

A PUBLICATION OF THE DTI - REGION XI

A SENSO KA!

ISSUE 10 NOVEMBER 2016

WELCOME

DTI 11 PILOTS
NEGOSYO,
KONSYUMER,
ATBP.



ENABLING MSMEs
THROUGH SHARED
SERVICE FACILITY



BuB BOOM:
MADE WITH
THE RIGHT
STUFF



BRACING FOR COMPETITIVENESS

As Davao Region's micro and small enterprises (MSEs) enter an era of a more exciting and competitive business environment, they need to brace themselves and be ready to keep up with the challenges and to seize opportunities offered. Given the various needs for readiness vis-à-vis limited capacities of our MSMEs, relevant support from government and other stakeholders is imperative.

Among the DTI's more responsive support projects is the provision of machineries, tools and equipment to MSEs through the Shared Service Facilities (SSF) Project. This project essentially aims to enhance productivity, increase production and improve product quality of targeted beneficiaries—all these directed toward competitiveness of our local entrepreneurs.

This issue of the Asenso Ka! Magazine will feature success stories of our MSEs some of whom have been recipient of the DTI's SSF which helped them in growing and expanding their business.



MA. BELEND A. Q. AMBI
DTI-XI Regional Director

We wish to emphasize that in implementing the SSF Project, we have generated the support of other agencies – national and local – through our strong collaboration with these partners. Their active participation has indeed, significantly contributed to the growth of the MSE beneficiaries.

We hope that these stories will serve as inspiration to those who are wanting and willing to start and engage in business. Moreover, we intend for these stories to serve as testimonies and tribute to those in government and private, who collectively made a difference, for the better, in the plight of our MSEs.

We are looking at more exciting times ahead for the MSE sector, with our very own newly-elected President Rodrigo R. Duterte expressing his full support toward development of more MSEs for a better and more progressive Philippines.

Mabuhay and God bless us all!



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Asenso Ka! Magazine is a publication initiated by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) XI to recognize and encourage micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and other entrepreneurs in the Davao Region. It seeks to make local MSMEs take pride in their successes and to encourage budding entrepreneurs to innovate. It also showcases the importance of convergence in the development of local MSMEs.

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“Cultivators of the earth are the most vigorous, most independent, the most virtuous, they are tied to their country and its liberty by the most lasting bands.”
- **President Thomas Jefferson**

“The reward of our work is not what we get but what we become.”
- **Anonymous**

“You add value to people when you value them.”
- **John Maxwell**

DTI 11 pilots NEGOSYO, KONSYUMER, ATBP.



In a bid to improve the competitiveness of MSMEs and awareness of consumers of their rights, DTI 11 was chosen as the pilot area to implement the agency's newest initiative – the Negosyo, Konsyumer Atbp (NKATBP) project.

Conducted in Davao City on April 25-27, the 11-in-one event was able to gather a total of 2,516 delegates composed of existing and potential entrepreneurs and exporters, industry associations, local government units (LGUs), government financing institutions (GFIs), national government agencies (NGAs) and academe representatives from all over Davao Region.

The three-day gathering featured a number of strategic activities, to wit: Trade Fair and Info Services Caravan; Presyo Diskwento Caravan; Standards Blitz; Consumer Forum; Seminar on Expanding Your Business

through e-Commerce; Philippine Quality Awards – PQ Challenge Roadshow; Construction Occupational Safety and Health Course for Site Safety Officers (COSH); Investment Briefing/Counseling Seminar; Investment opportunities and FGD on Swine and Poultry Industries; Catapulting New Businesses for the Global Market; and Food Safety Training for MSMEs.

DTI 11 Regional Director Maria Belenda Q. Ambi said the conduct of the event paved way for both DTI and its clients to learn further from each other's expertise and experiences, apart from becoming an avenue to showcase the various programs and projects that the agency has for the MSMEs and consumers.

"This is definitely a strategic approach towards providing our entrepreneurs and consumers the most needed assistance

while continuously educating them," Ambi said.

During the NKATBP in Davao, DTI also turned over 25 Shared Service Facility (SSF) certificates worth P12.6 million and six checks from Small Business Corporation (SBC) worth P8.8 million.

It likewise served as a venue to recognize those establishments that adhere to Fair Trade Laws and uphold consumer rights through the awarding of 34 Bagwis Seal and partner national government agencies and private organizations.

The NKATBP, being a vehicle for local entrepreneurs to widen their market reach, was able to generate a total of P994, 158 in cash sales.



Enabling MSMEs through Shared Service Facility

As the Philippine government continues its goal of further promoting the MSMEs, DTI implemented the Shared Service Facility (SSF) project in 2013.

SSFs are common service facilities or production centers for certain processes to give MSMEs access to a better technology and more sophisticated equipment to accelerate their bid for competitiveness. By providing their much-needed facilities, the MSMEs are also given the chance to graduate to the next level where they can tap better and wider market and be integrated in the global supply chain.

In Davao Region, DTI 11 spent a total of 8.012 million in 2013, which help 940 entrepreneurs and generated 1,920 jobs, while in 2014, the agency allocated 6.303 million. The said amount was able to give an impact on the lives of 276 MSMEs as they generated 1,416 jobs.

In 2015, DTI-Davao Region utilized almost P32 million for its SSF projects that helped 1,523 MSMEs and gave jobs to 8,142 people.

As of May 2016, a total of 142 SSF projects were established and operational.



THE HOT PABLO CHILI PROJECT

Background

Typhoon PABLO hit Davao Oriental on December 4, 2012. The hardest hit municipalities are Baganga, Cateel and Boston. Many lives were lost, damages on infrastructure, agriculture, crops and all forms of source of livelihood and others were the most devastating experience by the people in these municipalities. The major economy which is coconut production was

totally damaged. This resulted to the severe loss of income of the people making it even more difficult to meet the needs of their families.

However, in the Building Back Better Program of the Provincial Government of Davao Oriental under the leadership of the Honorable Governor Corazon N. Malanyaon, the Barangay

and Municipal Local Officials, National Government Agencies, Private Organizations, People's Organizations and the Non-Government Organizations, a very clear and well-defined program was formulated and mutually accepted and adopted by all the stakeholders involved in the program.



On the part of the DTI, the agency developed reliable and alternative sources of income for the people in these areas. Coconut production cannot be relied upon anymore as their source of income because it will take five (5) to seven (7) years before the farmer can harvest the crop. Thus, the DTI promoted the Hot Chili Production and Processing as alternative source of income to the farmers and the people. This is a new industry in the province where the farmers can already start harvesting fresh hot chili during the fourth month from planting and will thrive for even up to three (3) years. As a backgrounder, the DTI has been actively pushing for

the growth and development of the Hot Chili Industry even before typhoon Pablo hit the province. During those time, there were only around two (2) chili processors who are producing powdered chili or known to be "dumang" in the local dialect. This is being used as condiment in meals and even ingredients for hot foods such as chicharon and other foods. This product has also entered some institutional markets in Davao City and other areas.

Hence, the DTI in partnership with the Provincial Government of Davao Oriental and the Department of Agriculture intensified its

promotion of the said industry to the people in these areas. While it is true that there were a lot of challenges as a result of the destruction of typhoon Pablo, but, it is also noteworthy that opportunities are available for these people to survive the calamity. This is through the Hot Chili Production and Processing. **The OPLAN PABLO** which stands for Program to Accelerate Building Livelihood Opportunities in Davao Oriental became the Center Point of the DTI's Assistance to the development of the hot chili production and processing industry, among others.



The Major Players - MSMEs

There are around nine (9) major MSMEs who were developed under the OPLAN PABLO Program for the Chili Industry. They are as follows:

1. Ayana's Siling Kinamayo located in Poblacion, Baganga, Davao Oriental, owned and managed by Mr. Edlun and Mrs. Maricel Ferrando. They are producing chili sauce, chili powder, chili in oil, among others.

2. Edil's Chili Products located in Poblacion, Baganga, Davao Oriental, owned and managed by Mr. Edilberto Elicot who is producing chili powder with various variants and chili sauce.

3. Edelia's Chili Products located at Banoao, Baganga, Davao Oriental, owned and managed by Mrs. Edelia Donato who is into chili powder

processing and marketing of fresh and dried chili.

4. M.A.M.A. Chili, Tree Farmers Association located at Sitio Lucasan, Malibago, Cateel, Davao Oriental. This is an association of around 192 chili farmers. Its President is Mr. Luis C. Bueno. They are located in the four (4) barangays of Malibago, Aliwagwag, Maglahus and Aragon representing the acronym M.A.M.A. They are producing chili powder, fresh and dried chili.

5. El Tigre Chili Products located at Sitio Lucasan, Malibago, Cateel, Davao Oriental, owned and managed by Mr. Luis C. Bueno. He is producing chili paste, chili extract, chili powder, chili flakes and has also expanded to other food processing products such as taro chips and turmeric.

6. Ziah-Sam Chili and Other Food Products located in Taytayan, Cateel, Davao Oriental. This is owned and managed by Mrs. Evan Joy Suarez. She is producing chili powder, chili flakes, among others.

7. Food Processors Association of Taytayan under their President, Mrs. Lucilyn D. Suarez located in Taytayan, Cateel, Davao Oriental. This is an association of women entrepreneurs who are producing chili powder.

8. Dory Dumang, located in Carmen, Boston, Davao Oriental, owned and managed by Mrs. Dory A. Butulan. She is into chili powder processing.

9. Subangon Dumang Makers, located in Cateel, Davao Oriental, owned and managed by Mr. Edgardo Arisola.





DON BOSCO TECHNOLOGY CENTER (DBTC)

CARVING DREAMS IN WOOD

A training school in the fishers' community of Dahican in Mati City is taking advantage of the booming wooden furniture industry which started in the aftermath of the Typhoon Pablo a few years back.

The province of Davao Oriental, which is known for Mt. Hamiguitan and its white sand beaches, started to emerge as a potential furniture makers' haven after the typhoon. Once thought as a tool for destruction after it ravaged hundreds of lives and properties, the driftwoods are now etched and planed to become cabinets, chairs, tables, and other home furnitures.

