



# IGOROTA

THE WOMEN'S ALTERNATIVE MAGAZINE

ISSN. 1655-22457

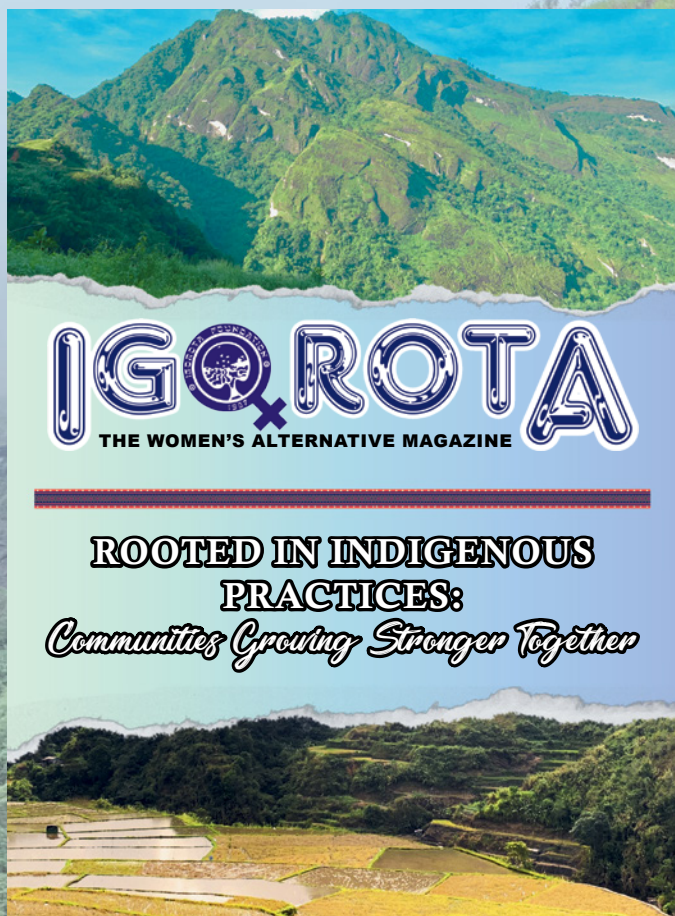
Volume 29 No. 3

December 2024

**ROOTED IN INDIGENOUS  
PRACTICES:**  
*Communities Growing Stronger Together*







## Our Cover

The photo captures the mountains of the Cordillera, a backdrop that symbolizes the rich cultural heritage and resilience of the indigenous communities. The mountains are not just a physical landscape; they are a vital part of the identity and spirituality of the community.

The indigenous people of the Cordillera have lived in harmony with their environment for generations, practicing sustainable agriculture, hunting, and gathering.

Their deep connection to the land is reflected in their traditions, stories, and communal practices. They have developed unique ways of living that respect the natural rhythms of the mountains, ensuring the preservation of their ecosystem for future generations.

The opinions expressed in the articles belong to their authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IGOROTA Foundation.

## WRITE US!

Igorota wants to hear from you! Send in your emails to [igorota.foundation@yahoo.com](mailto:igorota.foundation@yahoo.com), even essays, and literary pieces. Who knows, yours could be published next!

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-Ferrick Bulangen

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# EDITORIAL

As this year draws to a close, the IGOROTA Foundation invites everyone to dwell on our experiences and the practices that have sustained us as a community. December is not only a season of festivities, but also a chance to congratulate everyone's journey and how far they have come.

Communities are shaped by their cultures and practices. These roots are essential for social interconnection. They provide a sense of identity and belonging. When people feel connected to their community's heritage, they are more likely to participate in practices that pave for the common good.

For a community to develop, it is important to first determine which practices align with the community's characteristics and promote them. This includes talking to the residents about the issues that concern them most to motivate them to take part in decisionmaking. This way, communities will be able to come up with activities that are in line with their objectives and that address their concerns.

This issue discusses various community practices forwarding into success. The main source of the articles are the municipalities of Mayoyao in Ifugao; and Kibungan, and Bokod in Benguet

The first article discusses the good values of Mayoyao. It shows respect through verbal communication like "*itao*" which is an act of acknowledgment for the presence of a person. In addition, Mayoyao has a practice called "*maloh ami*" or "*umay ami*" which means "we will pass by" when passing by someone's home.

When it comes to environment-related practices, Kibungan has been doing the 4Rs which are reduce, reuse, recycle, and recover. Together with the municipality of Bokod, they have been practicing the "*Bawal ang Plastic*" which encourages everyone to use alternative materials like ecobags.

As we end this year and look towards 2025, let's not forget that forwarding is not about each of us doing something separately. Rather, it's growing together as a community, based on what we practice and how we do things.

IGOROTA congratulates everyone for the journeys we have made this year. The road ahead might be tough, but if we stand together for our aims and put them into practice, we can build a place where everyone can thrive.








# Mayoyao Rice Terraces

MAYOYAO RICE TERRACES  
drone shot  
Photo Courtesy by:  
Taga-Cordillera

## Good Values that make Mayoyao Great

The people of Mayoyao are well known for their hospitality, kindness, and generosity. They are helpful and welcoming, always treating visitors with warmth.

As Mario Bayaona, a local elder, shared, this hospitality is a tradition passed down from their ancestors. In the past, it was customary to share meals with guests, and this practice continues today. When a visitor arrives from another place, they are invited to eat and treated with great care.

