



SOME HISTORY OF

CORON ISLAND

ITS SPECIAL INHABITANTS

TAGBANWA TRIBE

HOW AND WHY PAOLYN HOUSEBOATS PROJECT HAS STARTED

March 2025

CORON ISLAND AND THE TAGBANWA TRIBE

Coron island was declared National Reserve in 1967, Marine Reserve in 1978, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1990 and Ancestral Domain of the Tagbanwa Tribe in 2002

The island is dominated by Permian limestone of Jurassic origin (formed **260 million years ago**), forming unique “karst” topography and creating breathtaking landscapes with steep cliffs rising dramatically as cathedral-like formations more than 400 meters above sea level.

There are no roads or paths on Coron Island and all transportation is by sea.

The island has different ecosystem types such as coral reefs, seagrass, mangroves, lagoons and limestone forests that support an outstanding biodiversity.

There is a high rate of floral and faunal endemism and wildlife species reported are the Philippine macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*), wild pigs (*Sus barbatus*), Palawan porcupine (*Hystrix pumila*), Palawan stink badger (*Mydaus marchei*), Palawan hornbill (*Anthracoceros marchei*), various parrot species (*Tanygnathus lucionensis*, *Gracula religiosa*), green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) and sea cow (*Dugong dugon*).

Coron Island is also known for Balinsasayaw (*Callocalia troglodytes*), this swiftlet produces the edible nest, made of gelatinous secretion from the salivary glands of the bird

The Tagbanwa of Coron Island have, since time immemorial, lived by sustainably exploiting the natural resources of their island and its surrounding waters and reefs, **but unfortunately over the years the Tagbanwa had slowly been expropriated of their lands**, also due to their peaceful and timid nature and the rich coastal areas and reefs constantly faced threats from illegal fishing activities.

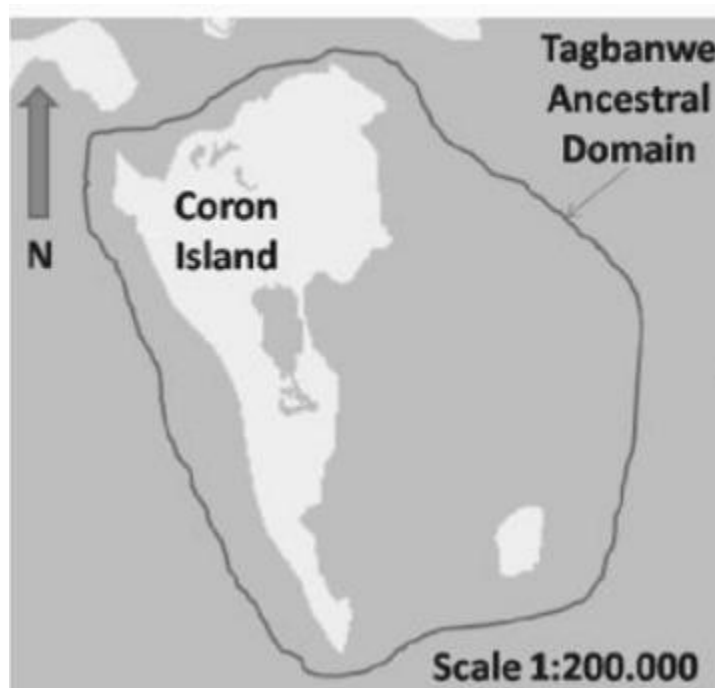
Luckily in 1997 the Filipino national law started protecting the Indigenous People right with the indigenous people R.A. n. 8371 (so called IPRA Law).

Thank to this law, Coron Island and its surrounding reef and water (till 500 meters) became private as **ancestral domain of the Tagbanwa Tribe members (the process took 4 years, from 1998 to 2002)**. It is the first ancestral waters claim in the world to be recognized by a government. The reason is that historically the main source of food for the members of the tribe was fishing in the surrounding waters and reefs.

The Tagbanwa tribe community has today the right to manage the area and preserve its rich marine and land resources and they have the right to decide which areas are open to the tourism so they also could restrict where people may visit in their domain.

