

“Sa Ilog ng mga Iraya” Notes about the Photo

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It was midday one Friday in September, 2015 when I saw a middle-aged woman and her little daughter in the river of Pagbahan in Sitio Barogante, Brgy. Alacaak, Sta. Cruz, Occidental Mindoro. They are just two of many Iraya Mangyan who fish for food using less efficient means. It was clear in their faces that the difficult search for food weighs more than minding the scorching heat and the numbness of their feet after hours of work, drenched in muddy water.

The river is an integral part of their daily lives because it links their community to the main town of Sta.Cruz. In travelling trades and basic goods, the Iraya Mangyan use a *timbang* (salbabida/rubber-made life buoy) from their community to go to town.

Iraya Mangyan is one of the minority groups of Mangyan who live in the mountain ranges of Mindoro Province. Due to inaccessibility to their Sitio (a small unit of community), most of them have not attained formal education.

This photo was taken while we were on our way to Sitio Barogante for a documentary shoot about teacher-to-the-barrios advocates who fearlessly cross the rapid waves of Pagbahan river to educate the Mangyan.

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