**Respect Through Verbal Communication.** The people of Mayoyao also show respect through their words. When passing by each other, they greet with "*itao*," a simple acknowledgment of presence.

When walking by someone's home, they respectfully say "*maloh ami*" or "*umuy ami*." (we will pass by). Gratitude is expressed with the word "*salamat*" (thank you), and when speaking with elders, they add respectful titles such as Auntie, Uncle, *Lolo*, *Lola*, *Manong*, or *Manang*.

**Bayanihan Spirit.** The spirit of *bayanihan* is alive in Mayoyao, where community members help each other without expecting monetary compensation. This cooperative effort is evident in practices like "*ubfu*," where neighbors assist one another in planting crops. Rather than paying for the help, the one who receives assistance returns the favor in kind. Additionally, "*fachang*" refers to the community coming together to clean the school grounds, ensuring a clean environment for their children. When someone builds a house, neighbors volunteer their labor without expecting payment. In return, the homeowner provides a meal, a practice known as "*bataris*." As Edward Bacnihan, another elder mentioned, this *bayanihan* is present in various community activities, especially during special occasions.

**Thanksgiving to Kabunyan.** In times of success or after overcoming challenges, such as passing a board exam, winning an election, or

surviving a serious illness, the people of Mayoyao express gratitude to *Kabunyan* (God). A pig is slaughtered, and the community gathers for a prayer service, sharing in the family's joy. Teacher Bella Baawa, a resident in the community said that this tradition reflects the deep sense of gratitude the community feels toward God for their blessings.

The good practices of Mayoyao rooted in respect, kindness, and cooperation contribute to making it a strong community. Growing up with these positive values shapes individuals and nurtures personal development. These traditions not only help achieve collective goals but also build trust and create a lasting positive impact on the municipality.

We should cherish and preserve these practices, keeping them close to our hearts and including them in our daily lives.//

-by Airish Bubod





**IN ACTION:** Kibungan National High School Students Weeding Their Innovative Landscape, Fenced in by Recycled Bottles.  
Photo Courtesy by: Merqula Estepa

Nowadays, many people neglect the proper ways of managing waste and following the 4Rs: **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Recover**. Instead of disposing of their trash responsibly, they often carelessly throw it anywhere without considering the consequences. Waste segregation is also frequently ignored, as many simply toss their garbage into trash bins without separating them properly.

Another growing issue is deforestation. Many people are quick to cut down trees but are reluctant to plant new ones. The motivation behind this is often profit, as trees provide raw materials for various products that can be sold. Unfortunately, the long-term environmental damage is overlooked for financial advantage.

While some individuals are passionate about planting trees, many continue to engage in harmful practices like cutting them down without reforestation efforts.

If this trend continues, future generations may never experience the beauty of our natural environment. They may be deprived of the opportunity to appreciate the richness and diversity of nature. We must act now to prevent this from happening.



**IN ACTION:** A Mother-Daughter Duo, Reusing Empty Sacks for Planting Root Crops. Photo Courtesy by: Merqula Estepa

To help protect the environment, we should all take responsibility. If you don't want to live in a polluted world, start by keeping your surroundings clean. For those who cut down trees, please take the initiative to plant new ones in their place. And for those who carelessly throw trash anywhere, think twice before doing so.

I often find myself asking, "Why do people cut down trees without replacing them? Why do they throw their trash carelessly?" It's hard to understand why some people disregard the well-being of our planet.

I dream of a clean and green environment, and for sure I'm not alone. We all want to live in a healthy, beautiful world, and for that to happen, we must change our behavior and take care of the environment. Proper waste management is a key step in solving this problem.

*Continue on page 7*





**AERIAL SHOT:** Mayoyao Rice Terraces  
Photo Courtesy by: GALA PH

# Will there be rice fields to be inherited?

**Rice fields have long been a part of our ancestral land, sustaining generations with food for family consumption.**

From their establishment up until the 1990s, these fields produced enough to feed entire families. Passed down from one generation to the next, the rice fields of Banhal, Mayoyao, Ifugao, as shared by elders Lola Abbayan Chumayo and Lolo Edwin Panangon, who are both over 90 years old, were a symbol of heritage and prosperity.

## A Heritage at Risk

In recent years, however, these precious rice fields have come under threat. The Mayoyao Tourism Office has urged for the restoration of the rice fields, also known as rice terraces, as many are now eroded. This destruction is primarily due to a combination

of factors - climate change, and the increasing presence of giant and fine earthworms. These earthworms have become an alarming issue, contributing heavily to soil erosion.

The giant earthworms create large tunnels under the rice paddies, allowing water to seep through and causing the soil to collapse. Meanwhile, fine earthworms, though smaller, have an equally devastating impact. Their extensive burrowing overly loosens the soil, consuming significant amounts of water and weakening the structural integrity of the paddies.

To add to these challenges, climate change has disrupted the natural cycles of drought and rainfall. Unpredictable weather patterns now bring heavy rains and dry spells outside of their normal seasons,

further threatening the survival of the rice fields.

## Seeking Solutions for the Future

According to the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) of Mayoyao, no pest control methods have yet been discovered to get rid of these earthworms. However, Local Government Units (LGUs) are actively working to find solutions.