The ownership of the ancestral domain is held by the community and not by a single individual or family.

Ancestral domains in the Philippines cannot be sold, this rule is intended to prevent indigenous populations from losing their territories again.



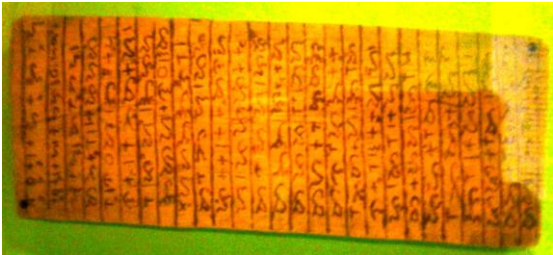
The IPRA law also protects the customary traditions of the Indigenous People.

The Tagbanwa people are one of the oldest ethnic groups in the Philippines. Research has shown that the Tagbanwa are descendants of the Tabon Man, thus making them one of the original inhabitants of the Philippine, in fact over **20.000 years old remains** have been discovered in 38 caves situated in a limestone promontory at Lipuun Point in Southwestern Palawan.

The Tagbanwa people have their own **native languages** (Aborlan Tagbanwa, Calamian Tagbanwa, and Central Tagbanwa) and writing system.

Tagbanwa is traditionally written on bamboo in vertical columns from bottom to top and left to right. However, it is read from left to right in horizontal lines.

a	ka	ga	nga	ta	da	na	pa	ba	ma	ya	la	wa	sa
i	ki	gi	ngi	ti	di	ni	pi	bi	mi	yi	li	wi	si
u	ku	gu	ngu	tu	du	nu	pu	bu	mu	yu	lu	wu	su



The Tagbanwa also collect medicinal plants found in the crags of the limestone cliffs as well as in the interior forest of Coron Island.

In the 19th century, the Tagbanwa continued to believe in their native gods.

Sacred areas are invaluable to the Tagbanwa as these symbolize their culture. The destruction of their sacred areas and loss of biodiversity is closely linked to the loss of cultural knowledge. Resurgence of customary practices and strong community effort of the Calamian Tagbanwa is ensuring the sustainable management and protection of sacred areas in Coron Island.

The Tagbanwa established a sustainable way of life that was in harmony with nature, their avoidance of their sacred areas and existing taboos played a role in the conservation of biological diversity in the ancestral domain and helped sustain their life support system. Taboo areas around Coron Island serve as a reminder of their own culture and these sites are ecologically intact.

Today, the Tagbanwa face challenges about how they can maintain the ecological balance along with the economic, social and cultural changes with the opening to the tourism and with the intrusion of migrant fishers around their ancestral waters, often resulting in the destruction of coral reef communities in their traditional fishing grounds.

There are 13 lakes in Coron Island and they are considered sacred by the Tagbanwa. It is strictly prohibited to enter these areas unless for cultural purposes such as performing rituals. Cabugao Lake or mother lake, the largest lake found in the island is considered to be the center of spirits.

Only two lakes were allowed for tourism namely the Kayangan and Luluyuwan (also known as Barracuda Lake). Both lakes have been given awards for the cleanest lake in the Philippines.

Also beaches that serve as burial grounds of their ancestors are also prohibited to visitors, only seven out of 33 beaches were open for tourism.

Sacred areas, locally known as panyaan, are areas in the sea where the Tagbanwa believes that there are spirits dwelling in the place. A panyaan is usually a big rock or coral reef formation that is separated from its main structure and in relatively deep waters. The Tagbanwa believes that a kunlalabyut or giant octopus lives in this area. This cultural knowledge is passed down from elders to the younger generation through oral tradition.

Not all Tagbanwa were able to go to the sacred areas, they had to have a definite purpose if they intended to go there. Elders (Mamaepet) and shaman (bawalyan) played a major role when entering sacred areas.

