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RURAL ORGANIZATIONS
ARE NATURAL PARTNERS**

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This publication contains articles on the latest technologies, research results, updates, and breakthroughs in agriculture and fisheries R&D based from the studies and researches conducted by the National Research & Development System for Agriculture and Fisheries (NaRDSAF).

BAR R&D Digest welcomes comments and suggestions from readers.

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R&D NOTES

by DR. NICOMEDES P. ELEAZAR, CESO IV

BAR and RURAL ORGANIZATIONS are natural partners



As far back as can be remembered, BAR and its forerunner, the Agricultural Research Office (MAF-ARO) of the then Ministry of Agriculture and Food, have engaged community-based groups in on-farm research activities. Over the years, from farming systems research and provincial technology verification trials, on to community-participatory action research and technology commercialization, farmers' associations, cooperatives and other community organizations have been constantly present.

It is but natural that BAR gravitates to these organizations as it is only through organized groups that the small farmers can be effectively assisted. When farmers are brought together, their thin resources

and weak voices can become strong enough to bring about improvements in the rural setting.

The country's agriculture is geographically scattered and, therefore, development has to be brought to the countryside. This is best done as self-sustained development which can be achieved through self-help organizations at the community level. As collectives, rural organizations can serve as the linkage for the flow of resources for much needed development.

Former Agriculture Secretary Yap once said that agriculture is business. This being the case, it is a must that agriculture be an organized endeavor if production is to be competitive and sustainable. For DA and BAR, it is but logical

that such organizations be sought out and mobilized for profit and welfare.

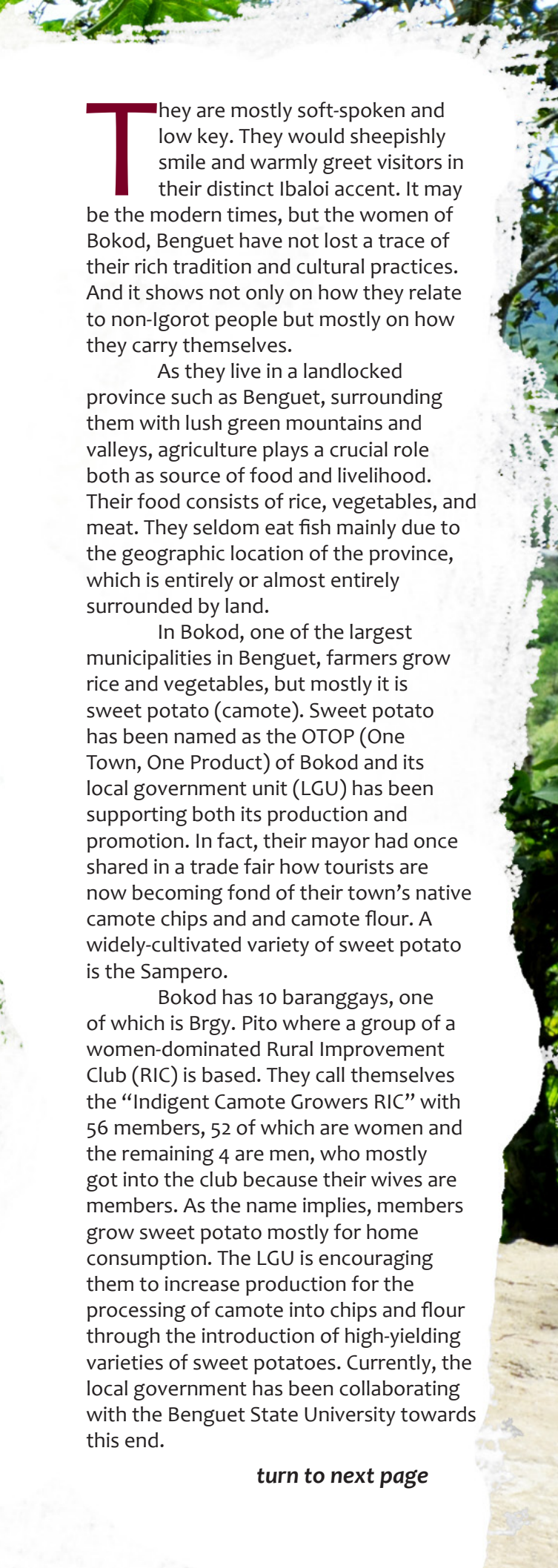
According to Deogracias Vistan, former LandBank President, among the rural organizations, the cooperative is deemed as "the most effective rural organization capable of unifying diffused individual power and abilities of small producers and consumers". The major task of cooperatives is to facilitate the redistribution of wealth and income. They serve as a means to increase participation, broaden ownership of investments, facilitate capital formation, and secure credits for establishing business enterprises. Thus, agricultural cooperatives can be catalysts for agricultural development.

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Women-led, indigent group discovers potential of Native chicken

by RITA T. DELA CRUZ





They are mostly soft-spoken and low key. They would sheepishly smile and warmly greet visitors in their distinct Ibaloi accent. It may be the modern times, but the women of Bokod, Benguet have not lost a trace of their rich tradition and cultural practices. And it shows not only on how they relate to non-Igorot people but mostly on how they carry themselves.

As they live in a landlocked province such as Benguet, surrounding them with lush green mountains and valleys, agriculture plays a crucial role both as source of food and livelihood. Their food consists of rice, vegetables, and meat. They seldom eat fish mainly due to the geographic location of the province, which is entirely or almost entirely surrounded by land.

In Bokod, one of the largest municipalities in Benguet, farmers grow rice and vegetables, but mostly it is sweet potato (camote). Sweet potato has been named as the OTOP (One Town, One Product) of Bokod and its local government unit (LGU) has been supporting both its production and promotion. In fact, their mayor had once shared in a trade fair how tourists are now becoming fond of their town's native camote chips and and camote flour. A widely-cultivated variety of sweet potato is the Sampero.

Bokod has 10 baranggays, one of which is Brgy. Pito where a group of a women-dominated Rural Improvement Club (RIC) is based. They call themselves the "Indigent Camote Growers RIC" with 56 members, 52 of which are women and the remaining 4 are men, who mostly got into the club because their wives are members. As the name implies, members grow sweet potato mostly for home consumption. The LGU is encouraging them to increase production for the processing of camote into chips and flour through the introduction of high-yielding varieties of sweet potatoes. Currently, the local government has been collaborating with the Benguet State University towards this end.

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BAR and rural...from page 3

Progressive farmers' associations have the ability to facilitate the adoption of new technologies and inputs, encouraging greater productivity and crop diversification, linking of small farmers to markets, and serving as a platform for small producers in decisions that affect their livelihood.

Agricultural cooperatives and farmers' associations are important in the implementation of BAR's banner programs, the Community-based Participatory Action Research (CPAR) and the National Technology Commercialization Program (NTCP), whose end goal is the empowerment of the community through the introduction of technologies and research-generated information that could lead to improved income and productivity for the individual farmer, and profitable enterprises and agribusiness ventures for the community. Through its banner programs and rural organizations, the bureau is able to assist communities in overcoming the constraint of limited access to information, services and markets.

