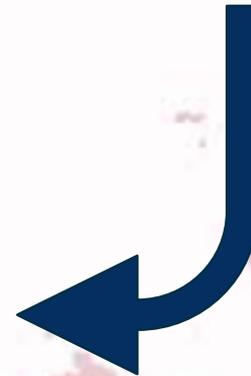
The story of Ate Rose

Timid, soft-spoken,
almost always breaking
down to tears



Chairperson of tripartite
organization

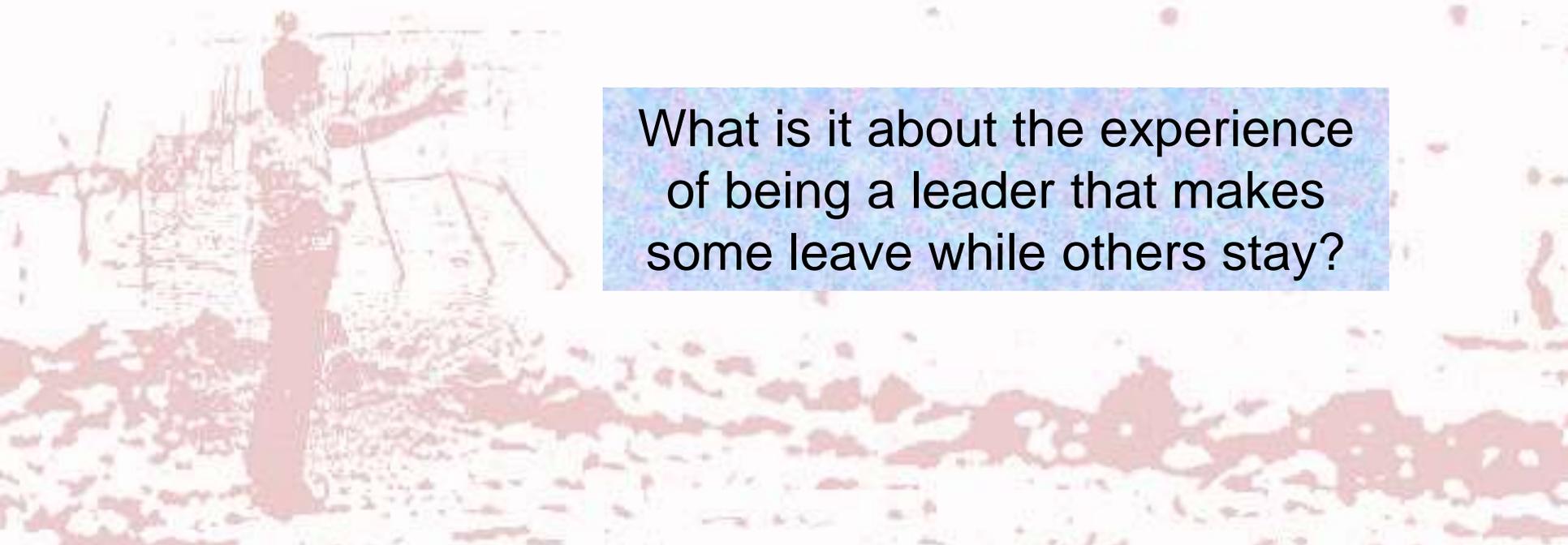
Quit the organization to attend
to children and economic needs
of the family



Ponder on...

Did we empower women or did we add on to their already burdened situation?

What is it about the experience of being a leader that makes some leave while others stay?



invisibility

MARGINALIZATION

choices

voices

benefits

opportunities

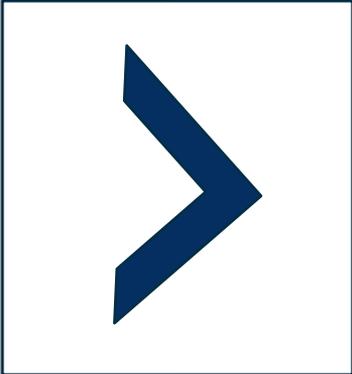
Available studies show:

Importance of women's participation in development

Difficult for women to access and sustain participation in leadership and decision-making structures

Available studies show:

Breaking
into the
glass
ceiling



Broken
into the
glass
ceiling

Where is Bolinao?