In the meantime, community efforts have not faltered. Women's organizations, particularly those under the IGOROTA Foundation, are taking steps to minimize further damage by advocating against the use of herbicides, which soften the soil and accelerate erosion. Herbicide use in rice fields has

*Continue on page 7*





**AERIAL SHOT: Mayoyao Rice Terraces**  
Photo Courtesy by: Harley Palangchao

## Will there be rice fields...

*From page 6*

consistently been discouraged due to its harmful effects on the soil structure. While waiting for more permanent solutions from LGUs and concerned organizations, the campaign for organic farming and sustainable practices continues.

### Will Future Generations See the Rice Terraces?

The question now looms: Will the next generation witness the breathtaking beauty of Mayoyao's rice terraces? If these issues persist without intervention from LGUs, NGOs, and other concerned bodies,

the survival of these terraces is in jeopardy.

Rice field owners and farmers hold on to hope, calling for immediate solutions to preserve the rice terraces for future generations. The legacy of these ancient rice fields must not be lost.//

*-by Sonia Pacyod*

## Preserving the Environment

*From page 5*

### The 4Rs: Reduce

Reducing means using less and minimizing waste. It also involves reducing the adverse environmental impact of activities like demersal trawling. By reducing consumption, we lower greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. This not only helps protect the environment for future generations but also saves money.

### Reuse

Reusing involves giving items a second life, either for

their original purpose or a new function. By reusing products, we conserve energy and raw materials, and support the economy by reintegrating materials back into circulation. Additionally, reusing reduces disposal costs and the need for new resources.

### Recycle

Recycling is the process of collecting and processing materials that would otherwise be thrown away and turning them into new products. Recycling conserves natural resources, reduces waste, and

even creates green jobs. If we all commit to recycling, we can significantly reduce our environmental footprint.

### Recover

This refers to extracting value from waste materials that cannot be reused or recycled. This process focuses on recovering energy, raw materials, or other useful byproducts to minimize environmental harm and maximize resource efficiency.

If we truly want a cleaner, greener world, we must start by caring for our environment. The time to act is NOW.//

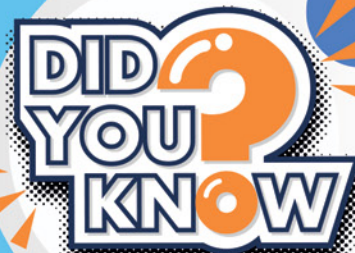
*-by Ayra Dayso*



# The Significance of *Man-Irot* in Maternal Health

According to the research, traditional healthcare practices have significant impact on people's approaches to childbearing and childrearing, nutrition, safety, and their responses to health and illness. (Abuidhail, 2014; Krans & Chang, 2011; Lewallen, 2011; Ramos, 2012).

These beliefs and practices can present both opportunities and challenges for healthcare providers. (Beser et al., 2010; Sharma, Van Teijlingen, Hundley, Angell, & Simkhada, 2016)



**“No mother should sacrifice her life while giving life!”** This is a powerful line from Kara David’s documentary *Manaram*, which highlights the important role of women who bear and give birth to children in our society.

Today, many facilities and resources are provided by the government to support women during pregnancy and childbirth. This includes hospitals and clinics, with trained midwives to assist in deliveries.

But how was it during the time when there were no clinics or hospitals? And what about in remote areas where there is no access to transportation to hospitals?

This is where the essential role of traditional birth attendants, known as *man-iro*t in the *Kankana-ey* language, becomes crucial. In communities that lack access to clinics or modern healthcare

facilities, *man-iro*t is often the only source of maternal care available to women. They serve not only as midwives but also as trusted companions throughout pregnancy, providing advice on how to take care of both the mother and the baby.

The *man-iro*t offers more than just delivery assistance. They guide mothers in maintaining their health, give advice on diet and physical care, and address potential complications with traditional knowledge. For instance, they perform massages or *iro*t to correct breech positions or other issues related to the baby’s placement in the womb.

These techniques can be passed down through generations within the traditional healer’s family line. They have been invaluable in saving lives.

Their knowledge and skills fill the gap left by the absence

of professional healthcare services, making them vital to the survival and well-being of both mother and child. Their presence provides comfort and assurance, especially in areas where access to hospitals and doctors can be hours or even days away.

Moreover, the significance of *man-iro*t extends beyond childbirth. They continue to care for the mother postpartum, ensuring her recovery by offering guidance and traditional remedies.

This long-term support helps women regain their strength and adjust to the challenges of motherhood, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility.

The *man-iro*t not only bridges the gap in healthcare access but also represents respect for life.//

*(See Original Piece on Page 21)*

-by Paul Mike Dominguez



**May Benguet's  
healing rituals  
inspire us to rediscover  
our connection to the  
land, our heritage, and  
the wisdom within  
ourselves.**

## **HEALING RITUALS: Restoring Harmony in Benguet's Indigenous Communities**

Healing rituals are deeply rooted within the cultural fabric of Benguet's indigenous communities, where traditional beliefs and practices intertwine to address physical, emotional, and spiritual ailments.

These rituals are typically performed by knowledgeable healers who possess an intricate understanding of medicinal plants and the spiritual realm.

The process often begins with a diagnosis, where the healer assesses the nature and underlying cause of the illness. In the indigenous worldview, ailments are believed to stem from spiritual disharmony or imbalance within the individual or the community.

The healer then prescribes a customized ritual, incorporating chants, prayers, and the application of herbal remedies meticulously selected for their healing properties.