Adaptation and verification research are conducted in farmers' fields with the participation of cooperatives, farmers' organizations and local government units in identified areas. Through this direct approach, CPAR-funded projects are addressing gaps in technologies to make them more appropriate to the farmers' available resources and conditions. Under NTCP projects, mature technologies and research breakthroughs have become the basis for developing profitable rural enterprises. Through these banner programs, the farmers and communities are also sensitized to the value of information-based decision making. To strengthen rural organizations, BAR has made it a policy to deal only with duly recognized agricultural cooperatives and farmers' associations on the funding and implementation of CPAR and NTCP projects.

In this issue of the BAR R&D Digest, we give tribute to agricultural cooperatives and farmers' associations by showcasing some of their projects assisted by BAR's banner programs that have enabled them to bring about economic improvement in their respective localities. The important role of women in development is also brought to the fore in these examples. ###

RICs are rural or barangay-based organization located all over the country with the aim of uplifting the living standard of its members and making them effective and productive partners of the government in community development. It's a joined initiative of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and LGU to also encourage rural women in livelihood ventures by becoming self-reliant and skillful in entrepreneurship through trainings and seminars provided through various assistance projects.

Planting camote and raising native chicken

The two may not seem to jibe at first, but think again and one will find the link.

Josefa Sapdit, agricultural technologist of LGU-Bokod, seemed to agree. *“Naging complementary ang pagpoproduce ng camote at pag-aalaga ng manok. Here, they raise chicken in range-type and farmers don't usually buy feeds. They utilized what is available in their garden. Aside from camote they also grow high value vegetable, which they feed to the chicken.”*

The “Indigent Camote Growers RIC” was chosen as

the beneficiary of a project, “Comparative Performance and Community-based Production of Native Chicken” implemented by DA-CAR Integrated Agricultural Research Center (CIARC) and funded by the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR). *“Napili ang RIC na ito dahil sa kapuripuri nilang interest na magalaga ng native chicken. Agad silang nagpatayo ng manukan kaya madali silang nabigyan ng manok mula sa proyekto,”* explained Sapdit.

She elaborated that, while the group is mostly composed of camote farmers, the LGU introduced raising native chicken to supplement their food requirement and serve as additional source of income for the members. “We saw great potential in this project because for one, native chicken is easy to raise and manage. It's a good source of protein since pork is expensive here. They are also assured that what they are eating is safe since they are the ones raising them and it is free from antibiotics,” shared Sapdit.

“In a way, raising native chicken has also become an education endeavor for the children as they themselves are learning. The farmer-

cooperators have a sense of ownership on the project. They know that this is not a dole-out project of the government and so, they value what was given to them,” she added.

Experiencing the benefits

From the 56 members of the RIC, 10 became farmer-beneficiaries of the project, 6 and 4 from batch 1 and 2, respectively. The first dispersal was in September 2012 wherein the first 6 members were given 7 heads of native chicken (5 hens, 2 roosters) each. Six months after, dispersal for the second batch was conducted for the four farmer-members of the RIC.

“We implemented the roll-over scheme wherein, the 10 farmer-beneficiaries will have to



escalate the numbers of chicken and they will be the one to disperse them to other farmer-members of the RIC,” explained Sapdit. Prior to the dispersal or distribution of native chicken, the farmer-beneficiaries attended a training and seminar on native chicken production to better equip them.

One of the 10 farmer-beneficiaries is Marcela Asim, 49. She is the current president of the RIC. In an interview, she shared how the native chicken project was able to raise their level of productivity. *“Malaki ang naitulong sa amin ng proyektong ito dahil nga camote lang ang tinatanim namin, malaking tulong ang pag-aalaga ng manok bilang dagdag pagkain at kita sa mga miyembro.”* She hoped that their

RIC will be able to sustain the project and hopes that the initial beneficiaries will be able to disperse to other members as well.

Another beneficiary is Mercedes Agwasil, 51. She was one of the first batches that received the 7 heads of native chicken in 2012. That year, she reported that she was able to disperse to another member of the RIC. *“Maraming tulong ang mga manok na naibigay sa amin kasi naibenta rin namin yung iba, at nagamit sa pangangailangan ng pamilya lalo na sa school ng mga bata,”* she happily shared.

To sustain the project, all the first 10 farmer-beneficiaries were required to return 7 heads of native chicken to other members of the association.

“This will continue until every member has been given their initial stocks,” explained Sapdit.

When asked for the success rate of their scheme, she said *“Sa 10 na farmer-cooperators natin, may 80 percent ang naging matagumpay. Matagumpay kase nasunod nila yung pinagkasunduan sa proyekto na dapat nilang gawin which is yung redispersal to their co-members.”* ###

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Empowering women and understanding the roles they play in the society is one of the current agenda of the government. Women are left at home performing the roles of a typical housewife. Men, on the other hand, are task to financially provide for their families. But in the modern time, men and women have pertinent responsibilities in the society and are now exploring equal roles and opportunities. In particular, housewives can now provide income for their families.

One group that epitomizes empowered women in modern time is the Kalipunan ng Liping Pilipina, Inc. (KALUPI) Tagkawayan Chapter, Inc., a successful recipient of government support. The group is based in Tagkawayan, Quezon wherein members are mostly

composed of women weavers who are engaged in abaca handicraft-making. Their projects titled include “Promotion and Commercialization of Abaca Handicrafts” and “Utilization and Conservation of Indigenous Natural Fibers towards Micro-enterprise Development for Women”.

Given the existing abaca plants growing in the municipality, the projects were conceptualized in 2011. Abaca are harvested by farmers and are brought to traders in Bicol as fibers which are then bailed, graded, and recorded as Bicol produce.

“We realized that if we train our women members to make crafts out of our own abaca, this might be a good livelihood opportunity for them.

KALUPI is already an existing organization involved in the production of various products which is a source of livelihood for members. It is a national organization and Tagkawayan Chapter is just one of the member organizations,” explained Ms. Myra Frondoso, project leader.

Members attended “Livelihood Training for Women Leader” to equip them with the know-how on abaca papermaking, macramé (knotting) making, and handicraft weaving including bags, baskets, and planters. A similar training was also hosted for KALUPI members.

Men, particularly husbands of women members, also attended trainings and they themselves enjoyed the production of abaca handicrafts. The group has seen the potential of indigenous plants and widely



cultivated natural resources in their area, maximizing potential and utilization.

Realizing the potential of other indigenous fibers as source of materials for handicraft making and further increase the income of women in their areas, KALIPI members is exploring other local materials like pandan plant.

During the trainings, members already showed interest in what particular product are they're going to pursue. Some chose abaca scrunch-making while others drew their attention on twines and pandan. KALIPI members also requested for handicrafts making using other raw materials available in the area such as ting-ting (coconut midrib) and rattan leaves.

Php 1,500 while bags made from abaca scrunch is sold for Php 25.00 each.

"The project has improved the quality of their produce providing them a relatively good price and profit. Handicraft making and selling is already in the hands of members." Ms. Frondoso shared.

"Noong una po ay maliit ang kinikita namin kasi mababa lang po namin binebenta ang aming mga produkto. Ngayon po dahil sa magagandang design at quality ng aming mga produkto, may magandang presyo na ang mga ito," said Ellen Iglesia, KALIPI President, Brgy. Mapulot.

"Malaking tulong po para sa aming mga kababaihan ang

friendly packaging materials.

With the increasing number of municipalities prohibiting the use of plastic bags, members see another potential advantage of their produce. "Training was concentrated on bag making as these are good replacement for plastic bags." Ms. Frondoso said.

