



SPROUTS OF *Dreams*

*A compilation of the Cordilleran
Farmer's dream for a better tomorrow
and the paths they took towards success.*

EX

TEN

SION *beyond*

boundaries



Sprout of Dreams Volume 1

Published by the Agricultural Training Institute, Regional Training Center-Cordillera Administrative Region

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Foreword

... dedicated to the farmers of the Cordillera Administrative Region

Like the sound of the gongs resonating from the heart of the majestic mountain ranges of the Cordillera Administrative Region, the “Sprout of Dreams” is a resounding testament to the resiliency and perseverance of the Cordilleran agriculture sector most especially its farmers.

This publication is a compilation of the struggles, challenges, inspirations, the joys and tears of farmers and agricultural extension workers in advancing agricultural development in the Region.

The Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center-Cordillera Administrative Region being a witness to these events gathered their stories knowing that these people may fade but their stories will forever be remembered, their footprints will be followed and their legacy will be passed on.

May this material serve as an inspiration to the stakeholders of the agricultural sector of the Cordillera Region to continuously persevere in their respective endeavors knowing that one day they themselves would reap the fruits of their “sprouts of their dreams”.

Message

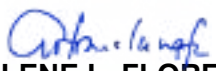


There's only one way to know that a trainer is doing a good job – it's through his/her trainees. That's the only way. What become of the trainees is a reflection of the trainer's performance and the best reward for a trainer is to see the trainees succeed or improve.

Success or improvement of the trainees does not happen overnight, however; it would take some time especially so that attendance to training is not the only success factor. There are other determinants that come into play – the other support services, enabling facilities needed and most important, the trainees' determination and commitment. So trainers don't need to take responsibility for matters not within their jurisdiction and responsibility. What is important is that trainers give their all utilizing what they have learned and what they know.

There are providers of the other extension support services necessary to ensure the success of a training and the trainees. In the region, it is worthy to note that they are continuously in support to ATI-CAR's training and extension programs – our mother unit, the DA-Regional Field Office in CAR; the local government units; the state universities and colleges; other regional NGAs; our accredited private extension service provider (SLU-EISSIF); our certified Learning Sites for Agriculture and Schools for Practical Agriculture. To them, our profound gratitude.

In this publication are some "sprouts" of training and extension efforts of the ATI-CAR with the support of the other extension service providers in the region towards agricultural development. Read on.


ARLENE L. FLORES, Ph.D.
Training Center Director

Contents

- 1 Jefferson C. Laruan: The Organic Agriculture Preacher-Farmer of the Cordilleras** *(Organic Agriculture School for Practical Agriculture)*
- 4 Going Organic for Good Health: The LaTOP MPC's Continuing Mission** *(Farmer Cooperative on Organic Agriculture)*
- 7 The School of Mr. Teodoro "Teddy" Kub-ao** *(School for Practical Agriculture)*
- 12 Cordillera's Cosmic Pride in Organic Agriculture: The Rogel Marsan and Family Story** *(Organic Agriculture School for Practical Agriculture)*
- 18 Metamorphosis of a Dream** *(Remy Balliyao, Graduate of ATI-CAR's Training Management Training Program)*
- 24 Digging in to the Sweet Gold** *(Dexter D. Wasawas, participant to the Training on Beekeeping in Support to Organic Agriculture)*
- 28 "I found the Better Haven for Investment"** *(Marilou Pasi Dulnuan, participant to the Training on White Corn Farming Systems for the IPs in CAR in Support to the FSSP)*
- 32 Bee My Honey Coffee!** *(Martin Dep-et, participant to the Training on Beekeeping in Support to Organic Agriculture)*
- 36 Young Agriprenur Unleashed** *(Mary Grail Paredes, recipient to the Loan Program of the Youth in Agriculture and Fisheries Program)*

Contents

39 Youngsters Sweat to Make the Future Sweet

(Masla Hoyohoy 4-H Club, recipient of the Loan Program of the Youth and Agriculture and Fisheries Program)

43 The Salvino Organic Farm, an Age-old Wisdom

(Learning Site for Organic Agriculture)

46 The Unselfish Knowledge Sharer

(Fatima Solimen, Agricultural Technician, participant to various training programs of ATI-CAR)

49 A Woman's Hands Sowing the Seeds of Change

(Berlina Clemencia, participant to the PalayCheck System Farmers Field School)

52 Celebrating the Fruits of the Golden Roots

(Milagros Justo, Magsasaka Siyentista of FITS Itogon, Benguet)