Participants are actively involved in these ceremonies through symbolic actions or offerings, fostering a collective belief in the power of community support and spiritual intervention to facilitate recovery and restore well-being. The shared experience and the sense of interconnectedness among the participants are integral to the healing process.

These healing rituals not only address immediate health concerns but also reinforce

cultural identity and the holistic understanding of the relationship between physical health and spiritual harmony within Benguet's indigenous tradition. The rituals serve as a means to maintain balance, strengthen community bonds, and preserve the rich cultural heritage of the Benguet people.

Such healing as offered in these rituals not only aims to solve problems with health but also gain perspective towards the culture and the complete dependency of the body's health on the understanding of the whole.//

*-by Judy Mae Bellan  
Jevie Caycayen*



# THE MUNICIPALITY OF BOKOD STRENGTHENS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF “BAWAL ANG PLASTIC”



**Reducing single-use plastics is a crucial step towards mitigating environment pollution”**

**“The use of plastic is prohibited in Bokod”, prompting the need for residents to seek alternatives and bring ecobags during market days. This initiative aims to reduce the impact of plastic waste in the municipality.**

The *Sangguniang Bayan* ng Bokod has launched a project with the slogan “*Sa Bokod, Bawal ang Plastic*” and has been distributing free tote bags to encourage the reduction of plastic bag usage. While this effort is commendable, it has not fully addressed the issues of waste management in the municipality.

In visits to various barangays, it was observed that many stores, establishments, and households continue to use plastic bags, cups, and other single-use items. Meanwhile, the ecobags or tote bags distributed through the project are often left unused, hanging as decorations, or stored away.

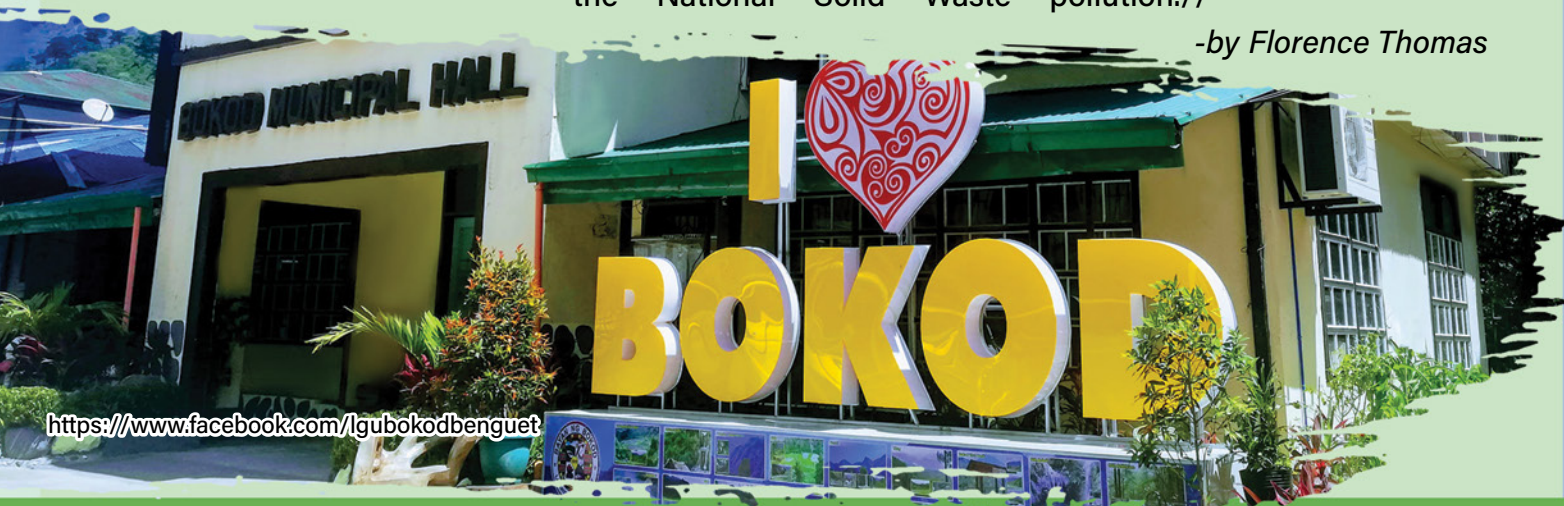
The Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 (RA 9003) has been in existence for 23 years, yet the nation remains in the grip of a severe plastic crisis. According to Oceana Philippines, plastic pollution must be tackled at its source. This includes strict implementation of municipal ordinances and a call for the National Solid Waste

Management Commission to fulfill its mandate by enacting a total ban on single-use plastics.

Community participation is crucial in addressing this issue. While individual efforts may not completely solve the problem, they can significantly lessen its impact. Change begins with discipline and accountability at the personal level.

Bokod’s initiative is a step in the right direction, but collective action and adherence to sustainable practices are essential. By embracing eco-friendly habits and supporting the municipality’s programs, we can protect Bokod’s environment and contribute to the larger fight against plastic pollution.//

-by Florence Thomas





# WASTE

## Management: Knowledge with Action

Is the use of plastics and Styrofoam truly controlled in our community?

Whenever I visit a store, I often forget to bring reusable bags and rely on plastic bags instead. I must admit that I seldom consider alternatives to plastics, revealing my lack of awareness and knowledge about proper waste management.

According to the study of Aditi Biswas, waste management is a streamlined process that organizations use to dispose of, reduce, reuse, and prevent waste. There are several simple yet impactful practices we can adopt to manage waste more effectively.