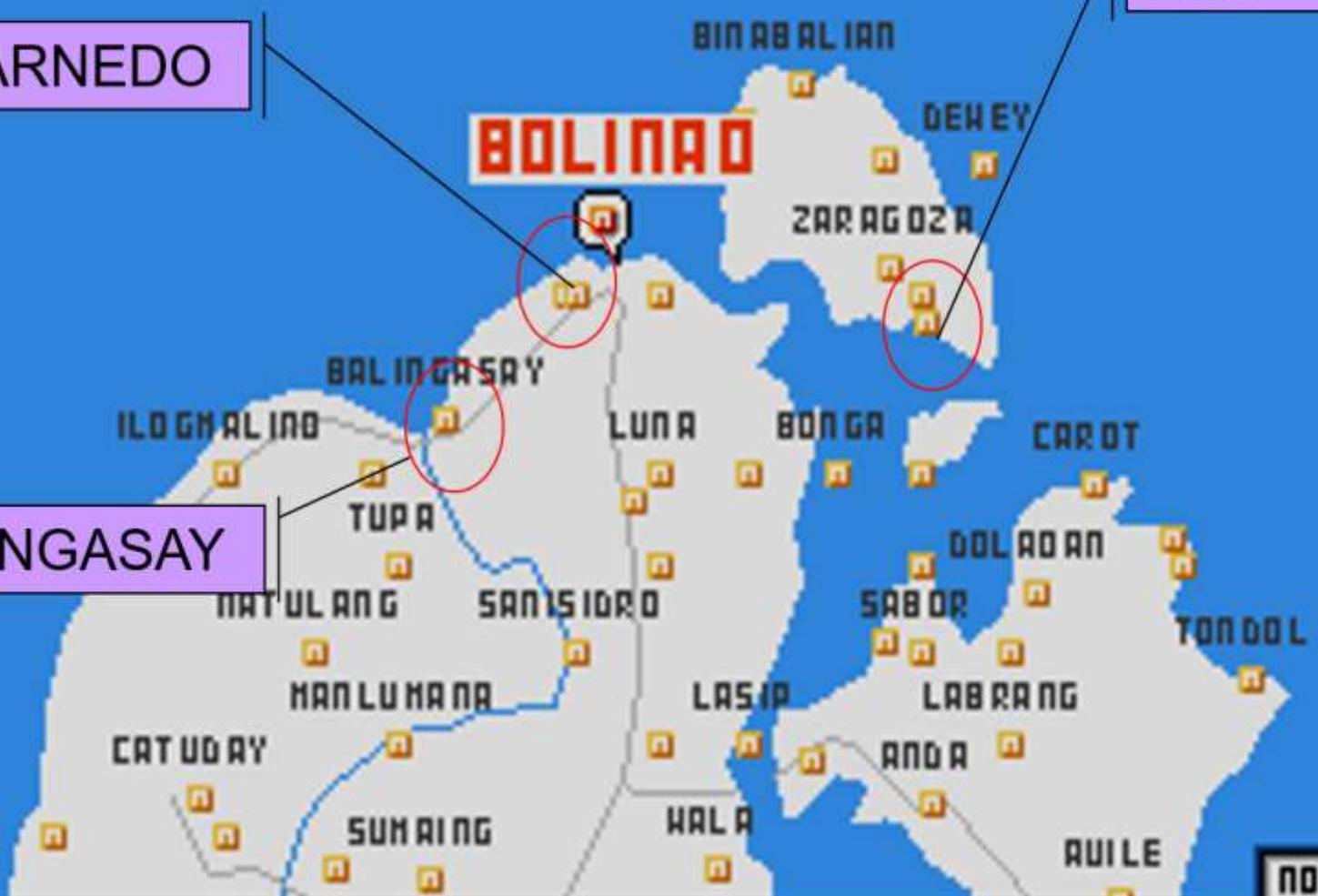


ARNEDO

PILAR

BOLINAO

BALINGASAY



BOLINAO Community-Based Coastal Resources Management (CBCRM)

First phase (1993-1998)

Second phase (1999-2002)

Notes:

1. Has gender component in its overall design
2. Household/community organizing as organizing strategies
3. Women actively participated from the start

METHODOLOGY

Alfred Schutz' Phenomenological Sociology



METHODOLOGY

► Thematic Network Analysis

FIRST ORDER CONSTRUCTS	SECOND ORDER CONSTRUCT	
BASIC CONSTRUCTS	SUB-THEMES	THEME
You're not afraid anymore because you are no longer ignorant	Finding one's voice	EMPOWERMENT
I once argued with authorities at the municipal hall because they released the dynamite fishers, it turned into a shouting match, I did not back out...		
Who can say we only reached highschool? Now they call us community scientists , scholars, imagine that?!	Sense of self-worth (value)	
I didn't finish school, that's why I did not understand what they're saying before... But now I know what dissolved oxygen, temperature and salinity mean ... I can even perform water quality monitoring.	Sense of achievement	