57 A Good Life in Rice and More

(Bonnie Dumagay, participant to the Training Course on PalayCheck System for Farmers of Kalinga)

60 Pitcher Plants and Organic Farms: The V & L Farm Success Story

(Valerio Ramos, Learning Site for Organic Agriculture)

65 Hands on Supervisor: The Marlita Basingan Story

(Marlita Basingan, Former Provincial Agriculturist, participant to various training programs of ATI-CAR)

Jefferson C. Laruan: The Organic Agriculture Preacher-Farmer of the Cordilleras

(Organic Agriculture School for Practical Agriculture)

Mr. Jefferson Laruan is a farmer all his life. Having grown in a farming community in Puguis, La Trinidad, he has always helped his father tend their farm lots. As a young boy, he has seen how a farmer can benefit abundantly from farming. In line with his farming skills, he earned his certificate in Farm Mechanics in 1973. Apart from farming, he also responded to his calling to the Christian ministry in the same year. He says that working in the ministry and farming are very much alike and that living the Christian life has often been compared to tending a farm. Just like the illustration of the parable of the sower, one has to keep working the fields to reap a bountiful harvest.

Before, Mr. Laruan also applies chemicals like tamaron in his farm as most farmers do in Benguet. This is to attain a high yield that would also result to a higher income.

Just as he thought he was doing the right thing, a tragedy occurred. In the middle of his field sometime in 1977, he lost his consciousness while spraying because of continuous exposure



to chemicals as a result of not wearing proper gears. He felt that death was just so near during that time.

With this accident, he realized that there must be other ways to grow plants other than using chemicals. After years of searching, he started farm operations on his own. He sought for ways to return to the basics of farming-that is, without resorting to commercial materials. He then attended and participated in a number of seminars, lectures, fora and conventions related to organic farming that included the trainings conducted by the Agricultural Training Institute-CAR.

In his total shift to organic farming, and along with a group of like-minded farmers, he co-founded the La Trinidad Organic Practitioners Multi-Purpose Cooperative (LaTOP MPC) in 2005. The ATI-CAR facilitated their Pre-Membership Education Seminar. For three years, he acted as volunteer Manager of the LaTOP MPC, ensuring that the first association of organic farmers in La Trinidad was able to operate on its own and spearheaded organic farming in the community. In the same year, he also set up the Lily of the Valley farms – a showcase of hard labor, dedication, commitment & belief towards sustainable farming.



In 2011, in partnership with ATI-CAR, he was chosen as one of the pioneer learning sites, ably fulfilling his role in the advocacy, implementation and practice of organic agriculture. His devotion to his organic agriculture craft earned him the 2013 Gawad Saka Award for CAR. Right now he is one of the favorite destinations of organic agriculture enthusiasts, farmers, extension workers and other stakeholders. He has been serving various clientele groups including foreign tourists who come for fresh ambiance and rural experience. He is also a regular host farmer of the ATI's Adopt-a-Farm Youth Program, serving as father, consultant, teacher at the same time God's minister to these young farmers.

With all the development in his farm, he was elevated as Organic Agriculture School for Practical Agriculture (SPA) in CAR by the ATI-CAR. Recently, he was accredited by TESDA as Farm School to provide OA trainings starting April 2017. "This is my dream, to become a center of organic agriculture training and education, accreditation and agri-tourism" he shared with joy and gratitude to ATI.

With the attainment of his dream and with all the support of the ATI and other agencies, he continuously helps other farmers and aspiring farmers to also build their dreams and yes, change their lives! (CCSagudan)

Going Organic for good health: the La TOP MPC's continuing mission...

(Farmer Cooperative on Organic Agriculture)

"A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step," goes a commonly used adage that best describe what the La Trinidad Organic Practitioners Multi-Purpose Cooperative (LaTOP MPC) had gone through, as the first organic agriculture cooperative.

This cooperative formally started in 2005 with only 26 pioneering members. As part of the protocol, interested individuals must attend a Pre-Membership Education Seminar (PMES) training which was sponsored by the Agricultural Training Institute-Cordillera Administrative Region.

Their strong advocacy, commitment and dedication on organic agriculture propelled the continuous increase in their membership. At present, there are 193 regular members and 2 associate members, and still counting.

The shift from conventional to organic farming provided LaTop opportunities to expand its market outlets and membership to neighboring municipalities in the Northern Philippines.

More than its marketing services, LaTop provides credit services for production, shredder, and vermiculture loan. As of 2015, the Coop's financial statement, revealed that it has a total asset amounting to 6.6 million pesos.

