A sunset over a body of water with silhouettes of people on a raft. The sky is a warm orange and yellow, and the sun is low on the horizon. Several people are visible on a raft made of logs, some sitting and some standing. The water is calm and reflects the sunset colors.

The Covid-19 Pandemic and Women Folk Healers in Fishing Communities: The Case of Pandan, Antique, Philippines

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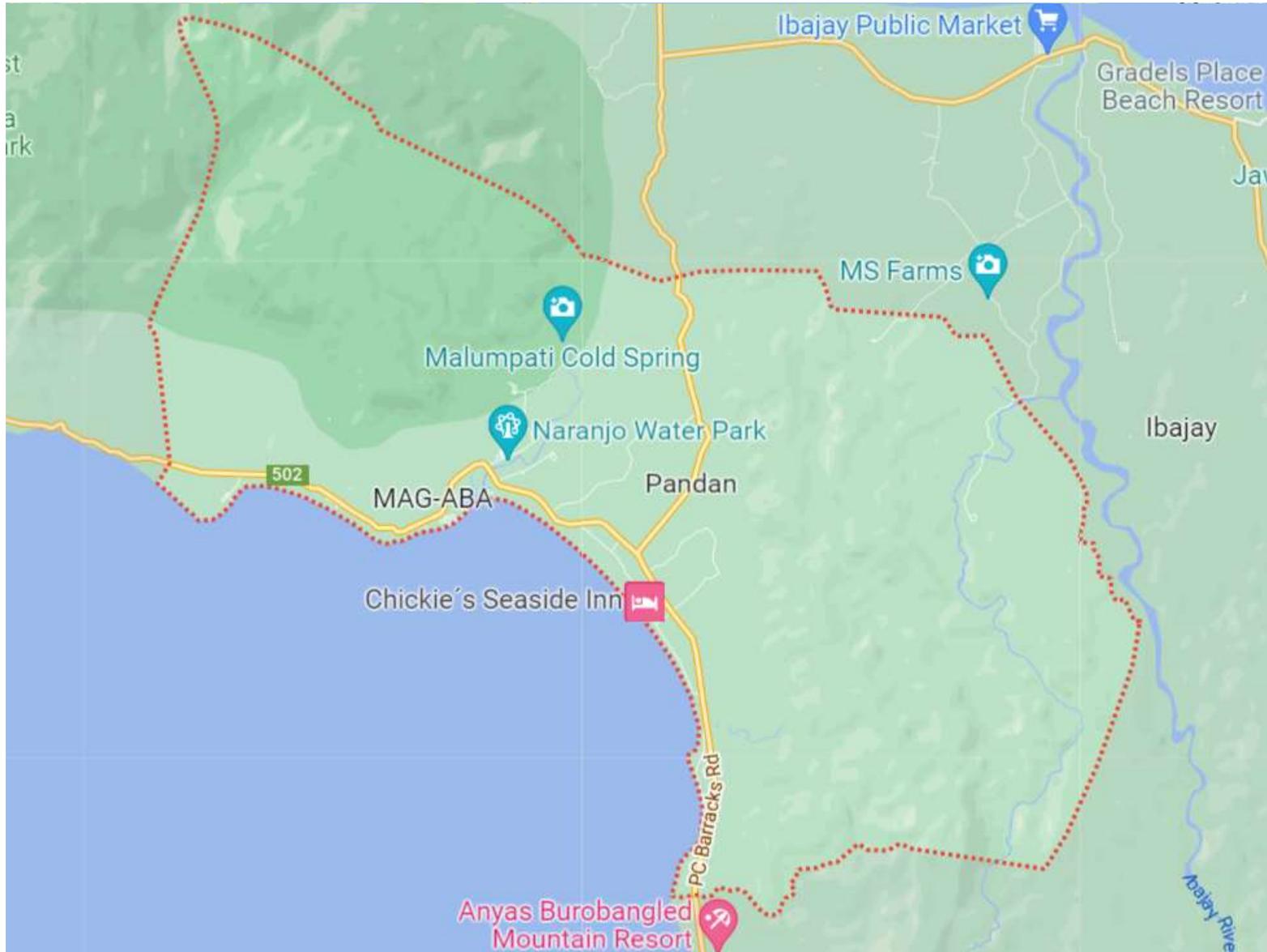
Background

Pandan was the first municipality in mainland Antique to have a confirmed case of COVID-19 in April 2020 and the first recorded case of the highly contagious and deadly Delta variant and in the Western Visayan Region.

