Summary of Marine Sanctuary Orientations

 For this project to have the increased opportunity for a sustainable change to occur, the Bancal Bay Resource Management and Development Alliance (BARMDA) requested the assistance to implement Marine Sanctuary Orientations for the 10 barangays that border Bancal Bay. These one-day orientations were designed to introduce community members to the importance of coastal resource management (CRM), what the local fishing laws are, the ecological reasoning behind those ordinances, and how the participants can benefit from a successful sanctuary, and how they can be advocates for it. Participants included members from fisherfolk organizations, Barangay Kagawads (community level legislative members), Bantay Dagat members (marine sanctuary enforcers), and other community leaders and fisherfolk that were identified by Barangay Captains (presidents of the communities). The orientations were conducted by LM Marcelo from BARMDA, Mary Jane Cortez from the Department of Agriculture of the Local Government Unit, and Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) Nicole Broquet.

 Each day began with an introduction to the Bancal Bay Marine Sanctuary Revitalization Project as well as the support given by World Connect Grants (WCG) and the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP). A lecture was then given by PCV Nicole on the introduction to CRM and was followed by either Sir LM Marcelo or Ma’am Mary Jane on the local fishing ordinances and penalties for violations. Then PCV Nicole with either Sir LM Marcelo or Ma’am Mary Jane taught the participants the basic biology and ecological processes behind these ordinances. The second half of the day was devoted to playing a fishing game provided by the NGO, RARE, that is designed to simulate the importance and benefits of utilizing CRM strategies. Each round of the game is a different scenario, beginning with an open season with no regulations and an abundant fish population, followed by an increased number of fishermen, then the implementation of a marine protected area, and ending with the illegalization of trawling while establishing an active Bantay Dagat. The purpose of this game is to show participants how fish catch becomes scarce without regulations and how important their efforts are helping the fish populations of Bancal Bay. It was the aim of this activity that participants would share the “experience” and knowledge that they gained with other members of their communities. The last activity of the day was a focus group discussion amongst participants’ barangays to describe the situation in their communities. Participants then shared their status and discussed what they could do to counter their situation.