Though there is so much to catch up on the furniture-making industry of Cebu, DBTC technical director Fr. Rex Cabilledo, SBD, said Davao Oriental has so many untapped talents.

Equipped with the years of experience garnered while working on the furniture factory of Don Bosco in Cebu a few years ago, Fr. Cabilledo said the center is already on the process of securing accreditation and registration of its new training program on construction which includes basic and advance carpentry.

With graduates averaging around 250 per year, Don Bosco is committed to produce products that are industry-ready either for the agriculture, mechanic, or construction sector.

This won't be possible without the assistance extended to the center by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) through its Shared Service Facility (SSF) program which aims to increase competitiveness of small entrepreneurs by giving shared facility that will enhance quality of their products.

The SSF was established February last year followed by training for existing industry players two months after.



With the project cost totaling to P843,000, the center received carving tools for etching and intricate carving, thickness planer with electric motor, mini bandsaw, table circular saw with electric motor, air compressor, table planner, post drill, electric hand drill, electric sander-wheel, handy circular saw, table clamp, compound miter saw, glass router, chisel, hand saw, cross cut saw, hand saw, key hole saw, and hammer.

The region is predicted to become a top player in the furniture industry years from now.

Defeating challenges

With so much equipment at hand, it is any artisan's dream come true. However, the limited capacity of each equipment prohibited the center from engaging into industrial mass production.

As much as orders are coming in, the equipment can only produce so much to the extent that Fr. Cabilledo said they've had to refuse some orders.

Not only was the capacity of the machineries a challenge to be overcome but also the decreasing supply of raw materials like driftwood.

These setbacks could have stopped DBTC from its high hopes.

However, as they finished a masterpiece at a time, it creates endless opportunities to the furniture making industry of Davao Oriental which once fell due to natural calamities.

To date, DBTC has already produced a tree house made out of drift wood, some religious souvenir items, wooden equipment for farming, and a center table from a driftwood which accentuates their lobby.

Creating opportunities

The SSF extended to the center opened new windows of opportunity to the center as well as its students who are mostly from unfortunate families who can't afford.

With the existing machines, Davao Oriental can be a supplier of semi-finished materials for much-developed wood, driftwood, and bamboo furniture making industry of Cebu.

The facility, he said, can be also used to create miniatures of sample wooden and bamboo furniture's than can be marketed abroad eventually.

With the shifting demand from the market which requires a combination of modern art and nature, the budding furniture industry of Davao Oriental will soon make its own way to international.

As the tourism industry of Davao Oriental takes stride, so as its allied industries.

With Davao as a surfing capital of the south, there's no doubt the mini wood carving from Don Bosco will soon make waves in their own time.

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FULLY ABLE, FULLY ADAPTIVE TO SUCCESS

They reached the top of the ladder without looking at their disabilities as hindrance. From a small to thriving coop, ADAP Multi-Purpose Cooperative is making headway in their furniture business.

The coop opened shop in 1997, with initially 53 differently-abled members. This was not the furniture business yet but lending services.

The furniture only came about a year after, starting with manufacturing desks and armchairs with the backing of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) 11, Technical Education Skills and Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) for some training's, skills development and provisions of equipment.

ADAP Multi-Purpose Cooperative manager Alicia M. Fabiana claimed that the ADAP is the first and only coop run by the PWDs (Persons With Disabilities) in the metro that manufactures desks and armchairs to public and private schools.

Luck came for ADAP when it placed and won a bidding in early 2000 to supply with armchairs the schools of the Department of Education (Deped) in Davao Region. Government bids out all its projects to private contractors as a policy.



The coop's tie-up with the government was further propelled after the signing of Executive Order 417, directing "the implementation of the economic independence program for persons with disabilities" in 2005.

The EO states that "the same are to avail of the services of cooperatives of PWDs and organizations of PWDs by procuring at least 10 percent of their requirements of goods and services, where possible and applicable. All local Government Units are also enjoined to do the same."

This was supported by Department of Budget Management's Procurement System mandated DepEd that 10 percent of the public school's furniture requirement should be supplied by coops of PWDs. While the

government policy secures for them a sure spot in the government projects, no PWDs groups but ADAP was capable of manufacturing armchairs, which is why the coop has always won in the bidding from the very beginning until today.

"The volume of order came from DepEd Central office. We saw this as a good business because we only deliver and they pay us in full," she said.

The management problems and some other issues also beset the coop's growth in early 2000, but none of them were unsolved after Fabiana took helm starting 2002.

The coop has since grown to a total of 148 members and counting from only 53. All of them report for duty to its workplace at the one-hectare ADAP Vilage in Indangan, Buhangin District, Davao city.

The coop's workers are 20 full-time and 20 part-time. It allows 20 percent of its workers to be non-PWDs for as long as they have a family member who is

differently-abled, she said.

For the past years, the demand from schools for armchairs grew much bigger, prompting them to seek intervention from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) 11.

Through DTI 11's shared service facility (SSF), they were awarded with wood turning lathe machine, router, wood molding machine, jigsaw, welding machine electronic inverter AC-DC, table planer/thicknesses, cordless 18 volt drill/ driver, 2 NiCD batteries, electric hand drill, migweld machine, inch planer portable circular saw, hole saw, grinder, dust collector, and wrought iron forming set. These all worth P497,000.

Fabiana was delighted for the equipment boost that they were able to crank up its production volume. Last year, it delivered 7,065 armchairs to the schools across the region last year but she expressed optimism they would surpass last year deliverables this year.





Embroidery, Education, Empowerment for the

Little Angels of Mt. Carmel

It was a project started to help the kids continue education. But in the hearts of some people, the Carmelite sisters are but the harbinger of hope.

Sr. Ma. Juana Navel Beas, of the Carmelite Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Inc. helped the kids and the mothers start dreaming again after she initiated an embroidery project called "The Little Angels of Mt. Carmel" in 2003 which is very much alive and growing to this day.

From its humble beginnings, she managed to grow the people working on this project at the Upper 8, Communal in Tibungco, Davao City. The project was hatched when the convent was still in Sasa and was continued until it was moved to a peaceful community in Tibungco in 2007.

Far in her wildest dream, the simple project with 14 kids at the start would grow to 117 kids and 16 mothers today. All that she had on mind at the very beginning was to be able to help the kids.

"We have catechetic in different chapels and every time we ask the kids why they cannot go to school, they would always tell us that they do not have the money. It's true that they don't have money, eight of them. We are thinking how to help them because we don't have money, either," she said.

Thinking of what project, embroidery

crossed her mind. Back then, she was thrilled to share her chops on embroidery. During her younger years in Mexico, she used to dabble in her time learning the craft. Now is her time to teach.

Sr. Beas trained the children and some mothers on Mexican-inspired embroidery that does great wonder in beautifying different linens. Now, the Carmelite sells simple yet classy garments, from table cloths, pillow cases, table runners, handkerchiefs, bags, pouches, towels, and to various kitchenawares.

"Some of the children need time to learn the skill while others are already doing nice things over a short period," she said.

What children get most out of embroidery are discipline, not to mention, artistry. The kids come on weekends while the mothers come four times a week – Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. For every accomplished embroidery, the mothers would earn money upfront while the kids get school supplies, books, and the jeepney fare to and fro the schools. Helping Sr. Beas is Sr. Maria Ramona Gutierrez Loma, the project manager.

"The mothers have to come only on Friday but they need money, so we get their finished products and give them money," Loma said.

"We show our friends our products. They started to ask how to order pillow cases and towels, until it grew and grew. We keep the money so by June, we can buy the kids school supplies and uniforms. The kids, too, learn good values. They learn how to be punctual, clean, order and responsible," she said.

At the rate this project is growing, a friend saw the need of an equipment upgrade and suggested that they avail of the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) support through the Shared Service Facility (SSF).

"We don't know how. We don't even know what's DTI or who is DTI," Sr. Beas said. Also SSF beneficiary, the friend took the time out to connect them with the agency and they were able to avail of the SSF projects shortly after.

Last year, they received two high-speed edging machines, two standard sewing machines, and two sewing machines with hemming accessories worth P205,000.

"The new machines really helped because we can now do what cannot be done before. We can now double our production and make very beautiful embroideries. We can accept orders from other organization," she said.



The additional sewing facilities are also intended to engage more housewives, who are mostly flower vendors on weekends outside churches, in the embroidery project. If there is one thing that the Carmelite sisters are wishing for, it is to help more people re-kindle their hopes in life.

The one graduate of BS Hotel and Restaurant Management and two graduating others of BS Education of school year 2015-2016 could deliver a more compelling story how the embroidery project of the Carmelite sisters got them through in college.

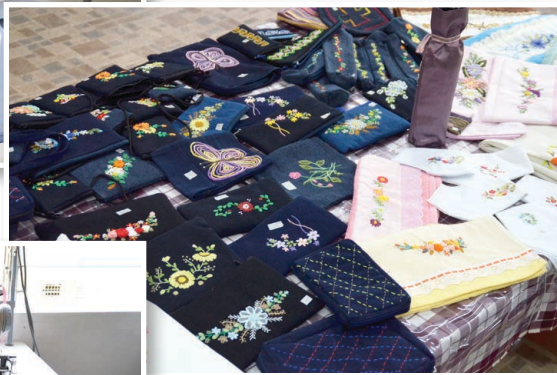
This is not far-fetched dream, as talks between them and some hotel operators are on-going to have their embroideries on display in their souvenir stores. If the push comes to shove, this will open more market opportunities for them.

"We want our products to be in a really nice packaging, in a box. This year we hope to make that happen," she said.

The Little Angels of Mt. Carmel is gaining traction in the local market who want to support the cause.

"We are very happy to see the children how they grow in security and values. They look sad without hope at the beginning but now they are smiling, secure, and happy. They really enjoy working with different colors, different materials and are not afraid if they commit mistakes," she said.

The Carmelite Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Inc. is a religious organization of the Carmelite Order that aims to promote a prayer and contemplation to young girls who are committed to enter the religious life.



PH: Wow for Cacao

With the increasing demand for cacao in the global trading arena, the opportunity for cacao growers, processors and entrepreneurs is definitely abounding.