Government-imposed mobility restrictions, inadequate knowledge about the new virus, and uncertainties compelled people to refrain from going to hospitals and instead availed the services of folk healers or *manugbulong* for their health needs.

Pandan has a rich folk healing tradition and locals continue to subscribe to it.

This study looks into the lived experiences of five women folk healers in fishing communities in Pandan, Antique during the height of the pandemic.



Pandan is a coastal town in the province of Antique in the Western Visayan Region of the Philippines.



MAP OF PANDAN

Photo by Faustino Castillo, Jr.

DIOSO & CALSADO



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/pandanantique5712/>





REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Province of Antique
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
New Capitol, San Jose de Buenavista

Executive Order No. 93
Series of 2021

**AN ORDER SETTING THE GUIDELINES FOR A
GENERAL COMMUNITY QUARANTINE IN THE PROVINCE OF ANTIQUE**

WHEREAS, on September 16, 2020, President Rodrigo R. Duterte issued Proclamation No. 1021, Series of 2020, extending the period of the State of Calamity throughout the Philippines due to Coronavirus Disease 2019 declared under Proclamation No. 929, Series of 2020;

Pandan village on granular lockdown

BY IME SORNITO
MAY 25, 2021

PANDAN, Antique – Barangay Baybay is on “granular” lockdown. It took effect on May 23.



Covid19 Watch - Pandan, Antique, Philippines • [Follow](#)

Apr 9, 2021 · 🌟

On this day last year, April 10, 2020, Pandan, Antique reported its first confirmed case of COVID-19. For the first time, the town has declared a community quarantine and a lockdown to prevent the local transmission of the virus.

COVID-19 WATCH
Pandan, Antique



ANNOUNCEMENT



**Brgy. Baybay shall be placed
under a granular lockdown
from May 23 to June 5, 2021**

From: Pandan, Antique Municipal Inter-Agency
Task Force Against COVID-19 (IATF)
Date Posted: May 22, 2021

📞 0923 477 4774 (MDRRMO)

📞 0997 726 6579 (RHU)

📞 278-9222 (RHU)

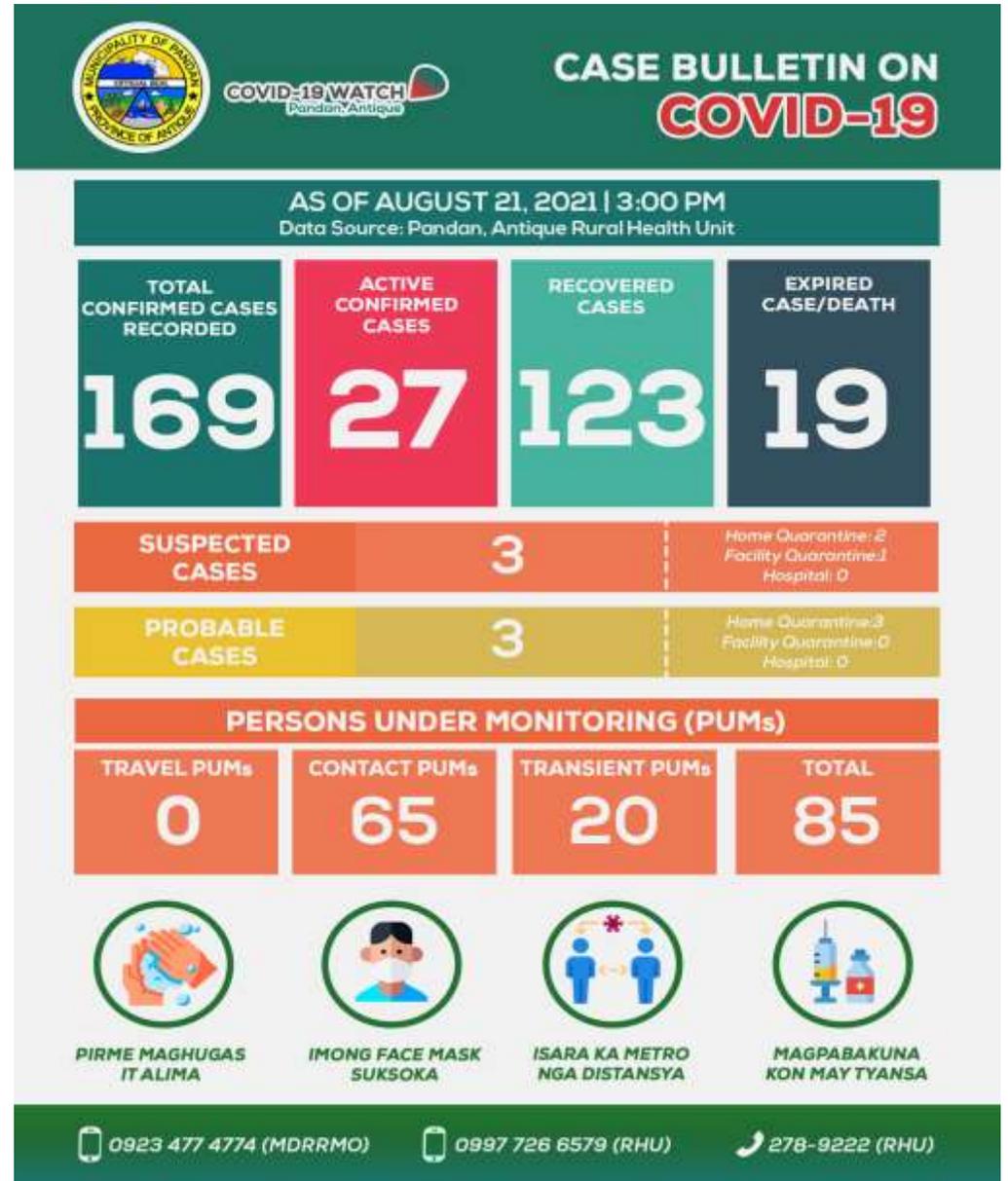
Kon bukon it importante ang imong aragtunan,