The elders or shamans utter uliwatwat, a prayer addressing the spirits requesting to enter the sacred areas. Names of sacred areas and species found in the island show how they are interconnected with the marine environment.

Some names of the sacred areas pertain to the morphological structure of the rock or reef formation and behavioural activity of the giant octopus dwelling in the area.

Ten such panyaan exist on the island. Fish sanctuaries are considered restricted areas. They are not allowed to fish, drop anchors or to culture seaweeds.

There are six traditional fish sanctuaries on the island.

Tourism is allowed only in the areas that have been approved by the council of elders as sustainably visitable from the tourists.

Since Coron Island and its water / reefs / beaches are private as ancestral domain, the Filipino law allows the tribe community to charge an Entrance Fee to the tourists that would like to visit the lakes or other locations opened to the public.

These Entrance Fees go to the sustainable development and protection of these sites as well as to the improvement of the lives of the Tagbanwa member living on Coron Island. There are 2,500 people living in two villages where there is not fresh water and electricity. Medicines and hospitalization are not free in Philippines, so these entrance fees play an important role in the community, especially considering that the level of education is very low with the consequence that members of the tribe do not easily find work as they have no experience.

Before the tourism arrived in Coron Island and before the implementation of entrance fees, the only income of the Tagbanwa was coming from the trading of the balinasayaw birds' nests (small black birds that make nests only in limestone caves). Tagbanwa developed incredible climbing skills while collecting the bird's nest (also called the "White Gold")



These nests (or luray) are used as a key ingredient in the preparation of birds' nest soup, a delicacy in southern Chinese cuisine considered a super food in fact consumption of the nests has long been associated with good health, virility, and social prestige in China and elsewhere in Asia.

Along the commodity circuit, a kilogram of high-quality white nests (~120 nests) reaches prices between USD 2,000–3,000). Unfortunately, only a fraction of this amount was given to the Tagbanwa from the Chinese middle men. Luray is derived from the nests of the balinasayaw or swiftlet, a small and delicate bird which spins a milky, semi-transparent nest made of its own saliva, wave wash and forest litter. Swiftlets make their nests in deep caves and crags found in the limestone cliffs ringing Coron Island. These nests are very difficult to reach as the cave entrances are usually found atop great heights and can fall away from nearly vertical cliffs. Once inside, a cave can also plunge straight down and nests may be located in the pitch-dark hollows below.

Every December, the swiftlets return to the same caves to spin their nests and lay eggs. Tagbanwa families have passed on their clan caves from generation to generation and have harvested (dangerously climbing the cliffs) and traded luray to Chinese middlemen for over 300 years. In fact, the customary law states that when a new cave with nests is discovered, the family of the discover has the right to harvests the nests in it.

Each family group of Tagbanwa's closely guarding their individual Caves in these limestone cliffs and only harvest the Nest during a particular season, safeguarding the survival for future generations.

They are also guarding the area during the harvest season, temporary putting up a primitive shelter just below the caves to ensure that no outsider is encroaching on their territory that has been in their family for generations. In fact, the nests can be stolen and also the balinasayaw birds are very sensitive so it is important they are not disturbed.



Under Customary Rules, the governance of the ancestral land and waters is the sole responsibility of the Tagbanwa Elders or Mamepet. The IPRA law, which recognizes their rights to assert and enforce their indigenous knowledge systems and practices, and customary laws and traditions further strengthen this over any part of their ancestral domains.

Under the IPRA law, no projects or businesses can operate in any ancestral domain in Philippines (so also in Coron Island) without going through the process of **Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)** and the issuance of FPIC. This special and unique process takes few years and has to be done in front of a special team (made by lawyers and experts) of the government agency named NCIP (National Commission on Indigenous People) that has the role to protect the rights of the Indigenous People in Philippines and to make sure the Indigenous Communities are not cheated anymore by outsiders and investors.

In fact in the past Indigenous People sold entire islands for few USD to unscrupulous speculators who had made them sign documents whose meaning was not understood and so doing they sent them away from their lands where their ancestors had lived for millennia.