PROFILE (PARTICIPANTS)

- ▶ 8 participants (5 Pilar, 2 Arnedo, 1 Balingasay)
- ▶ Age Range: 33-69
- ▶ Membership in PO: 15-20 years
- ▶ Number of years in leadership position: 15-20 years
- ▶ Positions held: Executive Committee (various positions including Chair), Committee Head, Board of Director
- ▶ Civil Status: 6 married, 2 single
- ▶ All participants have children

FINDINGS

OVERALL CONSTRUCTION:

Mahirap pero masaya
(Difficult but fulfilling)

THEMES:

- 1) Empowerment
- 2) Motivations
- 3) Challenges



EMPOWERMENT

- > Finding one's voice
- > Sense of self-worth
- > Sense of Achievement



EMPOWERMENT

- 1) Finding one's voice
 - Curbed their fear of expressing themselves
 - Gained confidence to speak and voice out their opinion in both public and private spheres

EMPOWERMENT

1) FINDING ONE'S VOICE

*“You are not afraid anymore
because you are no longer ignorant”*

(Norma)

EMPOWERMENT

1) FINDING ONE'S VOICE

“Before, I’ve already accepted that my responsibility is confined within the kitchen and doing laundry... but then (the experience of being a leader) developed me... I realized that I was capable of reasoning out, of fighting for what is right.” (Denia)

EMPOWERMENT

1) FINDING ONE'S VOICE

"I was a simple homemaker... but then, my awareness was raised and I learned how to fight... until finally, I was able to collect enough courage to leave my husband" (Anabel)

EMPOWERMENT

2) Feelings of self-worth

- Recognition and respect from others, including high-profile/powerful/well-respected people
- Rooted in the women's low self-appreciation due to lack of education

EMPOWERMENT

2) FEELINGS OF SELF-WORTH

*“I remember our seminar in University of the Philippines...
they did not treat us as mere fishers, they treated us as
colleagues...”*

I am truly grateful.” (Mulang)

EMPOWERMENT

2) FEELINGS OF SELF-WORTH

*“Whenever we go to other places or villages,
they call us “Madam”...*

I never imagined people calling me that way” (Emily S.)

EMPOWERMENT

2) FEELINGS OF SELF-WORTH

“They call us “community scientists”, imagine that?!

We may not be paid,

but you do not get these compliments everyday” (Anabel)

EMPOWERMENT

3) Sense of Achievement

- Improvement in knowledge and skills
- Access to opportunities that were not previously accessible

EMPOWERMENT

3) SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT

*“Before, I really did not understand what they’re saying...
But now I know what dissolved oxygen,
temperature and salinity mean ...
I can even perform water quality monitoring.” (Myrna)*

EMPOWERMENT

3) SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT

“I’ve been to so many places already, I was able to ride a plane and stay in a posh hotel at no cost, everything for free!” (Mulang)

EMPOWERMENT

3) SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT

“I was deputized fish warden in 1999... there were only three women that were deputized...

there is an impression that fish wardens should be males, but I did not believe that...

If men can do it, women also can.” (Emily B.)

MOTIVATIONS

- > Sense of belongingness
- > Access to opportunities and benefits
- > Commitment to a better future for the next generation

MOTIVATIONS

1) Sense of belongingness

- Solidarity to the family and community
- Recognition of the aspirations for a better future

MOTIVATIONS

1) SENSE OF BELONGINGNESS

“If I haven’t seen results,

*I must have quit a long time ago, but we’ve already
achieved so much already...*

I reached the point that I cannot quit anymore” (Anabel)

MOTIVATIONS

1) SENSE OF BELONGINGNESS

*“We did not get rich, but the experience elevated our
(sense of community),
that’s why I love the organization” (Norma)*

MOTIVATIONS

2) Access to opportunities and benefits

- Benefits and privileges acquired from being a leader

MOTIVATIONS

2) ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES AND BENEFITS

*“You meet other people when you go to other places...
if you just stay here, you’ll have a limited (network);
if you have a wide (network) that’s good for business,
you can find new markets and expand your business”
(Emily B.)*

MOTIVATIONS

2) ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES AND BENEFITS

“I receive honorarium as member of the NAPC (National Anti-Poverty Commission)” (Anabel)

MOTIVATIONS

2) ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES AND BENEFITS

“I was able to gather enough courage to run for kagawad (village councilor), I am the lone female councilor but because of my background, I am able to speak out and they listen to what I say” (Myrna)

MOTIVATIONS

3) Commitment to secure a better future for the next generation

- Responsibility to the next generation of Bolinaoens

MOTIVATIONS

3) COMMITMENT TO SECURE A BETTER FUTURE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