Yearly, the group conducts its General Assembly in March where they give special awards to their members to include: Best in Packaging, Top 5 Shareholders of the Year, Top 2 Gross Processors of the Year, Top 10 Gross Organic Vegetable Producers of the Year, Oldest Male Organic Practitioners, Oldest Female Organic Practitioner, Youngest Female Organic Practitioner, Active Officer of the Day and of the Year, and Most Active Committee of the Year.

This recognition program also motivates the members to continue on their organic farming activities.



Ready for Third Party Certification. Officers and Members of the LaTOP MPC share a light moment for a posterity pose during the Training in Support to Organic Agriculture Upgrading of Internal Quality System for LaTOP MPC sponsored by the ATI-CAR on June 17-21, 2013.

The recognitions being given by the group to its members served as one of the stepping stone for them to be selected as Organic Agriculture learning sites of ATI-CAR. As of now, there are five LaTOP members who passed the LS accreditation of ATI-CAR.

LaTop MPC sustains its partnership with ATI-CAR mostly in terms of training and extension-related activities. The cooperative was able to produce successful organic agriculture practitioners who are now partners of the ATI-CAR in promoting organic agriculture in the Region.

Since 2012, the ATI-CAR collaboratively conducted training courses on organic agriculture with

the LaTOP MPC. Selected members who were accredited as Learning Sites compliment ATI-CAR's training and extension activities as training site or venues.

Through this partnership, the ATI-CAR assisted the cooperative in upgrading its Internal Control System (ICS) in June, 2013 to polish their existing ICS manual which is one of the requirements for renewal of organic third party certification.

On April 24, 2015, the Negros Island Certification Services (NICERT) awarded a Compliance Certificate to the LaTOP MPC.

What a journey it has been for this cooperative, from its humble beginning to the success they are reaping at present. Long live La TOP MPC! (CCSagudan)



The School of Mr. Teodoro “Teddy” Kub-ao

(School for Practical Agriculture on Rice-Based Integrated Farming)

Is it possible for a farmer to serve as a teacher to his fellow farmers? Yes, says Mr. Teodoro Kub-ao, our School for Practical Agriculture owner here in the Province of Kalinga, the rice granary of the Cordillera. Mang Teddy, as he is fondly called, practices rice-based integrated farming system and his farm serves as a model farm in the province.

His farm has six (6) components:

- First, a 5-hectare rice field where he applies a fifty-fifty percent proportion of organic and inorganic fertilizer. This way, he maintains the good quality of the soil and is able to harvest 200 cavans of rice per hectare;
- Second, a tilapia and hito fishpond. He feeds these fishes with cooked corn seed every night to save on commercial feeds. He also applies vermicast for moss production. The surroundings of the pond is planted with calamansi to utilize the space and to protect the dike from eroding. The fruits of the calamansi are also added products for sale;

- Third, a banana plantation interspersed with Kalinga oranges. The Banana serves as a shade for the oranges;
- Fourth, a vegetable garden;
- Fifth, livestock production; and
- Sixth, a vermiculture project for fertilizer (vermicast) production. He uses ground kakawati, ipil-ipil, kangkong, banana trunks and animal waste to feed his earthworms. He uses the vermicast in his fishpond as well as in fertilizing his crops.

He also maintains a mini-forest that serves as a protection for his farm during typhoons and windy days.



Mang Teddy is not selfish. Having been successful in developing his farm, the neighboring farmers would usually go to him for tips and advises on farming and he always responds to them favorably. He emerged as leader to his fellow farmers and is acknowledged by his fellow farmers and their municipal agriculture office as “farmer-leader” in their community.

Mr. Teddy’s sharing of experiences gave a tremendous impact to his fellow farmers. They were able to strengthen

their Farmers Association. Hence, their loan collection status was at 70-80%. With this result, lending institutions trusted their association, thus, they were allowed to loan big amounts.

The Farmers Association members are also slowly focusing on organic agriculture. They now view organic agriculture positively, starting with non-burning of palay residues in the field and vermi-composting.

Cognizant of Mang Teddy’s achievements, positive attitude, and leadership, he was chosen as a Farmer-Extensionist under the Farmer-Led Extension Program of the Department of Agriculture implemented by Agricultural Training Institute and subsequently, accredited as School for Practical Agriculture (SPA) on rice-based integrated farming system under the ATI. As SPA, Mang Teddy’s farm functions as the “school” and he, the “teacher.” This school serves as the ATI-CAR’s partner in developing farmers in the locality. The ATI extends assistance through training and minimal financial assistance for sustainability.