These include banning single-use plastics, reducing the use of disposable materials, avoiding unnecessary purchases, and embracing recycling.

One significant initiative we can start, with the support of our Local Government Units (LGU) and Barangay LGU is the implementation of Information, Education, and Communication campaigns. These campaigns can educate the public about the harmful effects of excessive waste and improper garbage disposal.

In addition, enacting and strictly enforcing ordinances related to waste management can help instill discipline

and accountability among community members.

As the Tanzanian proverb wisely says, "Little by little, a little becomes a lot." Through small, consistent actions, we can contribute to the preservation of our environment and the well being of future generations.

Moreover, it is important to pair knowledge with action. As Al-Ghazali once said, "Knowledge without action is wastefulness, and action without knowledge is foolish." With a deeper understanding of waste management and a commitment to act on it, we can pave the way for a cleaner and healthier environment.

*-by a Youth Advocate for Waste Management*





# SOME WAYS FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT

**1** Reduce, Reuse, Recycle:  
Minimize single-use items, reuse containers and bags, and recycle paper, plastic, glass, and metal.



**2** Segregate Waste:  
separate organic (food, garden) from non-organic (plastic, glass) waste.

**3** Compost: Convert food waste into nutrient-rich fertilizer.



**4** Proper Disposal:  
Dispose hazardous waste (batteries, electronics) through authorized channels.

**5** Plastic: Rinse containers, remove labels, and recycle



“Reducing waste is not just eco-friendly,  
it’s economy friendly”





# Reducing and Managing Our Waste

Effective waste management is essential for keeping our community clean and sustainable. Learning how to properly manage waste is a responsibility we all share. If our municipality, Bokod, focuses more on waste management, we can significantly reduce unnecessary waste, decrease the amount of garbage generated, and create a healthier, cleaner environment.

## Why should we look for alternatives to plastic?

The answer is simple: to reduce plastic waste. Plastics are a major contributor to pollution because they take years to decompose. Switching to reusable alternatives like eco-bags can make a big difference. Eco-bags are not only durable and convenient but also environment-friendly since they can be reused multiple times, which helps in minimizing waste.

## Why should we stop using single-use plastics?

The more single-use plastics we consume, the more garbage piles up in our landfills, streets, and surroundings. Instead of discarding plastics, we can explore creative ways to repurpose them. For instance, plastics can be used in crafting items like decorative pieces, organizers, or plant holders. Old or unused clothes can also be transformed into rags, floor mats, or other useful household items.

These small, practical steps can contribute to better waste management in our community. By reducing, reusing, and recycling, we can lessen the burden of waste on the environment and work towards a cleaner, greener future. Let us all take action today and be responsible stewards of our beautiful community.//

*-by Valerie Anape*

**“Every small action, every conscious choice, every mindful decision to reduce waste, echoes across generations, shaping a legacy of environmental harmony”**



## 6 TIPS IN REDUCING AND MANAGING WASTE



**Segregation and Proper Disposal:** Separate waste into categories (organic, recyclable, hazardous) and dispose of them correctly.



**Minimize Single-Use Plastics:** Avoid plastics like straws, bags, and water bottles.



**Zero-Waste Lifestyle:** Adopt sustainable consumption habits.



**Educate and engage communities in waste management.**



**Implement Waste Hierarchy:** Prioritize waste reduction, reuse, recycling, recovery and disposal.



**Design for Sustainability:** Develop products with minimal waste generation and easy recyclability.





**“DON’T LET ALCOHOL SHIFT  
GEARS TO TRAGEDY”**

## **ALCOHOL-INDUCED MOTORCYCLE ACCIDENTS**

**Driving under the influence of alcohol is a reckless choice that often leaves innocent lives shattered.** Alcohol-impaired driving not only endangers the driver and their passengers but also poses a significant threat to pedestrians and other road users.

This pressing issue calls for effective and immediate solutions from the community.

One step in reducing such accidents is the strict monitoring of motorcycle drivers to ensure they are clearheaded while on the road. Regular checkpoints along national highways could serve as an effective preventive and enforcement mechanism.

Another vital measure is banning minors from purchasing and consuming

alcoholic beverages. In many municipalities, minors not only own motorcycles but also ride them while drunk, often disregarding basic safety practices such as wearing helmets or other protective gears. This combination of underage drinking, lack of safety equipment, and reckless behavior significantly increases the risk of accidents.

Public awareness campaigns, or Information, Education, and Communication efforts, should also be intensified. Many riders are unaware of the legal repercussions of driving under the influence. For instance, the Anti-Drunk and Drugged Driving Act of 2013 (RA 10586) penalizes driving under the influence of alcohol, dangerous drugs, or similar substances.

Meanwhile, the Motorcycle Helmet Act of 2009 (RA 10054) mandates all motorcycle riders and passengers to wear protective helmets that meet the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) standards. Educating the public on these laws, as well as their associated fines and penalties, can help ensure compliance and promote safer roads.

By implementing these measures, the community can significantly reduce the occurrence of alcohol-induced motorcycle accidents. Stricter enforcement of policies, coupled with public education, can create safer roads and protect countless lives from preventable tragedies.//

*-by a Concerned Citizen of  
Bokod*



# Vehicular Accidents: Causes and Prevention

## AVOIDING ROAD ACCIDENTS

Why do we keep getting into accidents, and what can we do to prevent them? As the saying goes, "In life, more than anything else, it isn't easy to end up alive."