Based on the data from the Department of Agriculture (DA), world demand for cacao has been expected to reach between 4.7 Million to 5 million metric tons by 2020. As a result, a global supply deficit of 1 million MT has been anticipated. Therefore, this is the opportunity that the Philippines can tap.

Meanwhile, per DTI's figures, Philippines' annual cacao production is pegged between 10,000 to 12,000 MT, while Davao Region contributes between 8,000 to 10,000 MT, thus, making it the top cacao producer in the country.

BATTLING EL NIÑO

A coop lists the things needed to survive hardships like El Niño

In trying times, the members of the Malita Rural Workers Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries multipurpose Cooperative (MARWABEMPCO) have found that the hard work and bayanihan are hopeful attributes needed to make it during harsh conditions.

The cooperative has been together for almost 30 years since the redistribution of the Philippine Coconut Estate Corporation to the members coming from various farming backgrounds.

The Department of Trade and Industry identified the organization to be its recipient of a P300,000 cacao fermentation facility.

This aimed to help the organization tend to their more or less 75,000 cacao trees that have a yield of 30 tons of cacao a year.

The availability of a fermentation facility allows the coop to access to a higher-paying market.

The facility brought the coop one step closer to clients like Nestle, whose demand for fermented cacao beans as well as other buyers. However, recent events have made it more of a challenge to connect the crops, the products, and the market.

The farmers were the recipients of around 150 hectares of land coming from the Philippine Coconut Estate Corporation, which distributed their land under the agrarian reform program decades ago.

As such, the cacao crops that have been planted in the area have aged over the years.

Added to this issue is the recent El Niño phenomenon that has been devastating numerous areas all over the Philippines, Malita included. Fortunately, the members of MARWABEMPCO were among the most united organizations ever registered at the Cooperative Development Authority.

But the members of the coop were not ones to easily give up. Fortunately, aside from resilience, the members were also creative, self-sustaining, and very strict with the policies that they implemented.

MARWABEMPCO's farm products include bananas and coconuts. This meant that even with low supply unfortunately greeting increased demand when it came to cacao, the members of the coop had a stable supply of bananas and coconuts they could sell to a recently steady market.

Board member Reynato Amores, 55, recalls how the organization began.

"We used to contribute P35 every day when we started more than 20 years ago," Amores said.



The Board Members of Marwabemppo

Since then, the company has grown to adapt to whatever the situation faced them.

What sets the organization apart from other coops is how they decide things together.

"There was even a time we chose not to receive salaries together," Amores said.

He added that there was a clamor from some government agencies, the board simply responded by giving them a situation of what was happening.

"If we spent what we had left, our cooperative would die," he added.

Over the years, the multipurpose coop has learned to find other viable methods of making a living.

The organization still ventures in a commissary, where they buy products such as food and other supplies.

An earlier loan from the DTI of a P100,000 coco dryer has helped the organization make ends meet.

But the true star of the organization's operations now is their banana products. Lucky for the members, some of the ARB lots in the area were also planted with bananas. This made a supply chain of cavendish, binangay, and cardava possible.

"We make our living off bananas now," Bicay said.

The secret to the success of the members of MARWABEMPCO is their experience running and being part of a plantation before the land was distributed under the land reform program. The board members immediately made use of their knowledge of property management and put it into good use.

Every June and December, each member

receives their bi-annual production share. The timing was decided by the members to be in time for the start of classes and during the holidays, respectively.

According to the members, there was even one of them whose emergency kidney transplant was paid for by the coop.

Over the years, the members have learned that the only way to sustain the organization is to not expect immediate returns.

"Some of our former members decided to leave because they wanted to receive things whenever they asked for it," Bicay said. "That simply cannot be."

The key, they said, to running an industry such as MARWABEMPCO is unity and transparency. "There should be no hocus pocus in anything that we do."



MARWABEMPCO (Malita Rural Workers Agrarian Beneficiaries MPC)

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Board Member
Reynato Amores, 55
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Board Member
Raul Payan, 53
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Board Member
Danilo Calina, 64
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Lacaron, Malita,
Davao Occidental



Hope in New Endeavors

Members of the Kaghinhawaan Coconut Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative are just starting to write its own success story- not with any coconut products as its name may say but with its very-own Tableya de Generoso.

Three hours away from Davao City, these coconut farmers from a small fishing town of Governor Generoso in the southern tip of Davao Oriental are determined to make waves in the discriminating cacao industry despite being a newbie.

Named before as Kaghinhawaan Coco Farmer Integrated Cooperative (KOFINCO,) manager Ryan B. Mangat said they still prefer its old name despite having a new product. This new product only started in 2009 as a buy-and-sell merchandise under its Coconut Productivity Enhancement Program.

Mangat recalled the price of copra's dropped to P20 two to three years ago, making coconut farmers desperate to find new ways to earn a better profit.

Those who did not chop off their cacao trees when the coconut industry was on its way to the peak in the 1990's are now reaping fruits in selling a kilo for P85 to P90 depending on the quality of the bean.

Recognizing the huge potential, the cooperative has taken the long leap from just being a trader to becoming as the town's first mass producer of tableya which will be next Governor Generoso's trademark product.



ROAD TO SUCCESS

Mangat said this business has been close to his heart as he saw his own grandmother make hot cocoa drinks growing up. The sweet childhood memory in every cup of Tableya de Generoso brings back the time when he and his cousins roll a ball of wet grinded cacao powder with their small hands.

Anchoring on the same techniques he learned growing up, Mangat said the cooperative started making tableya with a seed money of P200,000.00 just for the community before it scaled up.

Five years after, orders are coming left and right, but the lack of equipment which will boost their productivity is lacking.

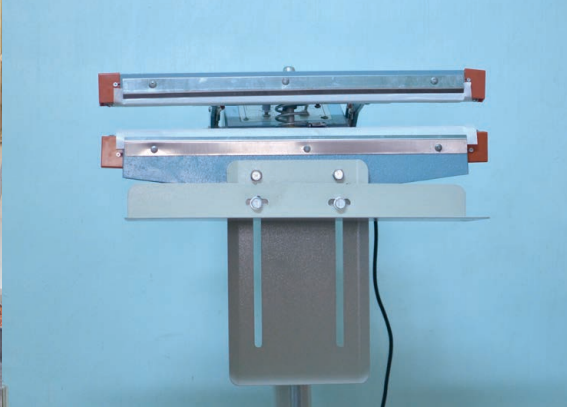
Thanks to the Department of Trade and Industry which gave the group with different working tools and equipment worth almost P500,000 under its program Shared Service Facility (SSF) which is a mechanism of the department to boost the productivity of small and medium enterprises while improving their position in the value chain.

The KOFINCO received different equipment like working table, grinder, sheller, sealer, roaster, and a winnower which increase its production capacity from 10 kilograms of cacao beans to up to 50 per day.

The cooking vats are replaced with bean roaster which can cook up to 20 kilograms of cacao beans without overcooking it. Hours of non-stop mixing are already gone with its new equipment which can boost its produce daily.

Compared to other tableyas in the market, Mangat said the Tableya de Generoso is already just like any commercial chocolate drink-- no residue settles on the bottom or on the brim of any cup.

Tableya de Generoso is also making its way to trade exhibits and expositions in Davao City. However, the small fishing town remained its primary market.



CONTINUING QUEST

Kofinco's Tableya de Generoso might have landed elsewhere but Mangat said the cooperative is determined to make its quality more superior than it is now.

Soon, they will have their Food and Drug Administration (FDA) license and more SSF equipment from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). The cooperative will be also working on securing a certification from the Global GAP(Good Agriculture Practices),an international certifying body, to be able to penetrate a bigger market which will have a shortage in supply soon.

In the local market, Mangat said the cooperative target to make available Tableya de Generoso on every shelf of supermarkets here. The cooperative is selling 12 tabs of the coco tabs for only P60 and 24 tablets for only P110.

With a very young cacao industry, he said the supply of raw material is still limited but as cacao trees are expected to reach maximum maturity so as their production.

BUILDING HOPE FOR THE CACAO FARMERS

While the coconut industry of the town is suffering from setbacks like low buying price, the cooperative is still committed to create a market of opportunity for these coco farmers rather than becoming a household name.

As it embark on creating new value-added products like chocolates in the future, the cooperative gives coco farmers the chance to venture to another business while maintaining their coconut plantations which was once the star industry.

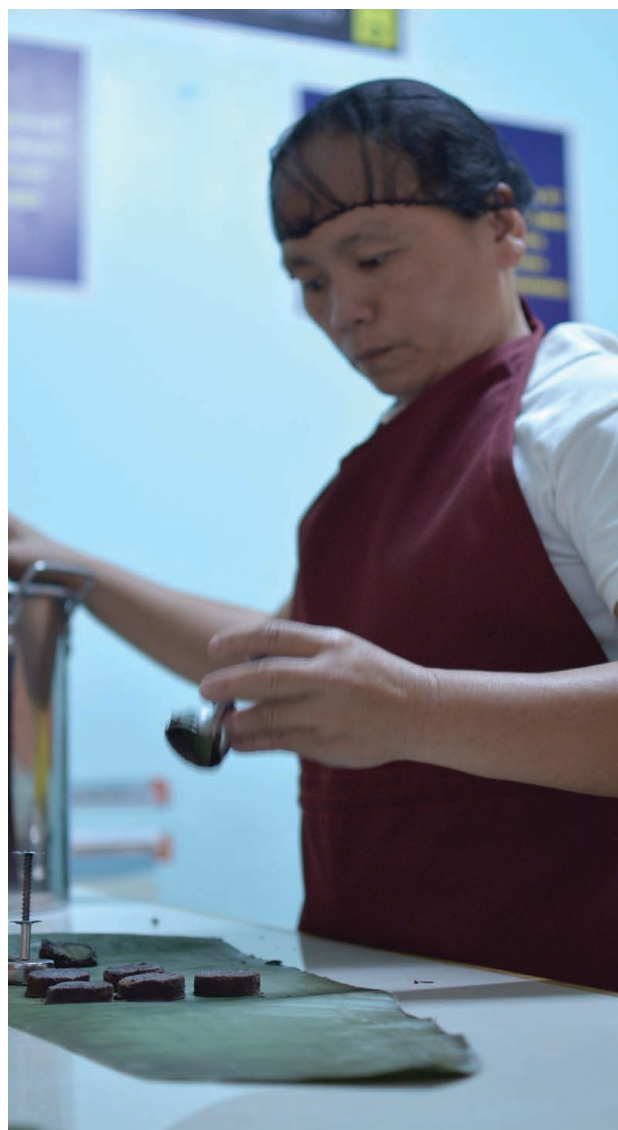
The coconut industry might have served its purpose for now but with cacao on its way up, coco farmer from the Barangay of Tibanban in Governor Generoso still have a fighting chance to soar high.