Most Mamepet (Elders) who are part of the Council of Elders who govern the ancestral domain of Coron Island cannot read or write and sign with a thumbprint.



The Council of Elders of Coron Island decides by majority and is made up of 27 Elders (Manig Erekenen) and each represents a clan (made up of 20/50 families).

The Tagbanwa Tribe members of Coron Island are around 2,500 and live mainly in the only 2% flat of the island, two small valleys where two villages are (Cabugao and Banuang Daan).

Under customary law (protected by the IPRA law) the Council of Elders is the highest governing body of the community and its ancestral domain, representing its judiciary.

In the presence of events that can have a large impact on the community, the council of elders convenes the general assembly of the community and decisions are made by a majority of voters made up of the heads of the family (each family has one vote expressed by the head of the family)

The Council of Elders have a significant role in implementing the traditional means of discipline such as panglaw (the hands are tied and feet are placed in stocks) and burdun (12 lashes of rattan cane). Thus, the great challenge among the Elders is to revive their strict enforcement of customary rules such as respect for restricted and sacred areas and not catching juvenile species but allowing them to reach maturity and reproduce.

THE TAGBANWA TRIBE AND PAOLYN HOUSEBOATS PROJECT

The COVID 19 pandemic in the Philippines lasted 23 months (from March 2020 to February 2022 when it finally reopened to international tourism).

Since the start of the pandemic Paolyn Houseboats has been supporting the two Tagbanwa tribe villages of Coron Island with rice donations, medicines and helping paying hospital bills for their 2500 members.





Republic of the Philippines
Province of Palawan
Municipality of Coron
BARANGAY CABUGAO



Republic of the Philippines
Province of Palawan
Municipality of Coron
BARANGAY BANUANG DAAN
OFFICE OF THE PUNONG BARANGAY

OFFICE OF THE PUNONG BARANGAY

CERTIFICATION

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to Certify that **PAOLO GRAZZINI** of floating House and Restaurant since April 2020 with the beginning of Covid 19 pandemic till now has been donating regularly rice to support the Tagbanua tribe members of Barangay Cabugao ang has also have been paying medicines for all the tribe members that asked to him. Barangay Cabugao has a population of Two Thousand Seven Hundred (2,700) Tagbanua Tribe members.


DARWIN M. MACOY
Punong Barangay

CERTIFICATION

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to Certify that **PAOLO GRAZZINI** of Paolyn Floating House Restaurant since April 2020 with the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic till now has been donating regularly rice to support the Tagbanua Tribe Members of Barangay Banuang Daan, Coron, and has also have been paying medicines for all the tribe members that asked to him. Barangay Banuang Daan, Coron, Palawan has a population of One Thousand Two Hundred Nine (1,209) Tagbanua Tribe Members.


BIENVENIDO L. ABELLA
Punong Barangay

Further Paolyn also supports the Foundation of the Tagbanwa Tribe of Coron Island with free interest loan (as of today it is over 250.000 USD), with cash advance on payments (as of today over 300,000 USD) and with cash advance on the salaries of its employees (as of today over 50,000 USD).

Samakatuwid, simula ngayon 22 Disyembre 2023 ang kabuuang walang interes na pautang na ibinigay sa amin ng Paolyn Houseboats ay katumbas ng **14,016,126 - labing apat na milyon labing anim na libo isang daan dalawampu't anim na Piso** (pitong milyon walong daan tatlong libo at isang daan dalawampu't anim na piso 7,803,126 PLUS tatlong milyon dalawang daan labing tatlong Piso 3,213,000 PLUS tatlo milyong Piso 3,000,000).

Today, many young members of the Tagbanwa tribe proudly work on the Paolyn Houseboats located in three lagoons on Coron Island.

In fact, Paolyn Houseboats employs over 300 people (with 8 houseboats!), most of them members of the Tagbanwa tribe who have never studied or worked before.

Paolyn Houseboats rents the lagoons from the community under the supervision of the government agency NCIP as the sea surrounding Coron Island is part of the ancestral domain, meaning it is not public but private. The amount of the rent of the lagoons is few millions of dollars.

