



Thafaas Sonsorol Men's Association

President
Kaipo Recheungel

Main Activities

- Controlling the coconut rhinoceros beetles (CRB)
- Reviving traditional canoes
- Educating traditional cultures to the community
- Aiding outlying states, such as by bringing in solar-powered lights



Background of Establishment

The elder men in Sonsorol noticed that the traditional practices and the cultural practices were slowly fading away, and saw the risk of losing the culture. In 2016, it officially became an NGO. Thafaas in Sonsorolese means the cultivation of traditional knowledge and practices in each individual in his/her particular culture and community for the successful perpetuity of that civilization. Today, this organization continues to function in both Sonsorol and Koror.

Purpose

Inheriting and maintaining the traditional knowledge and customs that have been passed down to the male society of Sonsorol's state. Maintaining security and a natural environment.



Member's Voice MR. Kaipo Recheungel

Both of our short-term goals and long-term goals are related to recruiting more members and finding ways to build more capacity for us to run an NGO, and effectively plan and implement projects and programs for the community. I want us to be independent and not be influenced by other external things, such as a change in leadership in the government.

We were fortunate enough to receive a grant from the Office of UNDP Palau for a one-year project on monitoring and controlling the coconut rhinoceros beetles (CRB) in 2018. They are an invasive species that eat the inside of the coconuts. We went down to Sonsorol Island to coordinate this project, starting from surveying all the coconut trees around the houses and controlled sites. We then set up traps, cut down all the dead coconut trees that the beetles reside in, and burnt them or threw them into the ocean. Within a year, we saw huge improvements in the controlled sites and an obvious decrease in the number of CRB's. Not only was this project a success, but it also became a hope for the other NGOs and has become a great tool to collaborate with other organizations, helping each other and sharing information and experiences.

This year in July, our organization worked on a project called "Reviving Traditional Canoe Building Practices of Sonsorol". The purpose of this project was to document the process and the tools involved in building a traditional canoe so that the information can be preserved. The main carver of this project taught me to move forward towards our own goals no matter what and stay confident in our decisions.

I hope to work with other men's organizations in other states, and together develop a network system of organizations that do similar work and have similar objectives. I believe by identifying the different organizations in Palau, we can collaborate and share resources. We then will be able to preserve traditional and cultural values in all of Palau so the younger generation can benefit from it. We joined BANGO precisely for this reason. Through them, we have started looking into our next activity in bringing solar-powered lights for all the households in outlying states.

I visited Okinawa in 2015 to take part in the Fisheries Development Project. During my stay, I was so impressed with how the organizations there are so interconnected, and how closely they work with the government. If we as Palauan NGOs had more opportunities to learn about how to establish NGOs and make them successful, I am confident more people in Palau would be encouraged and motivated to take active parts in an organization. I strongly believe that if you do not get up, then nothing is going to happen. So let's get up and make a change.

Contact Information

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