The pandan bags are sold at Php 100 a piece. Kilog and uway, on the other hand, are used for basket-making.

A nursery and abaca technology demonstration farm was established and maintained in the Tagkawayan Agri-park in Brgy. Bambang. This aim is to expand areas of production of priority indigenous fibers for raw materials and hopefully people in

KALIPI:

Making a name for their export-quality handicrafts

by MA. ELOISA H. AQUINO

Existing areas where natural fibers are abundantly growing have been initially mapped out. Identified areas of pandan and abaca plant were in Brgy. Mapulot in the Municipality of Tagkawayan, Quezon. Other kinds of natural fibers (uway, kilog, and rattan) were sourced out in Brgy. Casispalan.

The five hectare abaca plantation is owned by Mr. Johnny Papellero who solely supplies the required abaca fiber for P100.00 per kilo. KALIPI Tagkawayan Chapter is now producing a total of 15 pieces of lampshades which are being sold during trade fairs. A 38-inch tall lampshade costs

proyekto at pondong binigay ng DA-BAR. Sa pamamagitan nila napaganda namin ang aming mga produkto na dati ay nabebenta lang namin sa mababang halaga. Malaki ang pinagbago ng aming mga produkto sa pamamagitan ng mga trainings," shared Inocencia Paruja, KALIPI president, Brgy. Casispalan.

Other than providing livelihood opportunities for rural folks, the projects have created awareness regarding the need for conservation and propagation of indigenous plants. Also, offering an alternative source of native, biodegradable and environment

the municipality will appreciate and revive abaca production. "We are hoping that in 10 years we'll have our own bailing and grading station so that our own fiber will get recognition," Ms. Frondoso added.

Members of the KALIPI Tagkawayan Chapter acknowledged BAR's support in their endeavors. The bureau, through its National Technology Commercialization Program (NTCP), is supporting two projects on the promotion and commercialization of abaca handicrafts and utilization and conservation of indigenous natural fibers towards micro-

enterprise development for women.

“The BAR-NTCP has not only provided us with the initial capital to fund our activities but has also provided a venue for us to improve and market our products. We have become more aware of market trends and demands. The NTCP gave the commodity – abaca, a new light. That abaca should not be disregarded as a farm crop and that it is still a lucrative livelihood for handicraft makers.” Ms. Frondoso said.

BAR also provided support for the conduct of trainings of KALIPI members with resource speakers coming from Fiber Industry Development Authority, Department of Science and Technology, and Department of Trade and Industry.

“Sila po ay nakapagbibigay ng karagdagang kaalaman at kita para sa aming mga kababaihan upang makatulong sa aming mga pamilya. Naibigay po namin sa kanila ang pangunahing pangangailangan nila lalo’t higit sa kanilang pag-aaral,” said Ms. Emily

de Castro KALIPI President, Brgy. Colong-Colong.

The local government unit (LGU) plays a significant role in helping the project and its activities sustainable. In fact, LGU serves as one of its vehicle for product promotion. “Sustainability and expansion will be in the hands of the members, KALIPI though, will still provide support in terms of training, promotion, and development of products in terms of design,” Ms. Frondoso explained.

She is still proud to say that even with a handful of KALIPI members now, emergent skills and interests were developed. Former housewives now gained confidence and able to augment their source of income for their families. Husbands who are known for farming or doing the production aspect are now also into tambomaking.

Members also join national and local agricultural trade fairs and exhibits to promote their products and

establish market networks and linkages. For the past two years, KALIPI members are in-charge of making Christmas décors for the LGU and at the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Church. They have been a frequent and visible exhibitor of DA-BAR’s National Technology Forum. The KALIPI Tagkawayan Chapter has developed several designs utilizing indigenous fibers which are included in the promotional materials of the Department of Agriculture.

To be able to have an established outlet and able to be a well-known export product, the group never lost hope in attaining these goals. The KALIPI Tagkawayan Chapter is now locally making a name in the handicrafts industry with their scrunch for handicrafts, lampshades, souvenir leis, abaca special paper, scrunch sheets, pandan bags, and baskets among their many already known products. ###

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Mulanay Women's Rise to Fame

by PATRICK RAYMUND A. LESACA

Women and the role that they play in the society are contributory to the changing agricultural landscape. Women-led organizations are gaining stature, influencing agribusiness operations and other livelihood activities, which were used to be dominated by men.

The Rural Improvement Club (RIC) Federation of Mulanay is one good example of an organized group that is providing economic opportunities to their members, neighboring barangays and municipalities. The Mulanay RIC is a barangay-based women's organization supported by the local government through the Office of the Municipal Agriculturist (OMA). Although it was created in 1995, the RIC did little contribution in terms of livelihood development not until the federation was selected as one of the direct beneficiaries of government-funded projects.

Specifically, these are two projects on "Native Swine for Lechon De Leche Production Project: Improving Feed Availability through Integration of Sakwa as Forage Feed in Coconut-



According to Normita A. Labor, agricultural technician, OMA and RIC coordinator, “naging aktibo ang RIC sa mga meetings at mga aktibidades para sa mga kababaihan.” “Nang dumating ang programa, naging interesado kami at dito nagsimula ang lahat. Sa pamamagitan ng programa, nagkaroon ng pagkakaisa at kompiyansa sa sarili ang bawat isa at ang bawat RIC member. Nagkaroon ng puhunan na baboy at ito ay babayaran sa maluwag na pamamaraan. Nagkaroon din kami ng pagkakakitaan at nakatulong sa pagpapa-aaral ng mga anak at sa iba pang pangangailangan ng aming pamilya. Nakilala din ang RIC Mulanay sa pamamagitan ng native swine at iba pang produkto na ginagawa ng samahan,” Labor explained.



To date, there are 35 active members of the RIC in Brgy. Lantangan, Mulanay and most of them are all successful swine raisers. The entire membership in the whole municipality has now reached 569, all of which are engaged in various livelihood activities.

based Production Systems” in 2009 and “Agricultural Systems Approach to the Commercialization of Native Swine in Quezon” in 2011. These projects are funded under the Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR) through its National Technology Commercialization Program (NTCP).

the breeding operation and improves the supply chain system starting from animal feed production, breeding, fattening, marketing, processing and distribution until it reaches the end-consumers.

These projects aim to maximize the use of Sakwa or the bulb of Gabing San Fernando, a locally available feeds, for native swine production, which can be given fresh or boiled along with feed concentrates at the finishing stage. It also supports

Prior to their involvement in the project, most of the women were engaged in vegetable farming, tending small ruminants, assisting their husbands in coconut de-husking (pagkokopra), and vending fruits and vegetables. It was in 2009 that the federation received financial support from BAR for the implementation of the two projects.

The projects were implemented by the UPLB Foundation Inc. through the Farming Systems and Soil Resources Institute, University of the Philippines Los Baños (FSSRI-UPLB) in collaboration with the OMA of Mulanay, San Narciso, Quezon, Infanta and Real; Provincial Veterinarian of Quezon; Bureau of Animal Industry-National Swine and Poultry Research Development Center; Social Action Center, Prelature of Infanta; and RIC of Mulanay.

Since becoming a partner of the native swine project, the organization received national and

provincial commendations on agri-based livelihood projects including the “Outstanding RIC for the province of Quezon” in August 2012. Ms. Nelia R. Mercurio, president of the Mulanay RIC Federation, 2012 Gawad Saka Regional Winner, likewise bagged the 2012 Outstanding Rural Women.