As explained before, Paolyn started with a single private houseboat owned by Paolo and April Lyn which was opened to the public before pandemic (now called Paolyn Original Houseboat which has been expanded and completely remodeled).

They listed the houseboat on Airbnb, and within just three weeks, all three rooms were booked solid for several months. However, when they reviewed the accounts, they were surprised to discover that they were actually operating at a loss. The logistical and fixed costs, including electricity generation, wastewater treatment, and fresh water supply, proved to be too high for a single houseboat with only three rooms,

Therefore, Paolo went to visit the leaders of the tribe to explain the reasons why he was considering closing the houseboat to the public.

However, the tribe leaders asked Paolo to make an effort because many members of the tribe were already working in Paolyn and the families were really happy because it was the first time they had the opportunity to work and bring home a good salary. For this reason, Paolo, despite knowing that his life would change, decided to build two other houseboats.

But the big difference in the size of Paolyn activity was caused by the pandemic.

From March 2020 until February 2022 the Government closed the country to tourism so for 23 months Paolyn had no guests because of the Covid 19 Pandemic.

In many Western countries, employees normally did not go to work during the lock down but the government paid them some sort of salary.

Unfortunately, this did not happen in the Philippines. All the hotels and restaurants in the area sent their employees home without paying any wages and unfortunately the government was unable to support the workers and families. **For this reason, Paolo decided to keep all the employees and continue to pay their salaries even without income and without guests for 23 months!!**

Therefore, Paolo found himself with many employees without even one customer and decided to use the time to renovate the three existing houseboats and build new ones! Even though there had never been any intention to expand operations further.

All his friends thought he was crazy since he was using his (not unlimited!) saving of his old life without really knowing when and how the pandemic would have ended.

Therefore, in this period the 2nd Glass Houseboat, the Mini Houseboat, the Superglass Houseboat and the Houseboat Restaurant were built.

Paolyn rented 2 more lagoons giving a lot higher price to the community and decided to increase to almost 5 times the value of the rent of the first lagoon, amending the first contract.

So Paolyn has developed four lagoons: Laknisan Lagoon, where four houseboats are located (1st Glass Houseboat, 2nd Glass Houseboat, Bamboo Houseboat and Mini Houseboat) Awan Awan Lagoon, where the three houseboats are located (Paolyn Original Houseboat, Superglass Houseboat and Mega Glass Houseboat). Green Lagoon, where the private Italo-Filipino Houseboat Restaurant is located alone in order to keep more quite the lagoons where the houseboats with bedrooms are located. Sunset Lagoon, where only the Sunset Houseboat is located.

The rental contract is today worth around five million euros and was approved by the entire tribal community of Coron island (2500 people) in the presence of officials (a special team made up of lawyers and experts) of the government agency called NCIP (National Commissions Indigenous People) in compliance with the IPRA law (Indigenous People Rights Act n. 8371 of 1997) which protects the rights of indigenous peoples in the Philippines.

This process is called FPIC (Prior Free Informed Consent) and is required by the aforementioned law for any project/business in any ancestral domain in the Philippines to protect the rights of the indigenous people and to ensure that indigenous people are not deceived by unscrupulous investors.

Paolyn completed this particular, complicated but important process (twice!), which among other things cost Paolyn around 35,000 USD each process to cover the travel and procedural expenses of this special Government team that came to Coron several time.

The lease contract has a standard clause which states that every operator who runs a business in an ancestral domain in the Philippines must give priority to indigenous members of the community with equal professionalism when hiring staff. But most members of the Tagbanwa tribe have no professionalism as they have not studied and have never worked before.

This means that Paolyn could have hired competent personnel from outside the tribal community and avoided hiring tribal members, as unfortunately happens in all business-oriented projects developed within the ancestral lands in the Philippines.

But the meaning of the Paolyn project is different, which is why it has hired almost exclusively members from the tribal community even if had no experience and no professionalism, except for some of the supervisors who help train those hired who do not have any professionalism. Furthermore, the salary that Paolyn pays to the above workers who have no experience is today approximately double the salary that every other hotel in the area pays to its workers who have even over 10 years of experience.