One crucial step to avoid accidents is to refrain from drinking alcohol before driving. Alcohol impairs vision, often causing blurriness or double vision, which drastically reduces time and increases the risk of accidents. Additionally, we should avoid driving on rainy days as wet roads become slippery and more dangerous. Ensuring adequate rest before driving is also essential to stay alert and focused.

Drivers should be wellversed in road safety regulations – not only to protect themselves but to set an example to others, especially to their younger family members.

Education on road signs and safe driving practices can make a significant difference.

According to the World Health Organization,

**1. Stay Alert and Focused:** Ensure you're well-rested, avoid driving when fatigued, and minimize distractions.

**4. Anticipate and React:** Expect the unexpected, be prepared to react to sudden situations, and continuously scan the road.

**2. Maintain Safe Distance:** Leave a 2-4 second gap between your vehicle and the one ahead.

**5. Be Aware of Your Surroundings:** Keep an eye on pedestrians, cyclists, and other vehicles.

**3. Follow Traffic Rules:** Obey speed limits, traffic signals, and signs. Avoid aggressive driving, tailgating, and weaving through lanes.

**6. Regular Checks:** Ensure proper tire pressure, functioning brakes, and adequate lighting to prevent mechanical failures.

approximately 1.19 million people die each year due to vehicular accidents, emphasizing the importance of proactive safety measures.

vehicular accidents. Let us remember to drive carefully, as life does not offer a rewind button.

**“The consequences of reckless driving are devastating. Let's drive responsibly and preserve life.”**

Wearing safety gear is another crucial precaution. According to the Philippine National Police (PNP), which conducts Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaigns,

"Wearing safety gear can save lives." Helmets, seatbelts, and appropriate footwear can prevent fractures and reduce the risk of severe injury in case of an accident.

According to the research of Foundation for Traffic Safety, it shows that drivers aged 17 and younger are among those most likely to be involved in

People must stop normalizing minors drinking alcohol. We often hear "their life, their choices." However, we must not forget that youths are the hope of the nation. In Bokod, we often see minors drinking in public places and on special occasions. This affects their studies and other responsibilities. Worse, they might get involved in motor accidents.

Moreover, police officers of Bokod may also implement a curfew every night to avoid teenagers drinking in random places which may cause unwanted situations. Bokod must be strict in its laws in order to make it a better place. //

*-by a Local Citizen of Bokod*





One of the Forest Fires in Bokod  
Photo Courtesy by: PIA Benguet

# SURGING FOREST FIRES IN BOKOD

On February 24, 2024, the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP)-Cordillera Administrative Region reported a surge in forest fires across Benguet. The affected municipalities include Bakun, Bokod, Itogon, and Tuba. Among them, Bokod has raised significant concerns, with its once lush mountains now crying for help.

According to BFP Bokod, these forest fires have been linked to open flames on local farmlands, irresponsible disposal of cigarette butts, and deliberate forest burning by cow raisers. The situation has been worsened by the ongoing El Niño phenomenon, which has brought dry conditions and high-velocity winds, making firefighting efforts increasingly challenging.

Alma Cupido, head of the Municipal Disaster Risk

Reduction and Management Office (MDRRMO) in Bokod, enumerated the severe consequences of forest fires which are burned vegetation and deforestation, water shortages, negative impacts on tourism, and accelerated climate change.

Albert Mongol, Regional Director of the Office of the

*"Trees fall. hope rises"*

Civil Defense and CRDRRMC Chairperson, emphasized the importance of forest lands for future generations.

In response, concerned agencies have conducted Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaigns in support of Fire Prevention Month to raise public awareness.

Preventing and managing forest fires requires concerted efforts from the community and government. The Local Government Unit (LGU) and related agencies must strictly enforce ordinances related to forest fire prevention.

Additionally, they should provide training and workshops on forest fire management to barangay officials, particularly the *tanods* and *kagawads*.

Forest fires have immediate and devastating impacts on ecosystems and human lives. Taking preventive measures now can save lives, protect the environment, and secure the future. This is not just a responsibility—it is a necessity.//

*-by Nature Enthusiast  
in Bokod*



# Teenage Pregnancy: A Growing Concern

**L**ust or Love? These two words often confuse young women, particularly teenagers. Adolescents aged 13 to 17 are most vulnerable to the challenges of teenage pregnancy, a growing concern in many communities.

One significant factor contributing to this issue is the lack of parental supervision. In the pursuit of earning a living, many parents unintentionally leave their children without proper guidance. Children are often left at home or in boarding houses, with unrestricted access to gadgets such as cell phones. They have the freedom to go out with their friends and sleepover at other homes. This lack of oversight creates an environment where risky behaviors may flourish.

In the municipality of Bokod, the Office of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development has recorded 20 cases of teenage pregnancy.

Most of these involve high school students. While some people treat this number as a

source of humor or a joke, these cases mark the municipality's image and affect the future of the young women involved.

To address this issue, a collaborative effort from the entire community is essential. Parents play a significant role in prevention by setting clear house rules, assigning responsibilities, and closely monitoring their children's activities. Building strong connections with school personnel and barangay officials can also enhance supervision and provide additional layers of guidance and support for young people.