Impacts and Milestones

Strings of success followed the RIC as the project-cooperators were able to utilize their 1,000 to 3,000 sq.m. area for sakwa, Trichantera, and kangkong –which they use as alternative sources of feeds. Based on economic indicator assessment conducted by the project proponents, the estimated additional annual income of the farmer-beneficiaries for piglet production (two-sow level) is P20,000.00, while the lechon size production is PhP 33,000.00 over a period of 28 months. Moreover,

the native swine production in the province is becoming a lucrative business.

The native swine project in Mulanay is doing well in terms of project implementation and production, and thus generating economic activities. These are in the form of selling hogs to the market, reduced production cost due to cheaper feeds and more importantly the availability of swine for the roasted sucking pig (lechon de leche) in domestic market.

When asked how the project improved the lives of the Mulanay women, Labor said “*malaki ang naging improvement sa pamumuhay ng bawat kasapi, nagkaroon ang bawat isa ng adhikain sa buhay. Nakatulong sa asawa, nakapag-aral ang mga anak, at sa iba pang pangangailangang financial. Malaki ang pasasalamat ng RIC sa mga nagbigay ng proyekto sa malaking improvement sa aming*

pamumuhay.”

In terms of future plans, the RIC wishes to have their own meat processing facility to process their own produce which will provide additional income to their members. In just two years of operation, they have come a long way from an almost inactive organization with no means of major livelihood activities, into an award-winning organization brought about by the native swine project of BAR-UPLB. ###

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Arubub womenfolk working on PEANUT MAGIC

by VICTORIANO B. GUIAM



In peanut farming, women take part in planting, weeding, harvesting and postharvest operations more so than the men. But it is in food processing that the contribution of women is noteworthy. Womenfolk of Barangay Arubub and other barangays in Jones were given training on peanut food processing business enterprise in 2008 and this proved useful in the establishment of peanut processed food enterprises.

The latest peanut R&D project to impact Jones, particularly Barangay Arubub, is the Community-based Participatory Action Research (CPAR) project titled, “Peanut MAGIC: CPAR Approach Towards Enhanced Productivity in Cereal-Based Areas of Region 02” led by Ms. Rose Mary G. Aquino of the Cagayan Valley Integrated Agricultural Research Center (CVIARC).

MAGIC stands for “that is Market Attractive to Growers

and Import Competitive” to signify enterprise development and promotion of income-enhancing peanut technologies. Funded by the DA-BAR, it aims to link peanut productivity with value-adding business and improved marketing strategies for peanuts.

The project continued the effort to close the yield gap in peanut production through the promotion of POTs for large-seeded varieties. The project also improved the marketing



strategies for peanuts (raw and processed), and introduced new livelihoods and enterprises particularly peanut food processing and these proved pivotal.

For Barangay Arubub, the ability to produce peanut in volume is no longer an issue as yield has risen from 1.2 t/ha to 3.2 t/ha on the average. The Arubub Peanut Producers' and Processors' Association was therefore formed in May 2009 to further improve the economic well-being of the community's households through food processing and marketing of peanuts and peanut products. Starting with just 10 members, it now has 25 members including Magsasaka-Siyentista Roger Salvador and the present Barangay Captain of Arubub, Mr. Nelson Austria, The current president is a woman, Ms. Ocsinia Salvador, the wife of "Mang Roger". The association's peanut products are sold in Jones

especially during festivals and exhibits.

The LGU of Jones, Isabela has been very supportive of peanut product development and has provided much needed assistance to further strengthen the local peanut industry and generate employment. It also happens that the present Mayor of Jones is a woman, Ms. Leticia Sebastian. In pushing for the development of the municipality's "pasalubong" products that include peanut products, a food processing plant was set up behind the municipal hall for the preparation of peanut products of the Association and local Rural Improvement Clubs (RICs). The LGU has also sponsored training activities on food processing. A barangay-based nutritionist works with the Association to maintain the quality of the peanut products of Arubub such

as "peanut crunch", "peanut adobo" and sugar-coated peanuts.

Now SEC-registered, the women-dominated Association is looking into ways to take make the most of their peanut produce. Ever of assistance, the DA-CVIARC sees the need for further training on food

processing and packaging. The Association also has to get the seal of approval of the Food and Drug Authority for its products to penetrate the mainstream market and not remain in Jones. With the move into value-adding activities, the DA-CVIARC and the Arubub peanut association know that this is no longer research but technology commercialization and are taking steps in this direction.

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SABAPA GETS A 'subarashi' score for BANANA

by DARYL LOU A. BATTAD



I fugao province has been known to be an advocate of organic farming. Amazingly, this endeavor opened doors for farmers to showcase their produce in the international arena. And when a country like Japan— whose standards when it comes to ‘safe foods’

are very strict— nods at organically-grown bananas in the Philippines, it sure is something to take pride of, especially by farmer-growers themselves.

It is exactly what the Santa Maria Banana Producers Association (SABAPA) in Alfonso Lista, Ifugao felt when they

began exporting their produce in Tokyo and Osaka, Japan.

It all started with CPAR

Created as a farmer organization in 2010, to be involved in a Community-based Participatory Action Research (CPAR) project proposed by the

local government unit of Alfonso Lista in collaboration with the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), the SABAPA started with 23 farmer members. A year after, the association was registered in the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), enabling the group to rightfully enjoy various technical assistance and opportunities from the government as part of the project's sustainability measure.

The project titled, "Community-based Participatory Action Research on Banana Production and Processing in Alfonso Lista, Ifugao" generally aims to increase productivity among farmers in Alfonso Lista, Ifugao, through the introduction of new banana production and processing technologies.

To be able to achieve this goal, the farmers underwent trainings on farm management and organic production technologies in which they learned the use of tissue-cultured banana plantlets, recommended planting distances, clean cultivation through periodic weeding, desuckering, removal of the male bud, propping of banana plants, trimming of leaves and care for banana bunches, bunch covering, harvesting, and even marketing. Trainings did not only focus with banana production but also included organic foliar formulation, and preparation of botanical pesticides from indigenous plants.

The project then linked with the Cooperative for Rural Development (CORDEV), a Nueva Vizcaya-based multipurpose cooperative that provides a wide range of product development and marketing strategies. Along with the project team from the

LGU-Alfonso Lista, CORDEV assisted the farmer-cooperators in field validation, plantation establishment, and farm care and maintenance, and even harvest.

A 76-year old farmer cooperator, Erma Habiling, shared how CORDEV has been of big help especially to her and her husband as they are already old and had difficulty in harvesting bananas. "The CORDEV people were actually doing the laborious work for us—that is, they harvest our bananas because we are too old to do that," she said. "Another thing, they do it themselves because they want to make sure that it would cause no damage to the bananas but still they buy our produce at the same rate. They don't charge for the labor," she added.

Japan-grade bananas

Prior to the implementation of CPAR in Alfonso Lista, farmers were already into banana production however there is a pressing need for the growers to level up their knowledge in terms of quality improvement to be able to reach the growing demands of banana not only locally but also internationally.