“All of us are fishers here in Bolinao... what would they catch in the future? Will they catch anything at all? That is the reason why I always tell myself to carry on... just carry on... “ (Myrna)

MOTIVATIONS

3) COMMITMENT TO SECURE A BETTER FUTURE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

“We get by with the thought that our children and our children’s children will eventually reap the fruits of all our sacrifices today” (Gemma)

CHALLENGES

- > Internal struggles
- > External Threats

CHALLENGES

1) Internal Struggles

- > Finding a balance between reproductive/household responsibilities and organizational tasks

CHALLENGES

1) INTERNAL STRUGGLES

“Whenever a meeting is called, it’s difficult for us because both I and my husband are officers in the organization...

If we cannot find anyone to look after the store,

I usually stay at home... ” (Emily B.)

CHALLENGES

1) INTERNAL STRUGGLES

“Before, whenever they call for participants for seminars, I cannot volunteer myself because my kids were still very young” (Gemma)

CHALLENGES

1) INTERNAL STRUGGLES

*“My husband made me choose, he told me:
Take your pick, your organization or me?” (Anabel)*

CHALLENGES

2) External Threats

- Risks and trials women face outside of their homes as they pursue organizational goals
- Within and outside the organization

CHALLENGES

2) EXTERNAL THREATS

“The jealousy (among members) as to who benefits \ from the livelihood projects remains to be the biggest challenge for me” (Norma)

CHALLENGES

2) EXTERNAL THREATS

When a fish warden was killed in La Union, I told my husband to quit, I was worried for him...

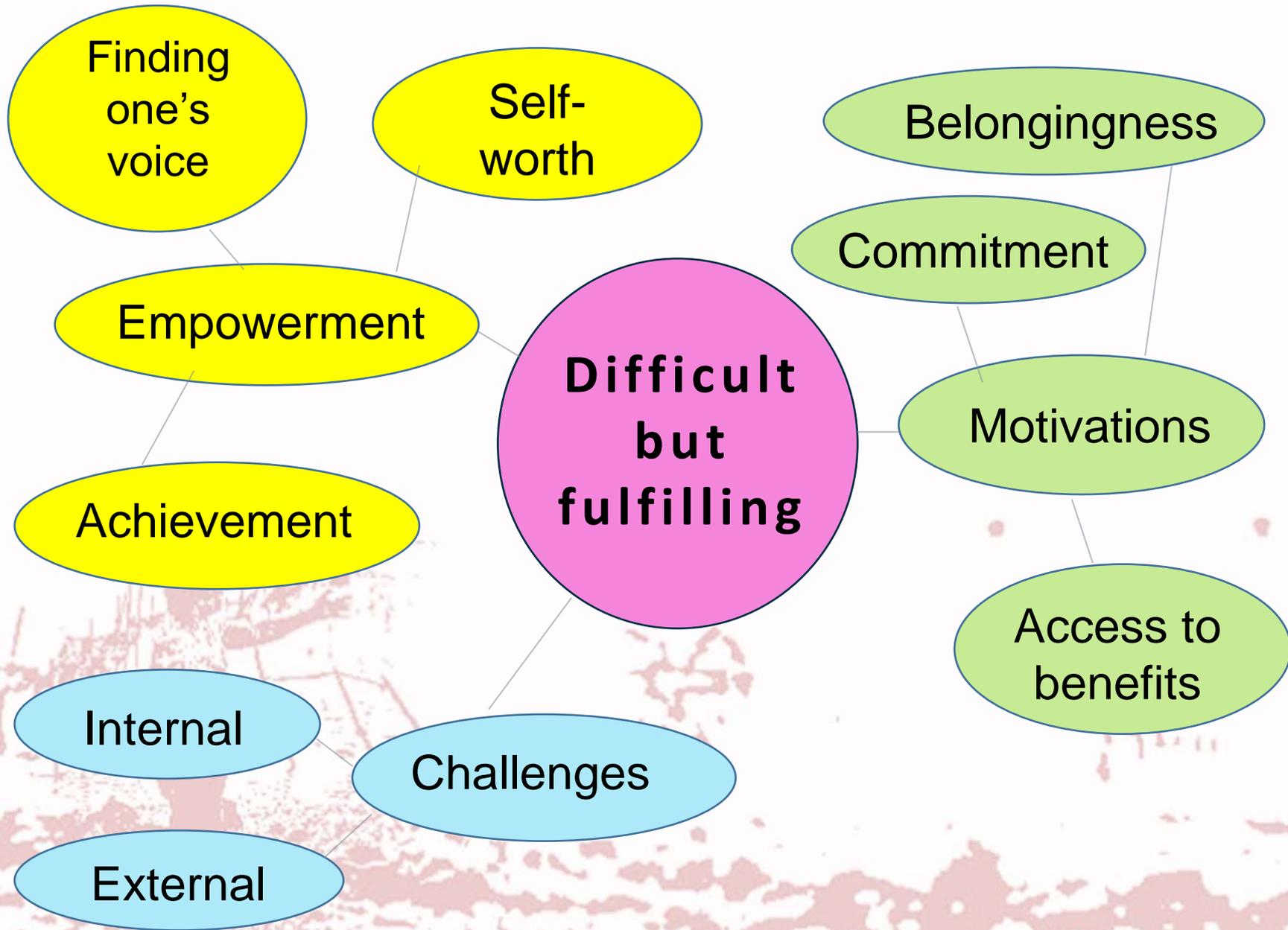
I was also worried that the illegal fishers will get back at me and my children” (Emily B.)