Teenage pregnancy is a challenge that can be solved. With proper education, open communication, and active involvement from families and community leaders, we can create a supportive environment where teenagers are empowered to make informed choices about their future.//

-by Whyda Gosgos

*"To young mothers:  
Remember.  
motherhood  
amplifies  
your capacity  
for love.  
courage and  
perseverance.  
Embrace your  
journey. and  
know you're  
capable of  
overcoming any  
obstacle"*





## DID YOU KNOW?



**According to the research of PSA (2023), CAR ranks first among regions with highest increase in teenage pregnancy.**

**Teenage pregnancy was at 6.1 percent in 2022, an increase of 2.6 percentage points from 3.5 percent in 2017.**

## Effective Measures to Prevent Teenage Pregnancy

### COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION

This is essential in preventing teenage pregnancy by providing accurate information on sexual health, and responsible decision-making. It should be age appropriate, culturally sensitive, and include topics like consent, abstinence, safe sex, and open communication with partners and adults.

### YOUTH-FRIENDLY REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

This provides a safe, nonjudgmental space for teenagers. These services should offer confidential counseling, STI testing, and psychological support, helping young people make informed choices.

### PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION

Open communication between parents and children is crucial in preventing teenage pregnancy. Parents should foster a supportive, nonjudgmental environment for discussing relationships, sexuality.

### ENGAGING ADOLESCENTS IN POSITIVE ACTIVITIES

Engaging teens in extra-curriculars and mentorship boosts self-esteem, reduces risky behaviors, and encourages focus on education, career, and personal growth.

### ADDRESSING SOCIETAL NORMS AND GENDER INEQUALITY

Preventing teenage pregnancy in the Philippines requires sex education, and addressing gender inequality for a better future.



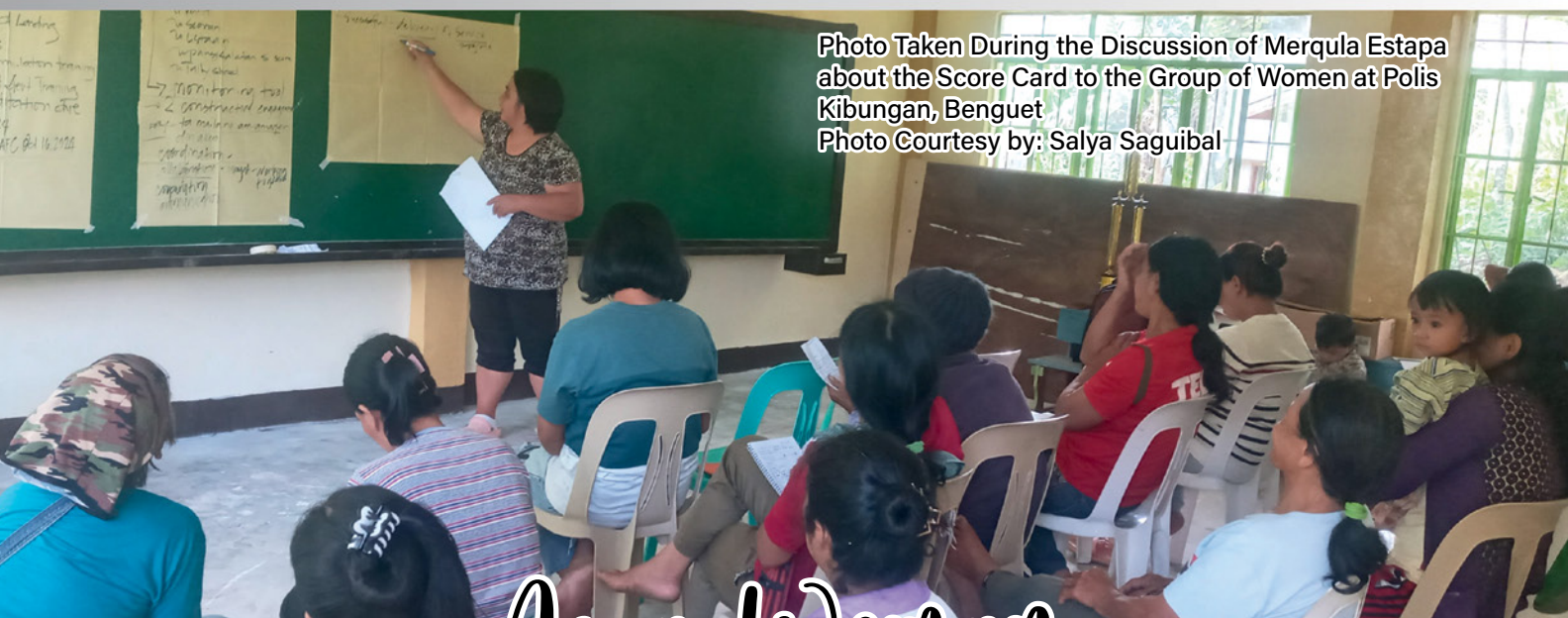


Photo Taken During the Discussion of Merqula Estapa about the Score Card to the Group of Women at Polis Kibungan, Benguet  
Photo Courtesy by: Salya Saguibal

## As a Woman

I come from a distant place where I must walk for about two hours to reach our meeting area with my fellow members. I belong to the Polis Women's Association in Kibungan, Benguet. Our meetings with the Igorota Foundation Inc. staff occur regularly. To prepare for the day, I wake up early to make breakfast for my family and feed our pets before leaving the house. My husband heads to the farm early, while our children go to school.