According to one of the project leaders, Mr. Peter Adawe, an agricultural technologist in the municipal local government unit of Alfonso Lista, every year there is a gradual increase in the production of banana due to the commodity's demand especially to nearby provinces like Isabela, Pangasinan, and Baguio City. "CPAR has provided a good experience for banana growers in our municipality to

learn and unlearn production strategies that will benefit the farmers and consumers alike," Mr. Adawe shared. He also added that the zero-chemical policy that the farmers learned and mastered over the years has been the main reason why marketing organizations became attracted to this project.

A social enterprise called the Alter Trade Corporation (ATC) is a marketing arm of people's organizations involved in providing livelihood programs, addressing hunger incidence, helping alleviate poverty and uplifting the lives of marginal communities recognized this campaign for safe food through the CPAR project. Since then, they have been providing marketing assistance to SABAPA, building linkages with markets in Japan particularly in Osaka and Tokyo.

Balangon variety is a subarashi banana

Balangon is a native variety of green banana, and is Alter Trade's most widely produced and widest selling product. Other groups call it "*bongolan*" or wild Cavendish. This variety used to be grown by indigenous people because it is easily cultivated and it grows unattended in the mountainous, forested regions of the Philippines. For many years, Alter Trade has been exporting *Balangon* bananas to Japan (which is also ATC's largest *Balangon* market).

The association's data on marketed bananas showed that as of February 2014, the volume of production of all 23 farmers reaches to 5.81 metric tons (5,812.21 kgs). To date, the Ifugao province is contributing 11 percent of the *Balangon* banana for export

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A home to greener pastures

by LIZA ANGELICA D. BARRAL



is to create beautiful works that bring sustenance and balance for the glory of the Original Creator who gives gifts, talents, and life abundant to people.

GRO's mission and vision is to become a prime mover in protecting the health and wellness of people and environment through sustainable use and management of the inherent God-given natural resources, job creation, and values formation. To fulfill their vision and mission, the association is continuously conducting research and development (R&D) works to create different organic product lines such as food, beverages, fertilizers, works of art, and others. "The association is using clean and locally-available raw materials. The members are involved in the actual production and processing of raw materials, up to the product marketing and promotion to shops and direct dealers," explained Dr. Taño.

GRO is also providing technical skills training for various clients all over the country. "It is to help others to gain confidence, so that they are also capable of starting a new business using the developed technologies through the funding support of the Department of Agriculture (DA) particularly, the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR)," she added. The founder also emphasized the importance of technology adaption and utilization as it creates sustainable jobs in rural areas and that locals don't have to look for better opportunities in the city or abroad.

The inner core

"Diligence, love for work, and care for the people and environment, those are the qualities which set aside

"It has been my dream to become a chemical engineer," shared Lucia Dalisay, a 48-year old local from Candelaria, Quezon. However, she opted to set aside her personal ambition to explore greater opportunities overseas. After 19 years of working in different foreign lands, Lucy finally came back to her native roots and enjoyed the outmost privileges of being with the family and being a part of a "new found home" which helped to make her dreams come true.

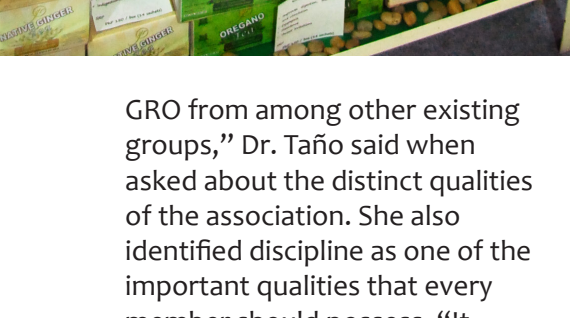
"I was taught on how to utilize the technology that is why I was able to create and develop products from natural raw materials. Together with my co-members, we are learning from each other through sharing and active participation," Lucy explained.

Their group's joy and love for work resulted to a more dynamic and promising organization that produces research-based and naturally-enhancing products from organically- and locally-grown raw materials. Aside from the

technical skills, she realized a big lesson in life. "*Masarap talaga kapag nasa sarili kang bayan, kasi makikita mo kung gaano kaganda yung ipinagkaloob ng Panginoon sa atin, yung raw materials nasa atin na, kaya dapat nating pagyamanin*". Due to her strong determination and positive disposition, Lucy drove her to the best opportunity when she was elected as the President of Green Rescue Organic Association, Inc. (GRO).

Going green

The GRO is an association originated from an enterprise called Green Rescue Organic Products. The enterprise was founded in 2009 by Dr. Estela C. Taño, a senior researcher at the Department of Agriculture-Quezon Agricultural Experiment Station (DA-QAES), to commercialize promising technologies that she developed. The association is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and is collectively managed by Christian believers whose purpose in life



GRO from among other existing groups,” Dr. Taño said when asked about the distinct qualities of the association. She also identified discipline as one of the important qualities that every member should possess. “It means that development should really start from themselves in order to impart their learnings to other people who are interested to learn from them and from the organization,” she expounded. The association is instilling the essential values such as love for country, equality, and appreciation, conservation and protection of the environment. “It is not necessary that



members should be highly educated in order to increase their technical core. What’s most important is that they clearly understand the association’s vision and mission, they love what they do and they give pride to the products that they actually made. By the time that they promote the products, it would be a lot easier for the members to explain what they do and what are the importance and benefits of the products,” Ms. Taño concluded.

Route to success

The GRO has different alternate routes towards the mainstream market. They link to other government and private agencies like DA-BAR and DA-Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Foreign Affairs, Filipino Inventors Society, Bureau of Pardons and Parole, Agricultural Inoculants Corporation Inc., different local government units and private groups and farmers. Recently, GRO has an existing tie-up with two other local manufacturers to establish more stores in agri-

tourism sites like in Villa Escudero to target the high-end customers who are mostly foreign and local tourists.

Participation in trade fairs organized by government partners also paved the way for new market prospects. Some medical doctors are already interested in using and in recommending GRO’s health and wellness products to their patients.

Both Dr. Taño and Ms. Dalisay commended the continuous support of DA-BAR in harnessing the association’s potentials through technology adaption. “Without BAR, there will be no association and no developed products available in the market. The agency helped us in the development, marketing and promotion of GRO products through participation to exhibits. It boosted our morale because we go to different places and at the same time, our products become popular as well. The support has been there 100 percent”.

With such devotion coming from GRO, hopefully more aspiring locals will follow their path towards attaining greater opportunities on their native land. ###



Diversification leads pineapple cooperative to success

by ANNE CAMILLE B. BRION

They were not given recognition as one of the 2012 Outstanding Farmers of the Philippines (TOFARM) under the Agriculture Cooperative category for nothing. This is only among the numerous awards that a pineapple cooperative in the Bicol region has received. Aside from leading the promotion of different income-generating activities specifically on pineapple, they are also keen on generating opportunities that will provide employment to the community.

Starting small, becoming big

On September 11, 1987, the pineapple coop started as a lending institution operating in a small office rented inside the Labo Public Market with just a capital of P5, 000. This amount is being loaned to the initial 15 members composed of ambulant vendors and farmers who sell their produce in the public market on market day.

It was registered as a cooperative on April 11, 1990 carrying the name Labo Market Vendors Multi-Purpose Service Cooperative Inc. But because of the members' vision to make the cooperative one of the progressive organizations in the country reaching out to help people grow, it was later on





named as the Labo Progressive Multi-Purpose Cooperative (LPMPC).