Contact Person:

Ryan B. Mangat
Manager
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**Kaginhawaan Coconut Farmers
Multipurpose Cooperative**

Dahlia 2, Barangay Tibanban,
Governor Generoso, Davao Oriental





ARABICA BY

Balutakay Coffee Farmers Association (BACOFA)

When farmers were no longer making money, coffee trees were totally banished from the picturesque landscape of this uphill community, but that was a long time ago in a town far, far away.

Today, you would see burgeoning number of farmers who have returned to planting coffee at the far-flung Purok Pluto, Sitio Balutakay, Bansalan, Davao del Sur, after seeing a resurgence of local demand at the turn of the century.

Ariel Dubria, member of the board of the Balutakay Coffee Farmers Association (BACOFA), recalled that he was young then when the vast sprawls of coffee

farms were a history to him in the 1980's.

For two decades, from 1980 to 2000, the residents in this community eked out a living from planting vegetables to be sold to the market in Bansalan.

But gone is the vegetable era. Now is the time for Arabica coffee.

The scenic terrain of Brgy. Balutakay is still dotted with swaths of all kinds of vegetables but with full-grown and juvenile coffee trees now back in sight.

"We planted coffee again because there was a stable market in 2000 up to now. The

cost to produce vegetables was also very expensive," he said.

Having known the business of vegetable farming for two decades, the farmers know that it would not get them any closer to financial stability. Dubria said that the downside of vegetable is that it would put the farmers in a costly routine - going back to zero after harvest - unlike coffee that would promise to yield cherries all year-round.

"With vegetables, farmers plant, harvest, sell and plant again, but with coffee, you plant, wait, harvest, and sell... and wait until the next harvest and sell again" he said.

SUPPORT FROM NGOS

Different well-meaning non-government organizations set out on a mission to Brgy. Balutakay to extend help to the farmers in need, from farm inputs, to technical assistance, to marketing. Two of such NGO was Kapwa Upliftment Foundation, Inc. and Catholic Relief Services who braved the winding and rough road up the community.

When the NGO had accomplished its project, ACDI-VOCA's Mindanao Productivity for Agricultural Commerce and Trade (MinPACT) project jumped in.

MinPACT is an \$8 million project that seeks to "increase agricultural productivity and trade in Western and Southern Mindanao. Cocoa, coconut, and coffee farming families in these areas will benefit from higher yields and product quality, as well as better access to services and markets."

With NGOs now in the picture, farmers got technical trainings, from good husbandry, farm management, production, harvest, and post-harvest processing from the best of the lot in world's best coffee-producing countries Ethiopia in Eastern Africa and Colombia in South America.

Harvest season usually peaks from September to January, which would yield the farmers somewhere between 10 to 20 metric tons of coffee beans.

The association has also received the much needed additional financial boost to jumpstart the expansion of their farms from these NGOs.

At least 50 hectares are estimated to have planted with productive Arabica coffee trees with around 1,800 to 2,000 trees per hectare. Around 60 growers have already ventured into coffee growing in Brgy. Balutakay.

The farmers also do pruning on coffee trees to encourage growth and flowering.

HUSBANDRY, POST-HARVEST

If elevation is to be talked about, Brgy. Balutakay, which sits at the Mt. Apo foothills with an elevation of 400 to 1,000 meters above sea level, can qualify for the Arabica growing requirement. An elevation of 1,000 meters above sea level is said to be the domain of the Arabica coffee.

Having met the elevation requirement plus the good weather and the volcanic soil, Brgy. Balutakay can undeniably produce good quality beans.

But here's the catch: farmers need support to improve husbandry and post-harvest processing. Seeing this dire need, Department of Trade Industry (DTI) XI came to the aid of the farmers and gave them the post-harvest equipment through its flagship program Shared Service Facility (SSF).

Before, Dubria said they used to dry the beans using tarpaulins on the ground, or sometimes with no mats at all, while cherries were manually de-pulped using a large mortar and pestle. But now, they have the de-pulper, flotation tank, fermentation tank, solar dryer, weighing scale, moisture meter, and bagger from DTI XI that help modernize and increase production by several folds.

Armed with the technical know-how, farmers would just handpick the red cherries, and then place them in flotation tanks to separate the cherries that float from those that sink, or the "sinkers," the good quality cherries. The beans are then placed to the de-pulper before the fermentation, he said.

After which, they would then wash the beans to take out the impurities.

The BACOFA sells its yields to Coffee For Peace, Inc., Hineleban Foundation Inc., and Monastery of Transfiguration in Bukidnon, who roasts and packs the Monk's Blend. But the farmers of BACOFA are envisioning to export their coffee beans, a move that will place their barangay in the map of coffee-growing areas of the world.



BACOFA's roasted beans which end up in the markets through local suppliers

The equipment boost from DTI 11 allows BACOFA members grind in large volume

Ariel Dubria, member of Balutakay Coffee Farmers Association (BACOFA)

Farmers started re-planting the Arabica variety in early 2000 in scenic Brgy. Balutakay

TO TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF



A Cassava Venture Success Story

Tasting the harshest of failures not only once but twice would have been more than enough reason already to scrap their dreams and move on, but this was not so for the Callawa-Bongan Employees ARB Cooperative (CABEARBCO).

The CABEARBCO has just started the cassava feed-grade production venture in 2015, the third after two failed attempts of expanding its product line, from over a decade-old manpower services to goods. However, a look further back on what it has been through would give a glimpse how the CABEARBCO people braved the tests.

CABEARBCO chairman Sotero B. Aspillá said they stepped outside of their comfort zone when they ventured into the cassava powder, an ingredient for glue, hoping to strike a deal with Lapanday Food Corporation, who had high requirement for glue for box-making at its plant in Mandug in Buhangin District, Davao City.

With no machinery to produce cassava powder, the cooperative sought assistance from the Department of

Labor and Employment (DOLE) who provided them, among others, with the cassava powder grinder, hammer mill, electric dryer, and solar dryer worth P845,000, awarded in two phases.

Much to the dismay of CABEARBCO members, things did not turn out well. Having no expertise at making cassava powder, they failed to meet the quality tests of the Lapanday Foods.

Next to DOLE, they also came to ask for intervention from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) to assist them in the quality improvement. Instead, they were suggested to work with a chemist, as the high-grade cassava powder requires a great deal of technical know-how to produce quality glue.

The first venture was a failure, so they experimented with a new one. Coming from the banana capital of Davao City, he said they thought banana chips would be a good option – first, to cash in on the rejects and second, not to put to waste DOLE's almost a million worth assistance.

So, the banana chips business came into being in 2011. But even the banana chips could barely survive for a year for lack of market, or as Aspillá put it, it's hard to compete neck and neck with the more established guys in the business.

"Shortly after, the banana chip venture closed down before it can even take off because we cannot compete with the big players," he said.

This was when they decided to take a break from the uphill battles. Instead of incubating new business ideas, they rather focused on the manpower services.

All the failures are a blessing in disguise after all when the San Miguel Corporation's B-MEG tapped the CABEARBCO to be one of its suppliers for the feed-grade cassava in 2015.

Armed with renewed hopes, the cooperative sought Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for help.



The cassava rootcrops are either sourced from CABEARBCO's eight-hectare plantation or from other neighboring farmers.

The agency did not turn a blind eye and immediately came to the aid of CABEARBCO, giving them the granulator with conveyor worth P450,000 through its flagship program Shared Service Facility (SSF) last year.

Not only that. They also get the much needed training boost on management and marketing, he said.

"When the B-MEG came in, they encouraged the farmers to plant cassava because they have high requirement for feeds," he said. Aside from CABEARBCO's eight-hectare property solely planted to cassava, non-CABEARBCO members are said to be growing the crops nowadays and have them sold to the coop.

He said they alone cannot meet B-MEG's demand of 66 tons a year.

"We buy from other farmers because if we only get the cassava from our plantation, we will not meet the demand. We are now the assemblers and most of the farmers would sell us their dried cassava chips," he said.

Last July 2015, the coop members could finally heave a

sigh of relief when they sold the first of batch of feeds weighing around 30 tons to B-MEG for P35,000.

Learning from the failures of the past, he has high hopes that they will make it big this time around by being keener on improving the quality and becoming hungrier for success after failing twice. After all, those who survived the toughest storms are made even stronger. The coop members have to wrestle yet again another challenge – El Niño.

CABEARBCO, a close-type cooperative, was started by 113 workers of Lapanday Foods employed from 1988 and earlier.

Following the implementation of Republic Act (RA) 6657, also known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), they got a sizable share of Lapanday's land of about 100.94 hectares, mostly are rented out to the company for its banana business plantations.

Its primary businesses are general merchandise store and manpower services, providing the banana company with over 100 workers.



× A CATCH OF THEIR OWN ×



A COMMUNITY OF FISHERMEN'S WIVES ARE EMPOWERED BY BANGUS PROCESSING

Every morning, a village sends its men out to sea for the day's catch of fish. For the members of the Cagangohan Women's Association of Panabo City, Inc., each day means the processing of a catch of their own.

CWA has become an example of growth with the help of various government agencies that saw the potential of the milkfish in the early 2000s.

Eufronia "Yayang" Enguito, 55, who acts as the secretary of CWA, said that the group managed to reach their full potential with the help of government agencies like the Department of Trade and Industry and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

The BFAR essentially helped organize the group as they are now, with the government identifying fish production from fresh- and brackish water as one potential source of income for coastal or fishing communities. DTI, on the other hand, led the team to an increased yield as well as to better market exposure through trade fairs and other training's.

SLOW AT FIRST

Growth was slow at first without the government assistance, and for a while, the group subsisted only on what they could afford to process and store.