MAGHIMUSLÒ SA BALAY!

Naga duro ruman ang local COVID-19 cases sa aton banwa, padayon ang aton nga pag sunod sa minimum health standards kag likawan ang mga tipon-tipon. Buruligay kita tanan, COVID-19 aton batu-an!



#PagdahanPandan



Folk healing practices



Folk Healer A

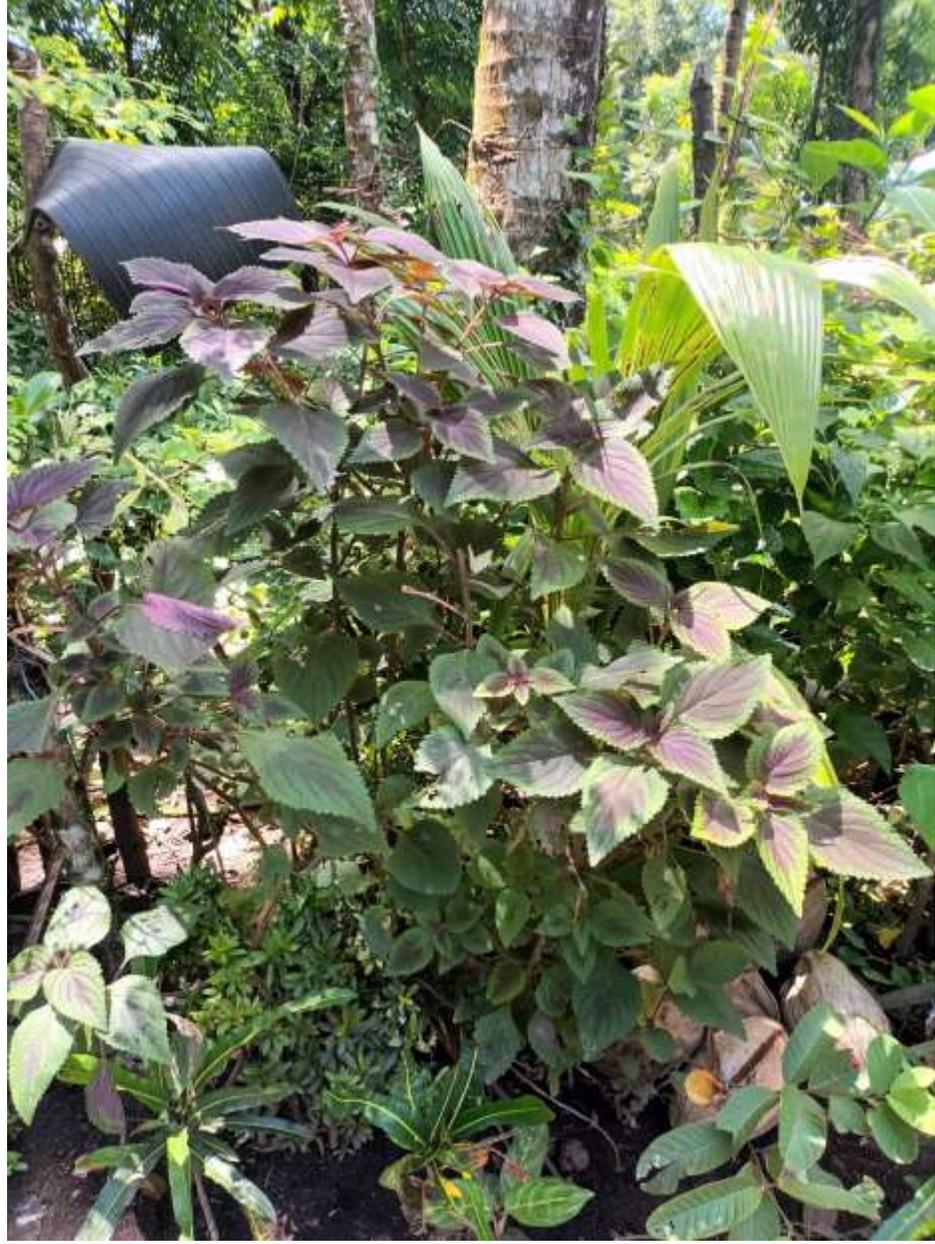
PROFILE	PERSONAL STRUGGLES DURING PANDEMIC	HOW THE PANDEMIC AFFECTED HER CRAFT	METHODS OF COPING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 40 years old, married- folk healer for 5 years- performs <i>butbut</i> (a healing method) and other types	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- taking care of her ailing mother- juggling multiple responsibilities- fear and anxiety due to uncertainties brought by the pandemic- restricted mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- not able to conduct a <i>hikot</i> (ritual) that she conducts annually to renew her commitment to serve as a folk healer- many patients could not physically visit her for consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- communicated with her <i>surog</i> (spirit-friend) about the situation- handwashing with alcohol and wearing of facemask- utilizing social media for diagnostic and appropriate healing method