All this respecting of course indigenous heritage and traditions.

WHY 304 EMPLOYEES FOR JUST 8 HOUSEBOATS !

Many guests wonder why Paolyn has over 300 employees with 8 houseboats when hotels in Coron town with 150 rooms like Zuri Hotel or Tag Resort have around 80 employees only.

This is due to three main reasons.

- 1) The logistics of Paolyn are very complex due to the fact that Paolyn is located in a remote area which is devoid of services of any kind.

In fact, for example, this beautiful and unique island has no fresh water and no electricity.

Even though Paolyn is totally off the grid, it guarantees 24 hours a day of electricity to its guests thanks to latest generation solar panels and Lithium batteries and transports thousands of liters of fresh water by sea from a source located on another island.

Furthermore, Paolyn does not discharge any wastewater into the sea, which makes waste treatment particularly complicated. Each houseboat has holding tanks where toilets, sinks, showers and kitchens drain, and each day specially equipped boats suck wastewater from the holding tanks and take it to another island about two hours away where Paolyn built a 14-stage septic tank on top of a hill equipped with an STP machine and motor pumps to transfer wastewater from transport boats to the septic tank

- 2) The fact that Paolyn decided to hire members of the local tribe who have no work experience as staff has the consequence that to carry out a particular activity a double or triple number of staff is needed as inexperienced staff are much slower in carrying out the activities and are often unable to carry out multiple tasks
- 3) In order to guarantee a certain level of service, Paolyn has hired a greater number of employees than is strictly necessary to guarantee daily operations.

In fact Paolyn staff are not used to working and respecting commitments. The passage of time has a completely different meaning and value for members of the tribe compared to workers who have had the opportunity to be trained at school and university and to work for several years.

This entails the fact that it happens quite often that workers do not show up on time or do not show up at all to carry out the shift assigned to them but show up to work randomly.

For this reason, it was necessary to have a greater number of employees in each sector to be sure, for example, that if a guest wants to take a speedboat tour, there is always a captain available.

HOW PAOLYN HOUSEBOATS WAS BORN

Paolyn Houseboats was not meant to be a business or a hotel.

The name Paolyn comes from the fusion of the names Paolo and April Lyn.

Paolo is Italian and in his old life he was an economist and CEO of eleven I.T. companies and worked 365 days a year. April Lyn is Filipina from Coron town.

Paolyn Houseboats were born by accident!

In 2008 Paolo decided to change his life when his 17-year-old sister died in an accident. So he sold everything he had in Italy (house, cars, companies) and boarded his sailboat and began sailing alone around the world, totally disconnected from the normal world. He crossed the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, went up and down exploring remote countries like Niue, Tuvalu, Kiribas, Phompei, Yap etc.

Paolo's plan was to never work again in the future and to continue sailing exploring remote islands.

At that time the Philippines was not yet a known tourist destination, so Paolo did not include it in his itinerary not knowing how beautiful it was.

After a few years of sailing Paolo was in the Republic of Palau (near Micronesia) and had planned to go to Indonesia to stay there for 6 months. The maximum visa on arrival was two months and is not extendable, so he checked where the nearest Indonesian consulate was on his route and it turned out to be Davao, Mindanao, Philippines!

So he sailed to Davao thinking of staying 3 days just to get the visa, but once there he really liked the country and the attitude and kindness of the people, so he stayed 2 months and decided that he would return to the Philippines after the 6th month. in Indonesia. So he did!

He finally returned to the Philippines and spent the first dry season sailing around remote islands and went out of the country for the rainy season as he had always done in all previous sailing years, as it is not that fun to be on a sailboat when it rains!

This is why the first houseboat was built!

In fact, when Paolo returned to the Philippines in the following season, he came to Coron and met April Lyn, so he decided to stay with her and for the first time he found himself staying in a country on his sailboat with rain.