"We would only process P150 worth of fish every day, and that was it," she said.

However, with the assistance of the agencies, production expanded and the entire length of the supply chain eventually became accessible to the humble women of the barangay.

The group processes milkfish, known locally as bangus and also as the giant herring.

CWA's products include deboned and dried bangus, as well as bottled bangus.

The deboned bangus has become a village trade, a cottage industry that the village has expanded into a small and medium enterprise with the entry of the said agencies.

"Back in the day, we used to only process a few orders because we could not keep up with the demand," Enguito said.

Now, production has since more than doubled with the help of DTI assistance under the shared service facilities program that complemented the BFAR's National Fisheries Research and Development Institute grant.

The SSF project, worth P300,000, allowed the group to add more equipment to the tools of their trade. Such equipment included pressure cookers, a vacuum sealer machine, two chest type freezers, and one stainless fish processing table.

According to Yang, this assistance has not only helped increase production for the 18-strong team, it has also given them purpose.

In her case, the livelihood project has helped send all of her children to school. Three of her children have already graduated, while two are yet to graduate.

A report from the DTI said that the bangus teams created by the BFAR was able to produce close to 12,000 of bottled bangus in corn oil, almost 1,200 kilograms of boneless bangus, as well as 2,422 kilograms of bangus belly.

This led to a gross income of around P1.2 million.

Not only is the team given a chance to be part of the bangus industry, the women are also treated as major stakeholders in the tourism industry, with fresh products from Panabo being one of its combined tourism and agri-fisheries thrusts.

While one obvious goal is to increase production, another is the invitation of potential investors who fund the raising and eventual processing of the fish.

There is so much potential in bangus.

According to data from the BFAR, in the late 2000s alone, national production showed a surplus reaching

up to at least 175,000 metric tons of the fish.

The group is already eyeing an expansion of another store to transact with customers, while the new products in the pipeline include bangus siomai.

The team has also experienced trade fairs with the help of the DTI.

"This project allowed us to find worth in ourselves," Yayang said.

According to her, the project and the assistance such as the SSF has led to a more empowered production team, where her fellow bangus dealers are concerned.

"We've become the breadwinners," she said.



Members of Cagangohan Women's Association



Cagangohan Women's Association of Panabo City, Inc.
Coastal Road, Brgy. Cagangohan, Panabo City
Eufonia "Yayang" Enguito
09474094231

BRIGHTER PROSPECTS FOR THE MUNICIPAL RURAL IMPROVEMENT CLUB



Aniceya Lagura, Angelbeth Pontilles, Leticia Cordova, Perla Fabillar, Luzviminda Gayuso, Zelda Garcia, Flora Lamparas

What the Municipal Rural Improvement Club (MRIC) of Maragusan is today is a far cry from what it was in 1997. What began as a women cooperative run by a handful of women and their sheer perseverance, now flourishes with over 160 members who work together to produce Filipino goods such as banana chips, *bukayo*, and *salabat* in a facility in Maragusan, Compostela Valley. Zelda Garcia, coordinator of MRIC, says that they owe part of their success to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for their assistance through their Shared Service Facility (SSF) program. “*Dako mig pasalamat sa DTI, wala gyud mi nila gipasagdan*” (We owe DTI a debt of gratitude. They never left us to fend for ourselves), said Garcia.

Luckily for the women, progress was seen through the years. Assistance from government bodies like the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Compostela Valley LGU (local government unit) aided them in their production. In 2007, MRIC started to engage in food processing and distribution of ginger powder (*salabat*), turmeric powder, banana and taro chips, and *bukayo* which is sugared coconut shavings. Their food production was showing potential, having earned up to P14, 000 a week in sales. However, they were impeded by lack of resources, of

maragusan machinery, and equipment.

In 2015, the Department of Trade and Agriculture proposed MRIC to be a beneficiary in their Shared Service Facility (SSF) program which is a major component of DTI’s MSMED (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Development). It aims to improve businesses by providing them with tools, equipment, machinery, as well as skills and knowledge under a shared system.

Through this program, DTI provided MRIC with equipment and machinery to help them maximize their potential and competitiveness in the market. In January 2016, MRIC was provided with a portable milling machine, vegetable and fruit juice extractor, coconut grater, portable vacuum pack sealer, digital weighing scale, and a working table, sink, and utility rack which are all made of stainless steel. The project was given a budget of almost P227,000. Prior to the SSF project, MRIC was also a recipient of DTI’s Bottom-up Budgeting which provided them with financial assistance amounting to P475,000.

“Many women became interested in this kind of business, and those who worked with us has greatly benefited from it, and for their families as well,” Lamparas said.

Of all the products of MRIC, turmeric was the most sellable in the market. Angelbeth Pontilles who has been processing turmeric in MRIC since 2012 says, "One of the difficulties in my job as a turmeric processor was the lack of utensils and equipment. Back then, I had to rely on my resourcefulness." Pontilles feels happy now that she is able to earn more by making more turmeric with the equipment and utensils that have been provided.

Letacia Cordova who has been processing *bukayo* since 1997 felt relieved when the coconut grater because she no longer has to manually grate the coconut meat. She said that this helped speed up the process of making the *bukayo* which used to take longer hours when she manually grated the coconuts. In addition, this was also tiring for Cordova who already turned 64 years old. The speedy process allowed Cordova to make more *bukayo* to sell. For her, the extra profit proved to be helpful as a widow and a mother of six.

On top of the equipment that they were provided, MRIC was also able to hold trainings in proper food processing as well as given the opportunities to widen their market. MRIC already sells their goods in the Pasalubong Center and opens up a booth as well in festivals like Davao City's Kadayawan Festival. Today, the MRIC is aiming to pass the Food and Drug Administration) accreditation and licensing. Expansion and a sales boost of at least 20% are projected to follow after that.

Garcia, Lamparas, and all the other women in MRIC feel thankful that they were provided with the equipment and assistance that they needed to make their organization grow and prosper. "The government has never failed to provide us with the help that we need. They have always heeded our call," said Lamparas.





Assumption College of Nabunturan (ACN) Creates Wealth in Camote

Sr. Marimon (third from the left) says she will continue to develop more healthy food products using the equipment from the DTI. Together with her are Sr. Rosemary Carreon, in charge of the Assumption School Canteen (fourth from the left), Angela Prudence P. Abalur, external relations officer of ACN (leftmost), and Consefa Casing, a head of a women's group that also benefits from the SSF project.

If it weren't for compassion, 50-year old Sr. Merlynda Marimon from Assumption College of Nabunturan (ACN) in Compostela Valley wouldn't find wealth in camote.

Turning the root crop into something else is anchored on ACN's thrust to continue providing free education to deserving poor students from communities. This started in 1955 when the sectarian school was established in a town more than two hours away from Davao City.

To date, the scholarship program of ACN has produced more than 500 graduates who have become leaders in each of their chosen fields.

"The success of each graduate we produce is not measured by how much they have but how far they have gone. As long as they are not considered as burdens to their respective communities, I consider them successful," she added.

Founder's Food Products

Sr. Marimon said that Mother Marie, the servant who first believed that education empowers the poor, dedicated her entire life in nourishing the minds of the young people. The food products were named after Mother Marie.

Today, Sr. Marimon, in charge of the Products, has produced camote juice,

Starting Mindanao's First Camote Juice

ACN is giving the sweet potato a new face with its very own camote juice.

With only P300 capitalization, Sr. Marimon produced the first batch of camote chips two years as well as the camote juice whose technology was acquired from a seminar workshop in a university in Visayas.

The idea is relatively new. It is a first not only in the Davao Region but also in Mindanao.

ACN's camote juice is made from the root crop mixed with lemon and mango puree giving the starchy drink a golden color. This is sweetened naturally and has no preservatives.

Despite the lack of preservatives, a bottle of this juice can last up to three months in the

camote chips, camote jam, camote tacos and other non-camote food products like macapuno-mango marmalade, macapuno macaroons, macapuno strips, and macapuno balls.

She is earning at least P500 daily to finance the education of the school's two college students.

freezer. Ideal for health buffs, the juice also become a thing among young students from different different campuses of Assumption College in Davao Region and sister schools.



Expanding Products

The cheese and spicy-flavored chips of ACN became a healthy alternative to commercially available snacks in school canteens.

Aside from chips, ACN is also engaged in producing salvaro, a plate-sized fried caramelized camote chips and iced candy camote juice which is sold at only P5 each.

The market for its product is not a problem as the product was created with its own market niche.

The school canteens of different Assumption communities in Compostela Valley and Tagum City as well as its sister Catholic schools in Tagum City, Davao City, and Digos City became its primary market.



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Sr. Merlynda Marimon, fma,
Mother Marie Products Officer-In-Charge
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Moving up in the value chain

The growing demand for healthy food products led the college to tap the assistance from the shared service facility (SSF) program of the Department of Trade and Industry.

The SSF, which on its last tier of implementation this year, is a flagship program of the department which provides groups or organization with shared equipment to improve quality and boost the production of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME's).

The school received a multi commodity solar mechanical food grade dryer worth P400,000 and two portable sugar refractometer or hydrometer worth P17,500, totaling more than P435,000 worth of shared equipment last year. This dryer cut air drying time to half.

The provision of the SSF is also expected to enhance ACN' the volume of the production of its Flavored Chips by 1,250% which is equivalent to 80 packs to 1,000 packs and Cassava Tacos by 1,300% or 50 to 700 packs daily.

The Technical Vocational Department of ACN, the co-operator provided counterpart of P1.07 million in building, equipment, capitalization and human resources.



Building dreams of communities

Sixty-two year old Consefa Casing, chairman of the Basak Rural Improvement Women's Association, one of the host organizations assisted by the ACN, believed that giving livelihood to women is empowerment. It is also entitlement and achievement.

Each member of the all-woman's association shares small success stories from producing food product like sweet tamarind which the group markets to different groceries and trade

fairs organized by the DTI.

Casing, who has been a barangay councilor for 10 years, might have started simple just like the ACN with its camote but believed that a bright future is ahead the families of her organization.

She believed that a strong community is just a product of strong families where there is respect and equality among family members.