Years after, the LPMPC began to enter the agribusiness scene and focused their efforts on pineapple being one of the primary and important industries in the province of Camarines Norte. There came a time when production exceeded the demand, resulting in the commodity's low price. To serve as an alternative source of income from the surplus, the coop turned to pineapple products and by-products processing. "We develop the decorticated fiber obtained from the leaves. Since then, we have diversified our business," said LPMPC General Manager Mario Espeso.

Aside from the decorticated fiber, the coop was able to produce the Formosa Manos piña cloth, a hand-woven material that is of export-quality which is processed and turned into barong, kimona, or gowns, and even into novelty items such as purses and pouches. This encouraged more membership for the cooperative. "*Sa pag-diversify namin ng business, madaming na-enganyo na sumali sa coop dahil sa naibibigay naming livelihood*

activities sa kanila," Mr. Espeso expressed.

Couple Joselito and Nancy Ramires are both members of the cooperative. A member for eight years, Nancy used to be a plain housewife who's into buy and sell. When she attended one of the trainings conducted on handmade paper and handloom weaving, she learned how to weave and design the piña cloth. This became an additional income for her, so she decided to join the coop. Currently, she is an LPMPC member, while her husband works as an employee of the coop.

Diversification also led to the development of various pineapple products including the Queen's Choice which are dehydrated pineapples that serve as a counterpart of the famous dried mangoes. There is also the Queench pineapple that they brand as an all-natural pineapple juice. Aside from food products, the coop also ventured into virgin coconut oil production and organic fertilizer production. Services were also offered in the form of agri and non-agri loans,

savings and time deposit, life and non-life insurance, scholarship program, and health program.

As of now, the LPMPC is starting to penetrate the export market with their decorticated fiber and pineapple cloth. "But not in big volume and not continuous. For fresh pineapple, we are in the process of securing accreditation and permits from the Philippine Exporters Confederation, Inc. (PHILEXPORT) and the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI)," explained Mr. Espeso.

With the efforts of the LPMPC and its members, it is now categorized as an Agricultural Community-based Cooperative with total assets of more than PhP 90 million, classifying them as medium-sized in terms of capitalization. Branching out to four municipalities (Labo, Daet, Panganiban, and Capalonga) province-wide, they now have 8,982 members composed of farmers, fisherfolk, and smallscale entrepreneurs, and 45 regular employees. Situated in its 1.3-hectare lot are its head office, 7 buildings of different agribusiness centers, wherein 7,500 square meters are divided into 69 lots



that serve as housing project for its coop members.

Pineapple industry further strengthened

In 2009, the LPMPC partnered with the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office 5- Bicol Integrated Agricultural Research Center, Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) through its National Technology Commercialization Program, and DA-High Value Crops Development Program towards “Enhancing Competitiveness of the Queen Pineapple in Bicol”. The project aimed to boost the pineapple industry in the province.

“The first phase of the project opened up the cooperative to a new horizon of pineapple production. Through the financial and technical assistance from BAR, the LPMPC established an initial 10 hectares of pineapple farm and it was a roll-over. To date, the coop common project reached to 15 hectares and has also secured a certificate of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) from the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS). In addition, we have acquired

new machineries and equipment for our agribusiness centers. Our annual participation in BAR’s National Technology Forum and Product Exhibition at SM Megamall also helped in the promotion of the coop’s different products,” Mr. Espeso shared.

In another project supported by BAR titled, “Pineapple Production and By-Product Utilization,” the cooperative was able to produce new products including pineapple jam, jelly and chunks, and puree which is still undergoing shelf-life test. Different trainings on advanced weaving have been organized to enhance the quality of pineapple cloth products. Towards the end of the year, a training on pineapple wine and vinegar will be conducted, and bottled pineapple juice will be launched once the new label and packaging materials are finalized.

“The LPMPC plans to continue on providing different financial, social, and economic services to the members and the community, while fulfilling its journey to become a globally competitive cooperative that empowers people for sustainable community development. That is by providing responsive financial and non-financial services for the holistic upliftment of the people of Camarines Norte,” the LPMPC General Manager concluded.

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yet the demand continues to rise.

The SABAPA intends to expand this project by converting more idle lands into productive agribusiness areas, sharing knowledge and training other farmers into banana production. Roy Gammad, a 67-year old farmer who is also an active member of the SABAPA, is more than eager to share how he personally succeeds through this project. “It gave me a sense of fulfillment as a farmer. All farmers want their produce to be recognized by our fellow citizens. But to be recognized in other countries, that’s more than enough,” he shared.

As the demand for organic food grows rapidly in Japan, and where food safety is of utmost concern (that even their law says that the country of origin of all products have to be listed and labels must come with very specific information such as chemicals used), and considering that the Philippines has already set a standard on the export quality of Balangon, plus small farmers can actually produce them, this might be a worthy opportunity for farmer-associations like SABAPA to take a good shot in the global market. ###

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Conserving and protecting the country's fishery resources is necessary to maximize economic opportunities and generate employment among the fishing communities. There is a need for a multi-sectoral approach that will zero in a more vibrant fishery sector and a life-changing scenario particularly among coastal communities.

This prompted the local government unit of Panobolon in Nueva Valencia, Guimaras to

implement a Community-based Participatory Action Research (CPAR) project on seaweed culture to improve their productivity and income.

Funded by the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), the project, which was initiated in 2009, was implemented in collaboration with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Region 6. It aims to help a small fishing

barangay in Panobolon and to provide additional income to about 1,120 residents in the coastal community.

The island barangay is a traditional fishing community where fishing is the main source of livelihood until the tragic event on 11 August 2006, when an oil tanker sank off the coast of Guimaras and Negros Island in the Panay Gulf causing the worst (as of press date) oil spill in the country. The oil spill adversely affected marine sanctuaries in three out of five municipalities. One of the severely affected fishing communities was Brgy. Panobolon.



Guimaras seaweed growers turn challenge into opportunity

by PATRICK RAYMUND A. LESACA

Fisherfolk in the area couldn't expect much on fishing activities due to the declining fish catch, due to the oil spill. It was here that the seaweed culture was introduced among the fisherfolk to supplement their income from selling fresh catch.