Since Paolo cannot really live on land anymore, he decided to build the first houseboat to have a comfortable and nice place to stay during the rainy season.

In fact, the houseboat has a very beautiful view even from the inside and the spaces are more livable than a sailing boat.

He built the houseboat with 5 fishermen on a nearby island without any architect or engineer and it was private for them!

Paolo fell in love with the Coron Islands from the first time he saw it from afar during his navigation.

He normally anchored his sailboat along the coast of Coron Island and explored it every day, sometimes by swimming and snorkeling, sometimes by kayak or stand-up paddleboard, sometimes by dinghy.

The first time he entered the Laknisan lagoon (the first), he immediately had the idea of how beautiful it would be to be able to place the houseboat in this lagoon which was without any people and without any development.

Knowing that even the sea was owned by the tribe, Paolo decided to come into contact with the tribe leaders to ask for permission to position, clearly for a fee, the houseboat in the Laknisan lagoon.

It was a long and slow process that lasted 8/9 months and the various meetings were very pleasant and gave Paolo and April Lyn the opportunity to appreciate this beautiful community.

During these meetings it turned out that unfortunately the members of the tribe could not find work anywhere as no one wanted to hire staff without educational and work experience.

For this reason, Paolo decided to open their houseboat to the public during the dry season, during which he still planned to continue sailing with his sailboat. In this way he wanted to try to give an opportunity to some young members of the tribe. Obviously it meant thinking about everything from A to Z and also training the staff from scratch as they had no experience.

Because Paolyn was not born as a business, Paolo decided to give his employees a much higher salary than the average. In fact, the cost of living in Coron does not allow workers with the average salary to have a decent life.

They are often unable to provide for the family's basic needs, such as food and medicine. In the Philippines, in fact, hospitals and medicines are not free and some of the basic necessities are not as cheap as one might think.

Just to give an example, petrol costs around 1.5 USD per liter and a kilo of mango costs 200 Pesos. These prices can be considered normal in a Western country where workers' wages are much higher.

April Lyn was very worried that giving wages so much higher than other hotels would bankrupt Paolyn.

But Paolo explained to her that he didn't need to run a business to live and he wasn't willing to set up a project and pay a worker an amount that wouldn't allow him to make it to the end of the day and be able to support his family. He also explained to her that this project was unique in many ways and therefore it could work.

In fact, Paolo had never worked in the hotel or restaurant sector but had always traveled even in his previous life when for work he flew to a different city every day and stayed in hotels in the historical centers of Italian cities, therefore very expensive and considered high level. Furthermore, the few times he had a few days' holiday he used to stay in the most disparate places in the world such as the Maldives, Grand Canyon, Dolomites, Las Vegas, Monument Valley, Niagara Falls, New York, London, Paris, Athens, Greek islands, Istanbul, Saint Petersburg and much more including natural parks as Paolo has always loved nature. In his life he has also camped with a tent or campervan, but he has also tried going on safari in Africa or exploring the African desert or the Andes with a cross bike. Obviously, he also sailed for many years to many places.

All this gave him an idea.

Try to give tourists the chance to have a unique experience similar to being on a sailing boat in a remote anchorage in the middle of wonderful nature like Coron Island, but at the same time with the comfort and facilities of a hotel. Therefore, with larger spaces, with windows and larger doors, with air conditioning if required, good food and services and also with kayaks and masks and fins to explore the nearby nature in autonomy and freedom. With decks where guests can relax comfortably lying on the deckchairs under the umbrella and where they can receive a bottle of Prosecco, a Campari or a lobster after a pasta carbonara!

All this perhaps in videoconference with family or friends thanks to the very fast internet connection of the 12 Starlink Satellites that Paolo decided to install as soon as this technology was made available on the market!

Because many people love nature but do not feel comfortable staying on a sailing boat which can usually be rented for at least a week, while the houseboat project could allow guests also to enjoy the experience of just one or two nights.

Of course, this was easier said than done!

The Houseboat project would already be complicated even if carried out in a country with developed services and professional staff already trained for the particular nature of the operation.