Creating more opportunities

Sr. Marimon is eyeing to employ two to three mothers in the production area to ensure the sustainability of the production.

Seeing the huge potential of their market as early as now, she said employing mothers from its adopted community

will help the organization attain its goal: to provide quality education to poor deserving children of God.



Noodles bring good luck to

Viscaya Plantation Incorporation Employees Cooperative (VPIEMCO)

Without fear of just being a second mover, members of the 29-year old Viscaya Plantation Incorporation Employees Cooperative (VPIEMPCO) are now exploring the potential of canton noodles making in a market where everyone wanted to be the first.

Based in Barangay Dumlan in the municipality of Maco in Compostela Valley, 52-year old VPIEMPCO chairman Benedicto P. Ayop knew that the cooperative had to diversify its products and services again after seeing the potential and the growing demand for canton noodles in the locality of Maco, a seaside town 58.7 kilometers north of Davao City.

Recognizing that the only way to grow is to move forward, the VPIEMPCO, which had experience a setback because of mismanagement in the



early 1990's, started a small business in canton noodle making in late last year to increase its income.

To date, the cooperative is not just making fried canton noodles but also fresh miki which they also serve at their refreshment parlor as "mami" and buttered bread sticks.

However, the desire to tap a wider untapped market lead the organization to tap services of the DTI through its Shared Service Facility (SSF) program which will help the VPIEMPCO to have a manufacturing facility that is Food and Drug Authority (FDA) accredited.

INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY

Thanks to the DTI, the cooperative received noodle making equipment last year as co-operator and in charge of the production and operations as well as management of the facility worth P486,000. Delivery of the dough roller, sheeter, and a dough slicing and cutting machine was completed during February 2016.

From scratch, the cooperative is now producing 96 packs of canton noodles daily which few are displayed on its store while some are delivered to their canteens, small stores, and grocery stores managed also by the 115-member cooperative who

are all employees of the 339 hectares Ayala-owned banana plantation.

VPIEMPCO manager Jenifer L. Nazareno said the cooperative has already collected an initial of P5,000 from its initial operation this year.

"We are studying the feasibility of producing canton noodles using squash, moringa, and banana flours in the future. We are currently on the testing stage for the squash," he added. "We will be using the squash harvested from the 4.2 hectare property owned by the cooperative."



MOVING UP

Ayop could still remember how the coop was failing when he entered the management board in 1993 which led to withdrawal of some members.

Believing of the coop's potential, Ayop said dedication and commitment as well as honesty to the members are secret on how the 29-year old coop stands on its feet back again.

With a growing P10 million assets, Ayop said the noodle making business will further expand its product line this year.

"We are studying the feasibility of producing canton noodles using squash, moringa, and banana flours in the future. We are currently on the testing stage for the squash," he added. "We will be using the squash harvested from the 4.2 hectare property owned by the cooperative."



EXPANDING EVEN FURTHER

Starting a new business is not actually hard for the cooperative which has been into enterprising since it was registered in 1987 with canteen operation and grocery store as its first lines of business.

Today, a two storey building along the highway of Maco is just one of the fruits of the dedication and commitment of the members to grow its organization aside from its grocery store in the poblacion area of the municipality.

The 363 square meter (sqm) building, which is still yet to be completed will have soon function halls on the second floor while the ground floor is sheltering the cooperative's bakery and refreshment parlor, manufacturing facility for canton noodle making, water refilling center and the gasoline station.



FROM MANUFACTURING BUSINESS TO REAL ESTATE

The VPI Employees Cooperative, meanwhile, has already started its 5-year development plan of 4 hectare property just meters away from the banana plantation.

The property will be developed into a housing project for its members with a component of a land resort and recreational area.

With all these projects on the pipeline, it will not be impossible that the once small cooperative of VPIEMPCO will be soon managing a thriving venture.



Contact Persons:

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Bwnedicto P. Ayop
09177169851

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Jenifer L. Nazareno
09155065902

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Belen Lubay
09357817237

Viscaya Plantation Incorporation
Employees Cooperative
(VPIEMPCO)
Barangay Dumlan, Maco,
Composstela Valley

Vermiculture on the rise

With the country's increasing population, there has been an escalation in wastes as well. Considering this situation, there is indeed an urgent need to address the problem on waste disposal, and vermi composting has been considered as a practical and economic way to properly manage the disposal of biodegradable wastes.

By doing so, the MSMEs in Davao Region do not only take advantage of managing its organic wastes properly, but it maximizes as well the opportunity to produce environment-friendly fertilizers that will reduce the country's reliance to the costly imported and inorganic ones.



TURNING WASTE INTO PROFIT

Kapalong Market Vendors
Association (Kamaveco)

Margarito Gonzales, 51,
Chairman
09214954138

Zenaida Bernardino, 56,
09473255806

Public Market, Maniki, Kapalong,
Davao del Norte

Through a vermiculture project, a coop has realized that there was money to be made from their market wastes.

At first, the members of KAMAVECO had no idea they would evolve from a lending coop in the early 1980s to a sustainable producer of organic fertilizer.

It was easy to think so, since the organization began with a simple operation as they started in the 1980s, evolving throughout the early 1990s with the coop focusing on financial assistance as its thrusts.

Eventually, what used to be the Kapalong Market Vendors Association (KAMAVAS), was encouraged by the Department of Trade and Industry to organize themselves into a cooperative to avail of the assistance by the agency.

The association would eventually partner with the local municipal government to help run the public market comfort room.

In 1999, the organization was assisted by the DTI through a P100,000 loan, which helped assist 120 members and eventually earned the group a good credit rating for payment performance.

In 2014, the group started venturing into vermiculture, owing to the multipurpose nature of the cooperative.



A Way Out of Plant Diseases

Bananas were prone to fusarium wilt, and farmers realized that vermiculture helped reduce the likelihood of the disease to affect the bananas. Eventually, the coop members realized the virtue of making their market wastes put into good use, through the collection of the said waste as a raw material from the public market.

Because of local government support, the group was able to receive a 100-square meter lot for the first batch of vermi beds.

"We decided to start and make 12 vermi beds for ourselves," Margarito Gonzales, 51, chairman, said. However, these were not standard.

The initial vermi beds that the coop used were made from hollow blocks, while an absence of any mechanical device to help with the shredding allowed for only 25 sacks harvested every month.

This made the group's vermiculture project unsustainable, with caretakers having to chop the organic material manually.

While the waste input and other organic material were easy to come by, the sustainability of the yield was being affected as it was not cost effective to produce only a few vermi casts.

Thanks to a DTI shared service facility (SSF) worth 300,000, the coop now enjoys a higher yield from their vermiculture with

the help of one mechanical shredder, a mechanical sieving machine, a vermi tea brewer, and 10 vermi beds.

Yield has increased almost exponentially, with processing easier from start to finish.

"We can't keep up with the demand anymore," said Zenaida Bernardino, 56, and the coop's general manager.

What makes the coop's improved vermi project is its sustainability and how it contributes in the coop's micro-economy.

Members are prioritized over non-members, who do not get tax incentives when they purchase bags.

The vermi bags are distributed throughout the coop to help with their farm output, at a price.

This translates to a large amount of money, as the price of each sack of vermi runs around P280 to P300, but this is still cheaper compared to synthetic fertilizers.

Right now, the coop is figuring out a way to improve their delivery system for both product and input, with customers having to pick up their orders.

Coop management, meanwhile, has had to use a pedicab to collect the sources for their vermi. "Someday, we'll get ourselves a truck," Bernardino said.

Local Government Assistance

At the local government side, the duo admits that it is easy to communicate with officials as they understand the workings of the coop. "One of the high officials is even a member," Zenaida said.

The coop is riding on the LGU's task to implement Republic Act 10068, or the Organic Agriculture Act, with the local Sanggunian adopting an Organic Agriculture ordinance.

The provision of the vermi beds increased the coop's yield almost four times, according to the officials.

They added that the decomposition of the organic material was even faster because of the shredder.

Since 2014, the group has grown from a total of P3 million in assets in 2005 to P20 million as of January 2016.





MARAGUSAN VERMICOMPOSTING:

AIMING FOR LARGER SALES OUTSIDE COMPOSTELA VALLEY

Endowed with nature's bounty, the small town of Maragusan produces some of Philippines' finest quality of fruits and vegetables. Its fertile land and rich agricultural industry has led Maragusan to be hailed as "The Food Bowl of Compostela Valley," and justly so. The vibrant array of fruits and vegetables that Maragusan offers can attest to that claim. Hence, it is no surprise that vermicomposting sprouted in the town. But as the demand for vermicast rose, vermicast processors struggled to meet the market's demands.

Vermicomposting is the process of producing organic fertilizer using earthworms. It wasn't until two years after the vermicast business started that adequate equipment and machinery was provided through the Shared Service Facility (SSF) project of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

The New Albay Vermi-Composting Production was formed by the New Leyte New Albay Multi-Purpose Cooperative (NELNAFARMCO), a cooperative with 60 active members. The vermicomposting began in 2011, where the forefronts of NELNAFARMCO worked mainly with patience and resourcefulness to compensate for the scarce resources.

Working manually with only four vermi beds and no machinery, it took them 1 and a half month to harvest 25 bags of vermicast, which is far below the market's demands. Vermicomposting was very difficult without the needed equipment, said Bevelyn Gonzaga, the NELNAFARMCO manager. It is a stark contrast to the 41 bags of vermicast that they can now harvest in 3 days, under normal conditions.

"The worst that we experienced was when we weren't able to sell anything for 2 months," said Gonzaga.

Recognizing the significance that vermicomposting held for Maragusan, the Department of Trade Industry approved NELNAFARMCO's proposal to be a beneficiary of the Shared Service Facility (SSF) of the Department of Trade and Industry, which is a major component of DTI's MSMED (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Development).

Vermicompost was shown to improve crop yields. It supports microorganisms which makes nutrients more readily available to plants. In effect, plants grow healthier, according to the Philippine Council for Aquatic and Marine Research and Development (PCAMRD).