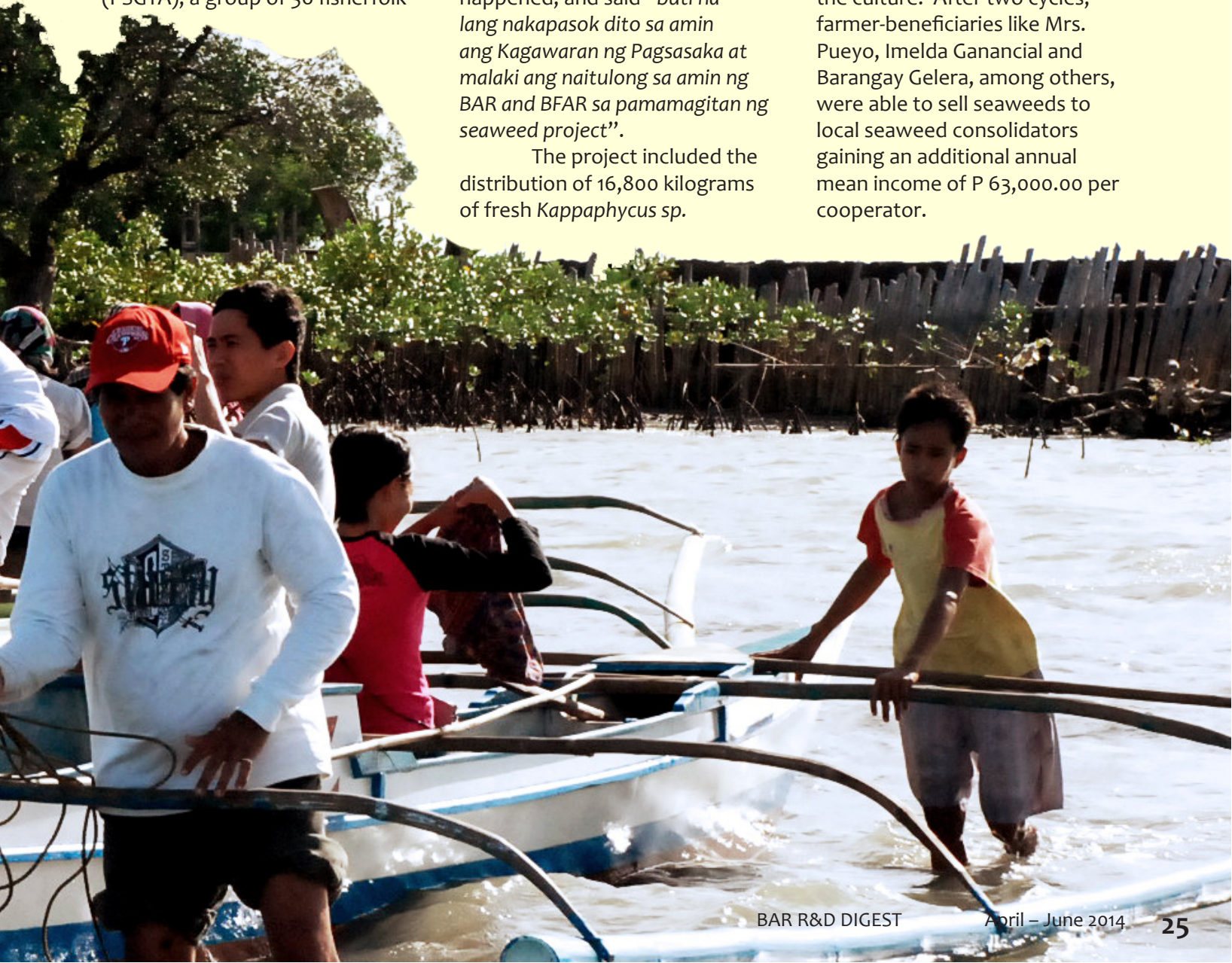
The beneficiary of the project is the Panobolon Seaweed Growers and Traders Association (PSGTA), a group of 36 fisherfolk-

members. The association, chaired by Panobolon Barangay Captain Pedro Gelera, also a beneficiary, is registered with the Department of Labor and Employment in 2006 with a current strong hold of 90 bonafide members.

Jocelyn Pueyo, one of the active members, expressed her grief when the oil spill happened, and said "*buti na lang nakapasok dito sa amin ang Kagawaran ng Pagsasaka at malaki ang naitulong sa amin ng BAR and BFAR sa pamamagitan ng seaweed project*".

The project included the distribution of 16,800 kilograms of fresh *Kappaphycus sp.*

seedlings to the 36 proponents intended to oversee the 3.5-hectare seaweed culture area. It is composed of 14 modules. Modules 1-7 were put in place on the first year followed by modules 8-14 on the second year. Each beneficiary was allotted a 2,500 sq.m area. The beneficiaries were likewise provided with the necessary materials needed for the culture. After two cycles, farmer-beneficiaries like Mrs. Pueyo, Imelda Ganancial and Barangay Gelera, among others, were able to sell seaweeds to local seaweed consolidators gaining an additional annual mean income of P 63,000.00 per cooperator.





Project impact

According to Ms. Remia Aparri of BFAR, also the project leader, after three years of operation, the CPAR seaweed culture project was sustained and recorded a positive result. The dried seaweed has an aggregate production of 34.90 MT during the first and second cycle. The first cycle produced around 9.70 MT dried seaweeds has doubled on the second cycle at 25.20 MT as all of the 14 modules were able to operationalize the seaweed culture.

In 2011, additional 49 cooperators, most of whom are residents of Panobolon, were added to the list of growers. The support of the leaders of Panobolon and the rest of the

seaweed farming community added to the development of the project. Chairman Galera himself expressed his full support and had encouraged his constituents to give full attention to it.

The CPAR seaweed culture contributed to the livelihood condition and personal needs of the families and it somehow assisted them in meeting their day to day needs. Some of the beneficiaries can now address and sustain the school needs of their children as well as afford a more decent living. Moreover, cooperators can now pay their counterpart for the solar panels that supplies electricity for their homes as well as owning an improved banca from a paddled one to a

motorized craft.

It provided supplemental livelihood to the fisherfolk and contributed to the increase in seaweed production of the community and more importantly the association has developed and learned the values knowledge sharing and resources, which will be imparted to the next generation of fisherfolk.

The overall impact of the project particularly in Guimaras showed potential for a sustained livelihood especially among the poorest fisherfolk through the CPAR project which could trigger and open better opportunities. More importantly, people in the area realized the importance of marine water as their primary means of wealth. ###



HARMONY beneath the MOUNTAINS

by LIZA ANGELICA D. BARRAL

Quezon Province is blessed with fertile land which is suitable for growing various agricultural crops. Also located in this area are Mt. Cristobal and Mt. Banahaw where you can see the naturally rich and relaxing paradise that will surely be enjoyed by locals and tourists. In an effort to protect and conserve Quezon's natural resources, a people's organization called Bangkong Kahoy Farmer's Organization for Reforestation and Eco-System Thrust (BK FOREST) was established in 2008.

"Our main aim is environmental and ecological balance protection through education, organic farming and self-reliance," explained Mr. Dionisio "Dion" Pullan, founder and consultant of BK FOREST. The organization's vision and mission is to ensure the area protection for the generations to come by organizing alternative livelihood and educational programs to the local communities for environmental and ecological balance protection.

From School Teacher to Nature Lover

Mr. Dion was a former school teacher and overseas worker from Kinabuhayan, Dolores, Quezon. His experiences as a duty manager of the

Olympic Park Station-New South Wales Railways in Sidney, Australia and his other previous working experiences abroad provided him knowledge on environmentalism. "These, together with my love for my country and Dolores, where Bangkong Kahoy is located, gave me so much incentive to go back home," Mr. Dion shared.

Upon his arrival, Mr. Pullan had numerous observations of the current situation in his community. "Mts.

Banahaw-San Cristobal though called the "protected landscape" lacks the protection it needs. The biggest threat comes from the local population not because they wanted to destroy the forest, but due to need for them and their families to survive. The use of pesticides and chemicals became so blatant and as the main water source, all will suffer." The current scenario of Bangkong Kahoy pushed Mr. Pullan to help his

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FARMERS' ASSOCIATION sets milestone in GOAT RAISING

by DIANA ROSE A. DE LEON

Dreams really do come true. This is the case of the Oaig Daya Candon City Goat Raisers Association Inc. (Oaig Daya) making its mark in goat raising as an essential industry in the Candon City, the trade and commerce center of Ilocos Sur.