Think about how much more difficult it is being located in Coron Island that is a remote place with no services and close to Coron town where you can find almost nothing. No boatyards, no outboard mechanics, no technicians for solar energy and much more!

Luckily, during his trip around the world on a sailing boat, Paolo had to adapt and become autonomous in adjusting and improving the systems of his sailing boat, under penalty of survival! In this way over the years he has developed a versatility both in dealing with and solving technical problems and often in physically doing it himself.

Just as an example if one of the outboard motors of the speedboats stops working, Paolyn has to pay for plane tickets, hotel and restaurants to the Yamaha and Suzuki mechanics who are located in Manila!

A very complicated logistics due to the location and to the level of the services in the country and an even more complicated situation due to firm Paolo's choice to involve the members of the tribe that do not have any experience.

Paolyn also registered the houseboats with government offices which they confessed was the first time this had happened in the Philippines!

Furthermore, in the Philippines there is no insurance that covers, for example, the risk of typhoons for houseboats....

Despite all this, today Paolyn Houseboats are a reality!!

One of Paolo's main goals was for off-grid houseboats to be environmentally friendly, so if one day the houseboats are removed from the lagoons, no one will even imagine that they were there. Paolo invented and implemented a series of solutions to avoid any type of pollution, such as the transport and treatment of waste water, despite their cost.

Over 300 people work in this project, thus becoming the largest reality in the tourism sector in all of Coron and Busuanga.

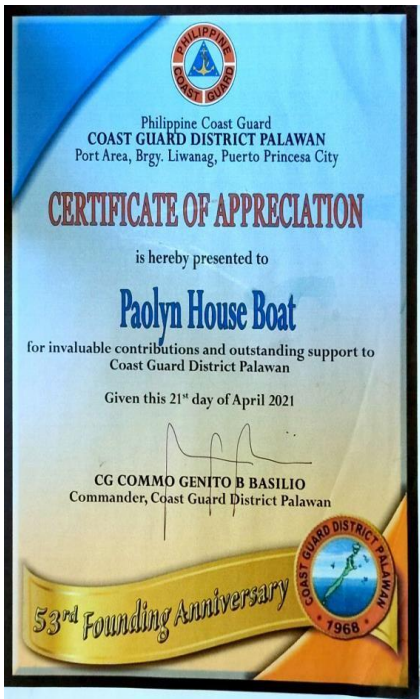
It has become an example that employees can be paid more than the average salary and above all it has become an example that something good and special can be done with the involvement of ethnic minorities such as the indigenous people who very often in almost all countries don't find work because they haven't studied and have no experience.

These two were Paolo's main goals!

All this was possible thanks to Paolo's madness and recklessness (including financial)

but above all thanks to the guests who chose to come and stay at Paolyn and understood the spirit and nature of this crazy project!

A final mention regarding marine life. When the first houseboat was positioned before pandemic in Laknisan Lagoon there were no fish anywhere. Paolo wondered why and the reason was soon told. Every night large illegal fishing boats operated with bright lights and illegal nets destroying everything. Paul noticed that the tribe members in general were very fearful of fighting against these illegal fishermen who are notorious for being criminals. Paolo decided to start a battle and every time he saw an illegal boat at night, he went to personally protest. He was warned that this behavior could even lead to his death but nevertheless he continued his battle. Once he managed to involve the Coast Guard but it turned out that some of the officers were friends of the owner of the illegal boat! But Paolo recorded everything that happened on video, despite the aggressiveness of the criminals. Finally, one day the new head of the coast guard arrived, a very capable and determined woman, with whom Paolo made an action plan. In fact, the coast guard didn't have any boats so Paolo gave 3 speedboats for free use and the new chief sent a unit every time Paolo called to warn them that there was a boat fishing illegally. Finally, after 2 months there were no more illegal boats and today you can see how many fish are in the lagoons! Paolo has also always supported the Philippine National Police with speedboats in operations against illegal fishing.



THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING THIS CRAZY PROJECT!

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