In 2013 DTI, through the SSF project, provided NELNAFARMCO with the following: a multi-functional shredder machine with 10 HP water cooled diesel engine; a small size, mobile, and steel framed mechanical sieving machine that is powered by 1 HP electric motor single phase; 2 units of vermi tea brewers that has 30 liters capacity, a double barreled agitator, 4 bubbler's that are powered by 2 aquarium aerators, with outlet filters and a faucet dispenser that are entirely made of corrosion resistant materials; and 20 units of 1 meter by 3 meters sized vermi beds. The project was budgeted at P300,000.

The SSF intended to maximize NELNAFARMCO's vermicast production that would boost sales by up to 40%. In 2013, NELNAFARMCO had a total revenue of P168,493. A year later, the total revenue was recorded at P176,851, with an increase of P8,358 in total revenues.

The difference in the vermicomposting processes of the NELFARMCO before the SSF with DTI is significant. Before, they would put worms in a pail where they would pick out the vermicast from the soil by hand. This process is called inayag. The tedious process would need at least 8-10 workers that would finish the job in 2-3 days.



Now that they are using adequate machines and equipment, inayag is no longer practiced. The separation of the vermicast from the soil now takes around 2-3 hours with the use of the mechanical sieving machine. This lessened the labor, too, where the workers are reduced to 4-5 only.

Five years ago, the vermicomposting production struggled to meet the demands of the local market because they lacked the resources to do so, but the difference that SSF with DTI has made has widened the vermicomposting business in Maragusan. Now, NELNAFARMCO is not only able to reach the demands of the local market, they also have their sights set beyond the borders of the town of Maragusan, Compostela Valley.



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NOW THEY HAVE MORE DREAMS

An indigenous peoples weavers' group capitalizes on opportunities in weaving and furniture work

That an indigenous group specializing in manufacturing cultural wear made it to the prestigious Manila FAME is proof enough of the success story that is the Tribal Handicraft Makers Association.

Once focusing only in handicraft, the group was able to avail of the Department of Trade and Industry's Shared Service Facilities (SSF) program, which led the group to acquire two heavy duty sewing machines and two heavy duty edger machines.

In total, the four equipment costs P82,000.

Weaver Felipa "Pipay" Manangka, 45, said that the handicraft project has allowed her people to experience a better life.

The organization was chosen to take part of the prestigious trade fair to showcase authentic tribal wear to a much larger market, through partnerships with the local government and the DTI. The LGU partnership has allowed the group to become one of Kiblawan's tourist attractions, with visitors booking in advance to see the weavers work wonders on the large pedal-type mechanical wooden sewing machine that helps them increase production.

And in the world of the fancy tribal wear, an increase in production means an almost exponential rise in sales, as the threads are highly valued to begin with.

Locally, the government has also mandated the wearing of official tribal wear, an instant captive market for weavers like Pipay.

Pipay has eight children, some of whom she has already sent to school through her earnings making tribal wear and other accessories.

The organization's product line includes woven abaca fabrics, abaca ribbonets, embroidered cloth for table centerpieces and napkins, fashion accessories, and bead products.

The men, too, take part of the industry, making furniture and bamboo gazebos. Other products include cotton and rayon-made fabric, as well as rattan wicker.

The SSF was aimed to generate at least 15 jobs.

Among the fastest selling among the products are the group's tinalak cloths and the shawls, especially during the recent Manila FAME, a prestigious fashion event.

The SSF is part of the Integrated Handicraft Facilities funded by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Before the turnover of the project, the group had already availed of several trainings from the DTI, such as product development and other trainings and seminars.

The products are initially marketed locally, with the products easily accessible to visitors as the site is located by the road side.

Rebecca Camporedondo, 61, acts as the weavers' "mother," guiding them throughout the entire time of their employment as craftsmakers. "It's a major lifestyle change for a lot of them," Camporedondo said.





"Some of them used to rely on farming."

She added that a local government event, the Damsu festival, boosted sales for the craftsmakers, as they were the sole weavers for tribal wear in the area.

During the festival, representatives from the different tribes in Kiblawan parade and show their culture in an elaborate display of colorful tribal designs symbolic of their heritage.

Moreover, the exposure and fast sale of their products also improved the lives of the members of the organization.

Suddenly there's now money in case of emergencies, as well as money for food and other necessities, she said.

"In the past, a lot of them would experience 'zero balance,'" she said, referring to the old lifestyles of her friends.

She added that the indigenous peoples in the area used to be resigned to the idea of a lifetime of farming or being in the hinterlands. "Now, their children have dreams."

According to Pipay, being part of the organization and getting to use tools that improved their chances at earning money also led to a change in mindset.

"People think that when they receive things from other people, that is enough," she said.

"People need to reach a point when they would no longer need to ask for things."

According to Pipay, this was the philosophy that allowed the group to realize that what they are doing is for a common good.

Not only are the members of the organization earning money from what they are doing, they are also part of the preservation of their culture.

"We've designed the program to focus on the B'laan culture," Camporedondo said.

During traditional events, the items adorn the IPs from head to foot, which increases the odds that their products get a steady supply of attention from both IP and non-IPs.

"Bamboo craft orders, on the other hand, are continuous, for example beds and sala sets." In October last year, the group was able to carry their products to Abreeza Mall during a trade fair.

Indeed, they have gone a long way. And in their area, there are dozens who are like Pipay. Those who now live a better life because of the assistance they got.

This, to her, is what dreams are made of: that ecstasy of watching her children enjoy a better life. Asked what else her dreams were, Pipay said she was already there.

"This phone," she said, pointing to her gadget. "I had no idea I would be able to buy one."

Rebecca Camporedondo, 61, acts as the weavers' role model and guide.



Tribal Handicraft Makers Association

District II-Poblacion, Kiblawan, Davao del Sur

Pelipa "Pipay" Manangkan, 45
8 Children

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BuB: Helping the Grassroots Move Forward

The Bottom-Up Budgetting (BuB) is an initiative of the Philippines government that is aimed at increasing citizens' access to local service delivery through a demand-driven budget planning process and strengthening government accountability in local public service provision.

As such, it is ultimately anchored on achieving the goals stipulated in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP), particularly the attainment of inclusive growth and poverty reduction, while promoting good governance at the local level.

With this objective of the government, DTI was named as among the government agencies that are mandated to work closely with the local government units (LGUs) in identifying

and implementing projects and interventions that are of utmost important to a specific community.

In 2014, DTI-Davao Region was able to implement 22 projects with total cost of P10,517,587. The following year, the agency funded 21 projects from its BuB budget of 15,125,000.

These projects include Shared Service Facility (SSF), Industry Clustering Development Program, Pasalubong Center, Yaman Pinoy and Local Economic Development.

Since BuB started, the office has already assisted a total of 22 LGUs in Davao Region.



Tagabawa Ilonggo, Muslim, Bisaya Association (TIMBA) Timbang Swerte Dala ng Kendi

The bestseller polvoron of TIMBA

What used to be an idle community has been turned into a thriving settlement of up and coming entrepreneurs. Who would have thought that this would even be possible?

Everything started so quick after Tagabawa Ilonggo, Muslim, Bisaya Association (TIMBA) came into being on February 5, 2009, just so women in Riverside Zone IV, Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur would have something to make of their time.

TIMBA started out with candy making such as sampalok, piniato, pilipit, peanut toron, sweet coco, and special polvoron, which are sold to the small sari-sari stores around Sta. Cruz.

All women and children in their community have been tapped to make these candies and native delicacies and they get paid for the day's work – the women earn extra income while the children would have money to help in their schooling.

Ramon Susano Jr., the association president, smiled in disbelief as he walked us down the memory lane and looked back at all the challenges that they successfully won over.

Most of the TIMBA members drew their livelihood from the nearby river by collecting sediments in exchange for money. This became like clockwork for most of them until they were formally organized seven years ago.

Not only was it labor-intensive, it was a pain in the back, too.

Susano saw this problem at hand and worked his way out to help these residents climb out of poverty.

With collective time and effort, TIMBA members hatched the candy-making venture in 2009 by pooling in P3,000 capital from among themselves.

He said he knew of a friend, a TIMBA member, who has knack for cooking candies. Soon after, TIMBA was able to make the first batch of candies that sold like hotcakes.

With a perfect mix of hard work and tenacity, the business was growing too fast, as they tapped the sari-sari stores nearby. But success did not come easy for TIMBA members. It was still vivid in Susano's memory that evening of April 26, 2012 when a strong downpour caused the river to swell and wiped out a portion of this community.

They saved nothing but themselves, he said. All of their hopes had been washed away while their dreams for a brighter future had collapsed to the ground. The business that they painstakingly managed to grow for four years vanished from their sight in a snap.

Distraught by the incident, it was easy to just scrap their dreams and went on their separate ways, back to the river where they would collect sediments.

This was not so for the members. This major setback as of yet did not dampen their spirit just like that. Soon, they got back on their feet. An opportunity lost can also be an opportunity to start again, he said.

In 2013, they heard about the program of Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) dubbed "Grassroots Participatory Budgeting Process-Local Poverty Reduction Action Program (GPBP-LPRAP)", now known as the Bottom-Up Budgeting (BuB).

The BuB is "an approach to preparing the budget proposal of agencies, taking into consideration the development needs of cities/municipalities as identified in their respective local poverty reduction action plans that shall be formulated with strong participation of basic sector organizations and other civil society organizations."

Six large cauldrons, two electric fans, two mono-block tables, three working stainless tables, three stainless basins, plastic basin, safety box, 12 chairs, trays, and three stoves were handed to them during the last quarter of 2014.

From Mondays to Fridays, the mothers and seniors could be found at a packing area, working on the candies for the following day's delivery while students take shifts on weekends. He said TIMBA now enjoys producing in large volumes, as they deliver candies to stores around Sta. Cruz and neighboring Digos City.

He said their products will be present in Cotabato City soon.

"Our production is faster and easier on our part. Before, we pound the peanuts manually using bottle, if not mortar and pestle, but now we have a grinder," he said.

Susano also prides that they manage to generate P40,444 in sales a month, more than two-fold increase as compared to P15,000 before DTI support.

He hopes that the next generation leaders of TIMBA would push the wheels of the association more than what they do today.

TIMBA, or pail in English, is no longer suggestive of a tool in which they used to collect stones but of a brand behind which is a story from rugs to riches.