Folk Healer B

PROFILE	PERSONAL STRUGGLES DURING PANDEMIC	HOW THE PANDEMIC AFFECTED HER CRAFT	METHODS OF COPING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 73 years old, married- 45 years as a folk healer- uses ginger and egg to diagnose- cures <i>usog</i>, <i>sinda</i>, and <i>alaw</i> (illnesses believed to be caused by unseen beings/force)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- could not go out to glean shells- limited mobility outside her home- <i>kahangawa</i> (anxiety) due to limited information about the virus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- could not cater to patients- no access to materials used in healing activities- could not perform rituals related to fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- use alternatives (garlic for ginger)- praying- support from family

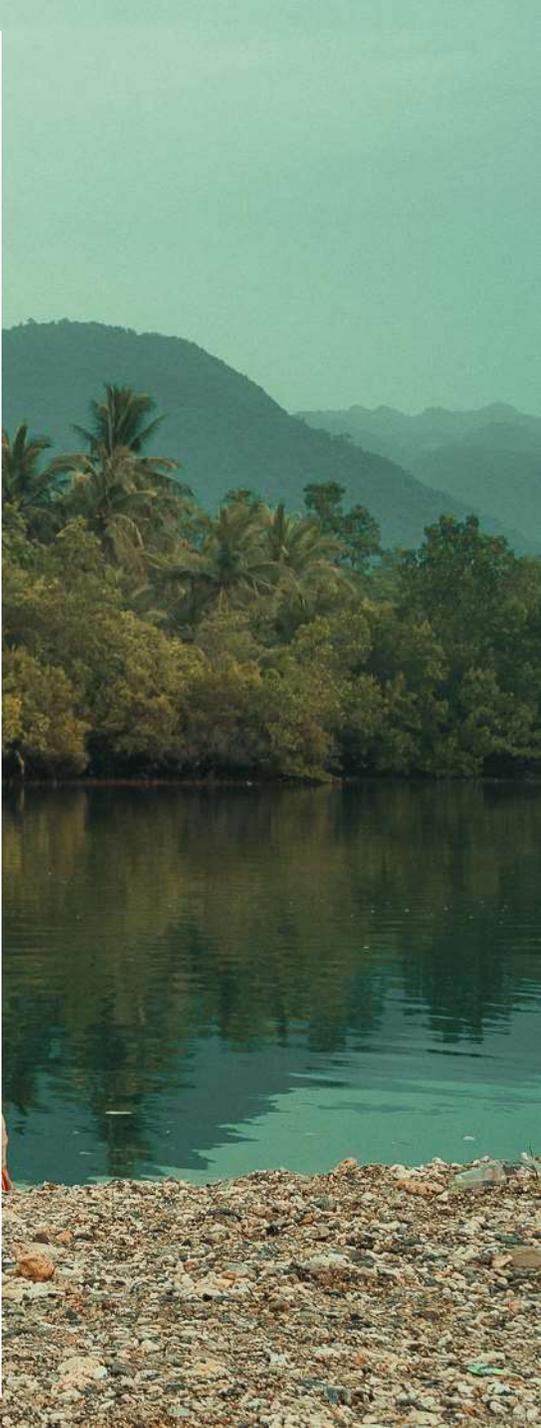
Folk healer C

PROFILE	PERSONAL STRUGGLES DURING PANDEMIC	HOW THE PANDEMIC AFFECTED HER CRAFT	METHODS OF COPING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 68 years old, widow- specializes in treating stomachache and various types of allergies in children- uses egg and ginger in performing diagnoses- uses <i>gamhon</i> (herbs); performs <i>tuob</i> (fumigation ritual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- scarcity of food as her family/relatives could not fish- the death of her husband in July 2021- <i>kahangawa</i> (anxiety) and <i>kahadluk</i> (fear) brought by the pandemic- strongly advised by her family to refrain from receiving patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- mainly attended to the needs of her family especially her grandchildren while refrain from attending to the needs of others- lack of access to healing materials like a specific <i>lumot</i> (moss) sourced in deep waters that are used in <i>tuob</i> (fumigation ritual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- apologized to patients she had not attended to and explained the reasons- a makeshift hut was built to isolate her and her husband- planted various herbs used for healing



Folk healer D

PROFILE	PERSONAL STRUGGLES DURING PANDEMIC	HOW THE PANDEMIC AFFECTED HER CRAFT	METHODS OF COPING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 42 years old, married- 15 years as <i>manughilot</i> (bone setting specialist)- also treats children who have coughs, colds, and others- utilizes <i>pamulso</i> (pulse method) to diagnose- has a <i>surondon</i> (calling) in <i>hilot</i> (bone setting)- never accept <i>sanag</i> (fee)- a public school teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- fear of getting infected with