The CPAR-Goat ADP

The Oaig Daya is comprised of the recipients and adopters of the technologies introduced from the Community-based Participatory Action Research – Goat Agribusiness Development Project (CPAR-Goat ADP). This project, initiated in 2005, was supported by the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) in the provinces of Pangasinan, La Union, Ilocos Sur, and Ilocos Norte.

This initiative focused on technology transfer and adaptation of goat raising technologies. By introducing the Integrated Goat Management Technology (IGMT), the project aimed to encourage farmers to venture on goat raising making it one of their main sources of income. Through IGMT, farmers increased their productivity and profitability. The end goal was to penetrate the livestock market dominated by cattle and swine and to carve goat's own niche in the consumers' market by supplying meat and processed products.

Candon City in Ilocos Sur is one of the six pilot sites of CPAR-Goat ADP in Region I. Goat raising in Candon was best described as a subsistence raising. The residents raised goats for their own consumption. Unlike other CPAR projects wherein the implementer taps an already existing association in the community, in the case of Candon City, there were no other established goat raisers associations in the municipality, thus, making it an ideal spot to initiate the project.

From dream to reality

As they say, most splendid plans start during drinking sessions. This was how

it started for James Galdones, incumbent chairman of Oaig Daya; and Virgilio Dagsi, incumbent secretary—when they weaved their dreams together to establish a goat raisers association. This is how the story of the association took off.

In the Farmers Livestock School (FLS), where Galdones and Dagsi both attended, the farmers were taught of the IGMT which included the standardization of goat housing, improved feeding using cheap and locally available feed materials, establishment of forage garden, health management through sustainable parasite control, among others. Also, one of the major interventions of the project was the upgrading of goat stocks. From the farmers' practice of rearing of native goats, graded bucks including Anglo-Nubian and Boer, were given to the farmer-partners. By upgrading the goats, it now commanded a better market price ranging from Php 2,500 to Php 5,300 compared to the native goats which are priced at Php 1,500 – Php 2,000. The interventions convinced the farmer-participants that they can make a profitable livelihood from goat.

The CPAR-Goat ADP was completed in 2009 and the thought of forming goat raisers association was first brought up by the members of the 2007 FLS participants. When the plan to establish a municipality-wide goat raisers association failed to materialize, Galdones and Dagsi dreamed of forming their own group exclusive for the interested goat raisers who are residents of Brgy. Oaig



to expand the coverage of FLS to 40 barangays in Candon City. This is a proof that farmers are really keen and interested in goat raising.

In an interview, the farmers shared that the existing swine houses are now being converted to goat houses. With the expanding number of goat raisers in municipality, the goat meat is now widely available in the municipality and the Candon residents are now including goat meat as part of their daily diet.

Due to their exemplary works, the association bagged the grand prizes for 'Best Livestock Production' category during the Dur-as Awards, given by the LGU of Candon City; and the Siglat Awards, given by the provincial government of Ilocos Sur, for three consecutive years. ###

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Daya, Candon City. From 2009 to early months of 2010, the two of them set the gears in motion and started organizing the goat raisers in Brgy. Oaig Daya. In June 28, 2010, the Oaig Daya Candon City Goat Raisers Association, Inc. was born and was duly registered at Securities and Exchange Commission.

Currently, the Oaig Daya has 40 members and still open for membership. "One can be a member as long as he or she is interested and is actually engaged in backyard goat raising regardless of how many heads he or she is presently raising. The plan is to recruit all interested goat raisers to join the association and convince them to adopt the technology introduced by CPAR (IGMT)," explained by Dagsi. Through joining the organization Dagsi said, "we need to show them concrete proof of the possible benefits that the

association may provide to them. Like for example, we can facilitate the sales of the goat stocks that they will produce."

The association was able to facilitate the selling of 57 goat heads of breeders to a cooperative in Sto. Domingo, Ilocos Sur.

The project proponents attested that CPAR-Goat ADP in Candon City is one of the successful project sites. "When we are visiting the other project sites. We told them that Candon City is reaping benefits from the project. This is because of the local government of Candon is very supportive and also the farmer partners are very cooperative and willing to try the technologies" said Ms. Melinda G. Calumpit, CPAR project leader.

From the initial batch of farmers from eight barangays who attended the FLS, the project implementers were able

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community in saving their natural resources.

Turning Challenges to Opportunities

At first, everything was not smooth sailing for Mr. Pullan in organizing BK FOREST. “We try to educate but education does not sink in straight away. There is resistance to change with some group members. “To see is to believe”, “wait and see”, “get rich quick” attitude, etc. is also the mindset of the locals, the change is not that great, but noticeable,” shared by the founder.

Despite the societal/ community challenges, Mr. Pullan didn't stop in pursuing the group's advocacy. BK FOREST conducted continuous interaction with the locals in order to ensure the full implementation and sustainability of its activities. At present, the organization has 69 members consisting of 23 males, 18 females, and 28 youth-members who are mostly farmers, their wives, and children from the area.

According to Mr. Pullan, the protection of the area has already improved after they have created alternative means of livelihood for a few locals through the establishment of agri-tourism industry within the community. As of now, there are 17 regular employees who are working as tour guides, bird guides, security personnel, cook and helpers, maintenance, etc.

“Organic agriculture will be the very essence of my advocacy to protect the fragile ecosystem that we have,” said Mr. Pullan. As a result of BK FOREST's advocacy, other farmers were also encouraged to engage in producing organically-grown vegetables to avoid the use of inorganic pesticides in farming.



Aside from the BAR-funded Organic Agriculture (OA) project, the Sapinit Production Utilization and Commercialization project also helped in generating additional economic activity. “This produced positive effects not only to the farmers but also to the consumers in terms of knowing the crops' healthful and medicinal values,” Mr. Pullan justified.

Aside from practicing organic agriculture, BK FOREST also ventured in mushroom farming and 15 casual workers were hired for its maintenance. “I intend to keep these people as regular workers when we start making money and it is sustainable to do so,” Mr. Dion added.

It was also indeed surprising for Mr. Dion that the youth members are more interested in BKFOREST's advocacy. In order to give back to the active young members, the organized group was able to send some of them to school. Five of them finished high school and are currently enrolled in college. The other two have graduated with college degrees. “Prior to the establishment of BKFOREST, none have made it



beyond high school,” Mr. Dion said.

Despite the significant accomplishments of BK FOREST, Mr. Pullan remained humble and mentioned that there is still a lot of work to do to protect their most treasured paradise. “I cannot say that we have had success yet, but through perseverance, patience, new knowledge (technology) and love for Mother Nature, it is forthcoming.” ###



Kalipunan ng Liping Pilipina, Inc. (KALIPI) Tagkawayan Chapter, Inc. is a group based in Tagkawayan, Quezon where members are composed mostly of women weavers who are engaged in abaca handicraft-making. In support to the initiatives of KALIPI, the BAR, through its National Technology Commercialization Program (NTCP), has funded two projects on the promotion and commercialization of abaca handicrafts and utilization and conservation of indigenous natural fibers towards micro-enterprise development for women. “The BAR-NTCP has not only provided us with the initial capital to fund our activities but has also provided a venue for us to improve and market our products. We have become more aware of market trends and demands. The NTCP gave the commodity – abaca, a new light. That abaca should not be disregarded as a farm crop and that it is still a lucrative livelihood for handicraft makers,” said Ms. Myra Frondoso, project leader. *(full story in page 8-10)*

PHOTO COURTESY OF KALIPI



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