We cooperate and engage with the prepared agendas during our meetings, even though we often feel tired from the long hike. We openly share our ideas, make suggestions, discuss issues, and come with decisions that we believe are best for the association. As a group, we strive to grow, and we are fortunate that the IFI is there to support us.

*Continue on page 21*







## As a woman

*From page 20*

They consistently guide us, conduct training sessions, and offer values enhancement seminars in addition to various livelihood projects, which we have implemented. The program creates a positive impact on our lives. They also encourage us to be environmentally conscious by planting indigenous trees. We have undertaken common sugar cane plantations to produce muscovado.

Although these activities can be quite challenging for us to coordinate through technology, the ongoing guidance and encouragement from the IFI staff have helped us become more united, cooperative, and open not only within our association but also within our families.



**WOMEN'S  
EMPOWERMENT  
IS A MATTER  
OF GETTING  
RESPECT FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS AND  
EQUAL RIGHTS"**



We do face challenges that sometimes lead to misunderstandings, but we overcome these by openly expressing our feelings, and I have truly seen positive results from this approach. I hold onto the hope that this unity will help us advocate for positive thinking and that our next generation will learn to adopt these values and do even more.//

*-by Salya Saguibal*





## DID YOU KNOW?

The Department of Tourism in the Cordillera Administrative Region (DOT-CAR) is encouraging traditional massage therapy practitioners to promote their practices as part of wellness tourism. DOT-CAR director Jovita Ganongan highlighted traditional techniques like *gisgisto*, *kulkulis*, and *dagdagay*, aiming to make them as popular as Thailand's traditional massage in attracting tourists.

Magazine, S. (2024, July 12). DOT to revive traditional massage to promote wellness tourism - Society Magazine. Society Magazine. <https://society.com.ph/dot-to-revive-traditional-massage-to-promote-wellness-tourism/>



## MAN-IROT

“Walang ina ang dapat magbuwis buhay habang nagbibigay buhay”, ito ay isang maikli pero makabuluhang linya mula sa dokumentaryo ni Kara David na pinamagatang “*Mana ram*”.

Binigyang-diin sa dokumentaryong ito ang papel ng mga kababaihan bilang mga tagapagbigay buhay sa lipunan. Ang mga kababaihan ang nagbubuntis at nagsisilang ng mga sanggol sa ating lipunan.

Sa ngayon maraming mga pasilidad at kagamitan ang ginagawa at ipinapamahagi ng ating gobyerno para tulungan ang mga kababaihan sa panahon ng pagbubuntis at panganganak. Maramin ring mga tao ang nag-aaral para magbigay ng pangangalagang medikal tulad ng mga midwives.

Pero ang tanong, paano kaya noong mga panahon wala pang mga klinika at mga ospital? O kaya naman sa mga liblib na lugar na wala pang mga klinika at mga mangagawa sa pangkalusugan?

Diyan pumapasok ang mga traditional birth attendants, o mga *man-iro*t sa salitang Kankanaey. Ang mga *man-iro*t ay mga kababaihang nagsisilbing tagapagpaanak at tumutulong sa mga kababaihan sa kanilang pagbubuntis.

Sila ang nagbibigay payo sa mga kababaihan sa mga dapat gawin tuwing nagbubuntis para mapangalagaan ang sarili at ang sanggol na kanilang ipinagbubuntis. Sila rin ang nag-aayos sa pamamagitan ng *iro*t sa mga komplikasyon tuwing nagbubuntis gaya ng sa kaso ng mga sanggol na nakaupo sa sinapupunan ng ina.

Ang mga *man-iro*t din ang siyang nagsisilbing tagapagpaanak sa mga buntis. Maliban dito sila rin ang gumagabay sa mga kababaihan pagkatapos manganak hanggang sila ay makarekober.

Makikita rito na tunay na mahalaga ang gampanin ng mga *man-iro*t para tumulong na walang ina ang dapat magbuwis-buhay habang nagbibigay buhay.//

-by Paul Mike Dominguez





## IGOROTA Foundation, Inc.

is a non-stock, non-profit, non-government social development organization established in recognition of the right and responsibility of women to fully develop their God-given potentials.

### OUR VISION

“Women’s Holistic Development for Self-Sustaining Communities.”

### OUR MISSION

To empower women through transformative training education, organizing, and advocacy.

## OUR PROGRAMS

### GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

From our awareness of Gender and Development springs an ardent commitment to work in transforming gender-based relationships and structures in society. It aims to enable women to be aware of the sociocultural and political conditions that affect their roles, choices, image and relationships, and to facilitate responsive actions as a result of their awareness and consciousness.

### ANCESTRAL DOMAIN PROGRAM

To ensure that our region remains worthy as our children’s legacy, we pursue efforts in response to issues of development aggression, underdevelopment, and the risks of development. It aims to sustain the resources of our ancestral domain through the Indigenous Knowledge, Systems, and Practices (IKSPs) in development work, the respect and exercise by the Indigenous People of their rights and strengthen communities’ resilience to climate change by increasing their capacities and mainstreaming IKSPs in disaster risk reduction, and management and resiliency program.

### SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

To sustain our people’s existing indigenous practices of farming and land use towards wellbeing, sustainable development, and food sovereignty.

### SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

To address the practical gender needs of women and provide opportunities for women’s livelihood activities towards sustainability.



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Realize our Visions of Women’s Holistic Development for Self-Sustaining Communities.



For feedbacks and donations, kindly contact us through the information found at the back cover.





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