the virus- fear for the safety of her family including her 80-year-old mother- guilt feeling that emanates from not accepting patients and sometimes she would become ill- juggles multiple responsibilities (as a daughter, a mother, and a wife)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- there were cases where she was fetched to perform <i>hilot</i> for adult patients- local health authorities advised her to limit engagement- had refrained from attending to some patients, especially during the discovery of the Delta variant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- use of alcohol; wearing of facemask; disinfection after <i>hilot</i>- prioritized patients coming from their community- <i>hilot</i> was done outside her house- drinks supplements- prayer- family support



Folk healer E

PROFILE	PERSONAL STRUGGLES DURING PANDEMIC	HOW THE PANDEMIC AFFECTED HER CRAFT	METHODS OF COPING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 60 years old, married- 15 years as a folk healer- came from a family of folk healers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- patients would still consult her even during pandemic- healing activities caused untoward distractions to her children who studied under modular learning modality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- increase in the number of patients availing of her services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- praying for guidance from her soul-spirit- sanitizing and wearing of facemask- distance diagnosis and treatment- a makeshift study room for her daughter who was a college student



Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic had enhanced the role of women folk healers as providers of healing services in fishing communities.

The pandemic had greatly affected their craft that posed a great deal of challenges to them.

The challenges that these women folk healers experienced had led them to resort to alternative forms of diagnosis and treatment while at the same time adhere to safety measures.

Women folk healers performed their best to provide services in their respective communities while also performing domestic, reproductive, and other responsibilities.

Recommendations

DIOSO & CALSADO

Recognition of folk healers as an important sector in the community

Representation in the local body/ task force created to address health emergencies

Interventions related to pandemic and other health emergencies that are dove-tailed to folk healers unique context and the needs of fishing communities

Social safety nets for folk healers

Duro gid nga salamat!
THANK YOU!



Photo by Faustino Castillo, Jr