

Team CREDO

<u>Team Member Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Major</u>
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Topic: A Fishing Village with Empty Nets

Audience: *Masinloc* Local Government Unit, Fishermen, and Bureau of Fisheries

Sustainable Development Goal

SDG # 14 Life Under Water: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Executive Summary

In the Philippines, 60% of the population live along coastlines and depend on fishing for their livelihood. Economically, these coastal small-scale fisheries account for 35% of the country's fish catch in 2018. However, inadequate presence and poor implementation of regulatory and institutional frameworks continue to impede access to vital resources, services, and markets, leading to a decline of 23.4% in marine produce from municipal sources over the last decade.

Particularly in Zambales, a province bordering the West Philippine Sea, the coastal municipality of Masinloc is at risk as it faces a pressing dilemma: 3,000 fisherfolk families are caught between conflicting national and local interests, competition from the entry of commercial fish pens, and the threat of increasingly dwindling fish catch. Consequently, 16.8% of its fishing-dependent populace is living below the poverty line (earning less than \$200 US/month). Critical to their survival is change - not only in fishing practice, but also in perspective. We propose that the fisherfolk engage in a collaborative effort by forming a Fishery Cooperative, *Sea Change*, which operates three businesses: a marine aquaculture for the supply of milkfish, a bio-waste sequestering seaweed farm, and an educational agri-tourism destination. This tripartite approach, which is economically viable and environmentally responsible, is set to modernize livelihood, develop entrepreneurship among fishermen, significantly increase their average daily income, and define new experiences for the community - all while staying true to fisherfolk values.