CHALLENGES

2) EXTERNAL THREATS

“After apprehending them (illegal fishers), they used their connection with the powerful people in the village and wrote a petition to expel me from my house.

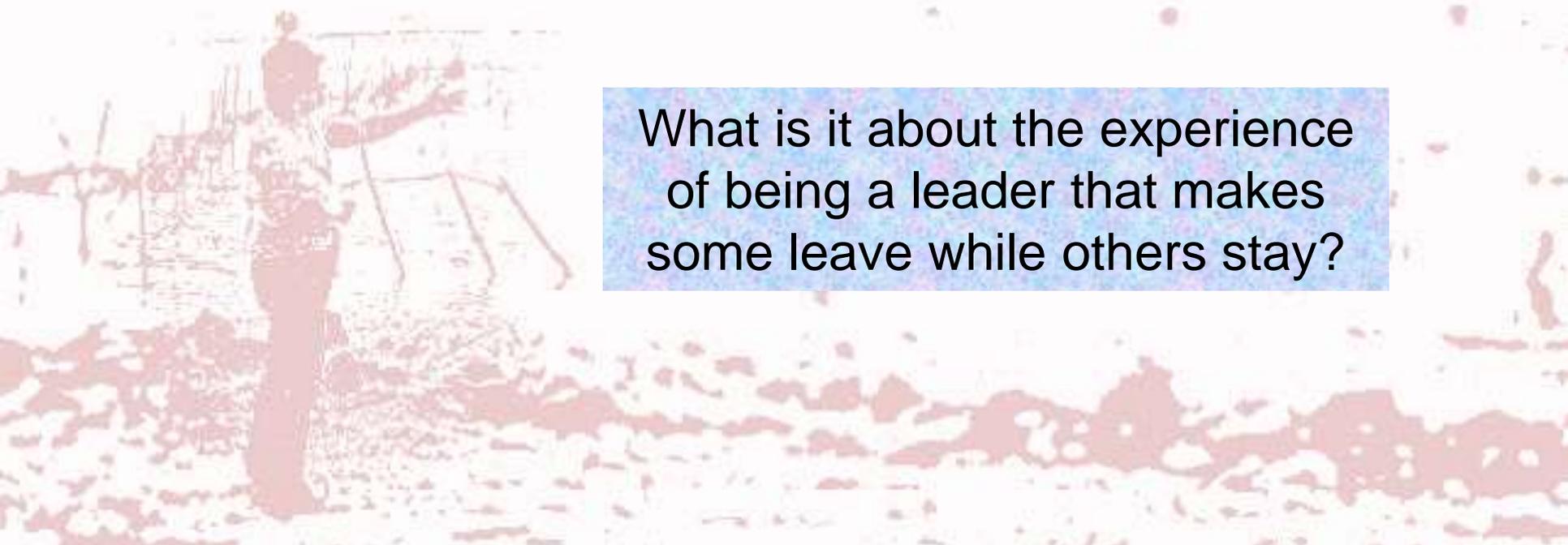
It’s a good thing good souls provided me and my children a place to stay” (Anabel)



Ponder on...

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Conclusion:

Participation increases women's burden, however the overall positive construction of the Bolinao women leaders of their experience have been the most critical influencing factor of their decision to stay as leaders in their organization

GLEANINGS:

1. Women continuously weigh the cost and benefits of their participation
2. Women are not passive actors but are active participants exercising agency (“Is it worth it?”)
3. Women’s agency are still bounded by the limitations of their gender roles particularly the caring responsibilities assigned to them

Thank you...

Maraming Salamat...

Koopkhun Ka...

