SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

Baguio City, Philippines

# Metric 14.2 Supporting aquatic ecosystems through education



14 LIFE BELOW WATER

Times Higher Education Sustainability Impact Ratings

AY 2025-2026

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

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# Indicator 14.2.3 Overfishing (community outreach)



14 LIFE BELOW WATER

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# Horizon Keepers: How a Strategic Card Game is Tackling Aquatic Poaching

## A NET-ZERO EDUCATIONAL GAME

Marine biodiversity faces a dual threat in all coastal areas worldwide: ecological depletion and economic destabilization. Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and illegal poaching are the heart of this battle. These activities bypass catch quotas, exploit protected marine sanctuaries, and wreak havoc on fragile aquatic food webs especially in the Philippines.

To fill the gap between high-level international policy and grass-roots public awareness, researchers and educators have turned to an innovative educational medium: **Horizon Keepers**.

"**Horizon Keepers**" is a fun and strategic card game where players become turtle rescuers on a mission to protect the sea turtles found in the Philippines, collect resources, play action cards, and overcome real-life conservation challenges. This game-based learning offers an exciting way to turn complex marine protection laws and conservation efforts into an interactive, national outreach program. Players act as guardians of the community, directly engaging in real-world threats to marine life in the Philippines.



By confronting these real-world challenges head-on every round, players learn to identify specific threats to local species—such as the illegal trade and capture of endangered Pawikan (sea turtles) in coastal regions of the Philippines.

Counter Cards represent real-world conservation interventions—such as reporting illegal fishing activities, deploying community coastwatch patrols (Bantay Dagat), enforcing marine sanctuary regulations, and applying eco-friendly practices.

Combating illegal poaching in maritime zones involves navigating competing stakeholder interests, policy shifts, and resource constraints. Trump Cards reflect variable enforcement conditions (e.g., legal policy boosts, weather disruptions, or enforcement delays), while the 7-card hand limit teaches strategic resource management—demonstrating that communities must make timely, focused decisions rather than hoarding unused interventions.

By framing victory around rescuing the distinct Pawikan species across the Philippines, the game instills national ocean literacy, reinforcing the message that preventing illegal poaching directly safeguards the country's natural heritage.

Because the game relies on minimal components and highly accessible mechanics, it serves as a versatile tool for national community outreach:

- School & Youth Engagement: Conducted in primary and secondary schools across coastal municipalities to instill anti-poaching values early.
- Fisherfolk Cooperatives & LGUs: Used by Local Government Units (LGUs) during coastal management workshops to spark discussions on community-led watch groups and marine protection laws.
- Quantifiable Outreach Metrics: Pre- and post-game surveys can be administered to measure increases in community knowledge regarding illegal poaching regulations.







Source: https://www.slu.edu.ph/2025/11/18/slu-partners-with-project-curma-for-coastline-and-endangered-sea-turtles-protection-and-conservation/



*The SLU SDG Report 2026*