Soon, TIMBA would venture into processed meat products such tocino, chorizo and nuggets and will be available in supermarkets eventually.





MADE with the RIGHT STUFF

Among the LGU's products is tablea, made from their own cacao yields.

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An agrarian reform beneficiaries organization in Davao del Norte has found a niche growing the raw materials for everyone's favorite comfort food: chocolate.

Erlinda Andaya, 62, a community leader of Purok 5A, Tugas, Sto. Nino, in Talaingod, Davao del Norte, has a word for the right stuff that is needed to grow cacao and the other crops their organization of 28 beneficiaries. The right stuff, she said, is attitude, kinaiyahan in the local language, which also translates to environment.

Kinaiyahan also literally translates to that which is ours, and there is nothing more apt than to use a term that describes identity, ownership and surroundings with that which is needed for any organization to grow.

Andaya's civil society organization received 120,000 seedlings distributed to 28 recipients under the national government's bottom-up-budgeting, coursed through the local government and agencies like the Department of Trade and Industry.

According to Andaya, their group initially hesitated to accept new technologies when it came to their crops. In fact, before there was a global demand for cacao, the farmers in the area had given up on the cash crop, burning some of these for firewood and planting other crops instead.

But this would change, when the world would change the way it looked at cacao and how chocolates were made.

"Eventually, we were introduced to seedlings such as UF18," Andaya said.

Andaya said that, like many other organizations, theirs was tight knit but went through so many changes along the years of their existence.

"People argue sometimes, but here, we've learned to settle our differences and remind ourselves that we need to do hard work together," she said.

The choice of cacao as the main crop in the area was no accident, with the local government unit of Davao del Norte closely monitoring the farming of the crop.

Cacao, in particular, was selected as the province's main crop in its investment plan submitted to the Philippine Rural Development Program.

Zooming in on the source, the World Bank is funding P27.5 billion for the PRDP, which includes cacao as one of the main crops being supported in different areas in the country.

And in this important chain of farms from all over the Philippines, Talaingod stands out on many fronts.

For example, the drought that is being suffered by a large number of provinces in the Philippines has barely made its way in the region.

"I think we're lucky to be where we are," Andaya said. "We've heard that the drought is worse in other areas."

This love affair between the province and the crop is known throughout Philippine agricultural history.

In 2013 alone, Davao del Norte made up for 371.82 metric

tons of cocoa produced in the country, with an average yield of 0.36 metric tons per hectare.

Production volume in Davao del Norte increased from 313.87 metric tons per hectare in 2009 to 371.82 metric tons per hectare in 2013, translating to an average growth rate of 3.69% for those years alone.

Among the regions, this growth rate is high, next only to Davao City's 6.58% for the same period. The Davao Region dominates the cacao industry in Mindanao, with 70% comprising the hectareage in the island group.

The region produced 3,884.30 MT of cocoa beans in 2013. Regional production volume had a rate of 1.9% while annual increase in areas planted with cacao reached 1% per year.

But what do these numbers mean for farmers like Erlinda? Demand was a constant blessing, with several of the members already motivated to keep planting the crop because of its effect to the farmers since the BuB project was implemented.



Erlinda Andaya believes that the right attitude and a strength of character is needed to make it in cacao farming, aside from the luck of being in the middle of increased global demand for the crop.





BuB

ROLLING TWINE OF SUCCESS

A group of women have found that success and strength could come from the flimsiest of objects. The women of the Barangay Sagayen Council of Women (BCW), in Asuncion, Davao del Norte at first had no idea about the potentials of coco coir as a business venture.

With the help of government support and a bottom-up-budgeting (BuB) program, the women were able to earn additional income with a simple device.

The BuB program, which was assisted by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), allowed 14 women from the BCW to tie up twine and make it a productive part of their lives.

"The first of us who started rolling twine were met with ridicule from our neighbors," Barangay Councilor Mercill Tagnipis said.

Eventually, the women found out how much help the twine would provide, the twine eventually becoming a potent symbol for their will to rise from challenges that faced their means of living. From only a handful, more women joined up and started with the latest livelihood.

The BuB project allowed the council of women to acquire 30 bicycle-type twining machines that could be manually operated by two to three people. One rolls the wheel, while one or two other pull and twists the resulting twine from the raw coco coir.





For faster processing, the DTI also provided 60 improvised twining machines that made use of ceiling fans rigged with hooks. This way, a solo twine weaver could simply hook up the coir and let the makeshift device do most of the work.

However, the twine would face another obstacle: the weather. In the absence of rains, the hydro power plants in Mindanao lacked sufficient power supply and left various parts of the grid with hours of blackouts in early 2016.

But the women of Sagayen were not to be uprooted from their livelihood.

To address the issue, the members of the BCW took to the mechanical twining machine and sought for help from their own families. The children would help pull the twines as these were roped, while the mothers would roll the bicycle wheels that make up the contraption. The power shortage did not stop anybody from the livelihood. It has become a family affair.

Suddenly, the group found themselves the recipients of a steady income from virtually nothing except coco fiber and free time.

Jeraldine Caturay, 26, said she was able to band together at least 20 pieces of twine every day. "It's as easy as it looks," she said, clearly amused by the ingenuity of the contraption.

"All you do is line up the coir, roll the wheel and manage the sturdy coir that comes out of the equipment," she said.

While appearing flimsy, what with the material being the coir from the coconut's husk, the resulting twine is unbelievably strong.

In fact, the Department of Public Works and Highways regularly uses the material to protect critical slopes, disturbed soils, and embankments.

The narrow twine ropes are netted together into geonets, which provide up to 150N in tensile strength, according to a department order from the agency. Private companies, too, avail of the product.

This is where the women of the barangay council have found refuge, that in the churning of simple coco coirs, productivity could be achieved as simply as the turning of the wheel.

At P2 per twine, the products may not seem much, but for these women, the additional income augments their financial needs. Now there is money for a sack of rice every month. School supplies, even. Those who were at first laughed at now had money to save up for every Christmas celebration.

The Barangay Council of Women, thanks to the BuB, have learned not only to make something of their free time but also how to weave a strong life together. As an organization, they realized that community-building begins with the simple ties that bind. And what better metaphor can we give than the gift of the coir.



Automated Taxation Process Improves Business in San Isidro

The Municipality of San Isidro is home to over 30,000 people, while its lush forests serve as a wildlife sanctuary. Although this quaint and picturesque gulf town is generously endowed with natural resources, the local government unit of San Isidro relies on businesses and taxation for its local income. However, it was difficult for San Isidro to meet their local income target goal. Apparently, the lack of an automated taxation process was what hindered the Municipality of San Isidro to reach its goal.

The Local Government Unit (LGU) of the Municipality of San Isidro sources out income from business permits, licenses, and local taxes. However, the tedious manual taxation process took too much time and had a higher rate of human error. This discouraged potential small businesses from applying, and tax bills weren't easily generated. In effect, the municipality's local income took a dent.

Having identified the culprit of this problem, San Isidro began to reform their Business Processing and Licensing System (BPLS). In a joint effort with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) through the Bottom-Up Budgeting (BuB) system, San Isidro was given appropriate budget to buy additional laptop computers and printers to enable fast and effective processing and licensing system that could benefit the entire municipality.

In 2012, the municipality of San Isidro, Mati City implemented the reforms in their BPLS

in the hopes that it would increase the revenue generation of the municipality. This streamlined system uses a "Unified Form" which shortens the procedures in acquiring business permits and licenses by lessening the number signatories.

Improving the BPLS is just part of what their Municipal Mayor Justina MB. Yu has envisioned for the municipality.

"I imagined San Isidro to have this kind of interface," said the mayor. "I was a mayor who had a forward vision. In terms of activities, I don't want San Isidro to be left out," she added.

Before the BPLS in San Isidro was enhanced, acquiring a business permit could take 3-7 days of processing time. The applicant should also obtain signatures from 8 regulatory officers. The processing time only begins after the applicant has submitted all the necessary requirements. Since completion of the requirements alone could take days, the applicants opt to leave their forms instead and return at their available time. This tedious process sometimes discourages potential businessmen to acquire a business permit, says Eden N. Rañises, the ICO municipal officer.

The high percentage of human error in encoding the correct information submitted by the applicants was difficult to correct, explained Rañises. The manual encoding and organizing process was tedious and took up a lot of time. In addition, printing

costs also added to the operational cost of the previous BPLS.

The San Isidro Municipal Treasury Office (MTO) did not find it difficult to transition to the new system at all, says Rañises. After being provided with the budget to acquire laptop computers and printers and to hold trainings and seminars, San Isidro immediately handled all business permits and licenses in a matter of minutes. Because the signatories were limited to two instead of the previous eight, the process can be finished within a day, says Rañises.

This statement was mirrored by the San Isidro Local Enterprise, Investment, and Promotions Officer (LEIPO) Ma. Theresa D. Arancana. "We are slowly promoting local tourism to invite locals to invest in small businesses," said Arancana.

For the Municipal Mayor Yu, San Isidro is vastly improving in business and tourism. As the city welcomes at most 300 tourists a day, business in San Isidro is alive, even during the night. During the evenings, San Isidro is alive with a growing night market, cinemas, and other forms of entertainment.

Mayor Yu hopes that in the near future, San Isidro would also be able to run paperless transactions.

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DTI-XI AT YOUR SERVICE

The Department of Trade and Industry-XI is the first regional government agency in the country to receive an ISO 9001: 2000 Quality Management System certification, along with its field offices namely: DTI Davao del Sur Provincial Office, DTI Davao del Norte Provincial Office, DTI Davao Oriental Provincial Office, DTI Compostela Valley Program Office, and DTI Davao City Field Office.

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NEGOSYO CENTER

The Negosyo Center is a one-stop shop for services intended to support existing and start-up small business



What is Negosyo Center?

- It is a one-stop shop for services intended to support existing and start – up small businesses.
- Its establishment is provided for in Republic Act No.10644 (Go Negosyo Act) authored by Senator Paolo Benigno "Bam" Aquino IV, and was signed into law on July 15, 2014.
- It provides an array of services categorized into three major classifications:
 - a) business s registration assistance
 - b) business advisory
 - c) business information and advocacy
- It also conducts several training programs to further develop MSMEs