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As SPA, Mang Teddy's farm functions as the “school” and he, the “teacher.”

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As SPA, Mang Teddy trains 4-H out-of-school youth under the “Adopt a 4-H Youth Program” of the ATI. His farm serves as venue for ATI-conducted farmers trainings, e.g. Farmers Field Schools. He orients, shares his knowledge and skills to his fellow farmers, the youth and visitors who frequently visit his farm. Aside from his teaching job, he serves as a perfect example of a farmer entrepreneur, able to provide sufficiently for his family and acquire properties for his family's comfort; willing to help his fellow farmers reach greater heights and responsible for his own learning and development.



Mang Teddy said that his success is due to his passion for agriculture. He is a civil engineer by profession but because of this passion, he left his profession and engaged in agriculture as his main source of livelihood. He started with the farm that he inherited from his parents and went on to acquire additional farm lands through the years. He also said that continuous training is a must; take advantage of the trainings offered by the government and other entities. True enough, a farmer can be an effective teacher and a model to his fellow farmers. (MR Aromin, Jr.)

Cordillera's Cosmic Pride in Organic Agriculture: The Rogel Marsan and Family Story

Cosmic! is what best describes this family's achievements in the field of organic agriculture. Probably, it is the first time in the history of the National Organic Agriculture Program (NOAP) of the Department of Agriculture (DA) that a farmer and his family, were recognized as achievers in the national level for three (3) consecutive years (2015-2017) and recently, at the regional level.

That is why the Cordillera Administrative Region takes great pride for this family's achievements in the field of organic agriculture. He is no other than Mr. Rogel A. Marsan and Family. Together they manage their farm enterprise called Cosmic Farm.

The Family as a Company

The Marsan family lives in Brgy. Caban, Beckel, La Trinidad, Benguet. Mang Rogel, the father, finished several short/ vocational courses that included auto-diesel mechanic at Ryan Technical School, computer data entry at Data Center, and community organizing at the UPLB. Mr. Rogel serves as the overall manager of the Farm. He is married to Florence who is a

BS Accountancy graduate and a skilled food processor. She manages the food processing component of the farm.

They are blessed with six children. The eldest is Rohinil, also a graduate of accountancy, thus serving as the bookkeeper and treasurer of the farm. The second is Aratil, a graduate of BS Hotel and Restaurant Management and a Master in Business Administration, who serves as the marketing officer. The third is Rohit, a graduate of Organic Agriculture as a course, who serves as the farm technician. The fourth is Jaya, followed by Pramila then Prabhat Ranjan. All three, are still studying in college but lend a hand in the farm during weekends, holidays and their vacation period. Aratil has a daughter named Glitainjall, who at her young age also helps in the farm.

How Cosmic Farm Started

Like other organic agriculture practitioners, Mr. Rogel's desire to provide his family with safe and nutritious food started their enterprise. By faith,

his family is a vegetarian, which also contributed to his decision to farm. He started farming in 1989 with his 2,000 m² area that he planted to different varieties of citrus (lemon, Valencia lime, calamansi, and Washington navel) chayote and yacón. Of this, 500 m² was devoted to vegetable production.

An entrepreneur by heart, Mr. Marsan, was involved in other businesses apart from farming then. He owned two units of jeeps for transportation services. His family once tried a restaurant while renting a stall for retailing vegetables for quite some time in Baguio City. However, his passion for farming, made him decide to stop with these businesses to give full attention to their organic agriculture (OA) venture.

His Quest for Knowledge

Mang Rogel, started his farm with little knowledge and on trial and error approach in improving his farm productivity. He practiced mono cropping during the earlier days of his farming.

To enhance his knowledge, he enrolled as an e-learner in the International Correspondence School (ICS) of Trans World Education College (based in United Kingdom) on bio-intensive gardening. He also studied homeopathy in India and herbal medicine, where he learned the science of the effect of food we eat to our health. He now applies his learning in their enterprise.





Nine years after (1998), he decided to engage fully into vegetable production. He continued to improve his farm, joined several organic groups, expanded linkages, and found ways to enhance his knowledge in organic farming.

He joined the Organic Producers and Traders Association (OPTA), which at that time, gave him a yellow certification. This means his farm is still under conversion since at that time, he bulldozed the top soil of his expansion area. It took three years before he was given the Ligtas Bughaw Certificate by OPTA, a proof that his farm passes the standards for organic production.

Sometime in early 2000s, with the need to meet the growing demand of organic vegetables, Mr. Marsan, together with fellow advocates of organic farming, organized the La Trinidad Organic Producers Cooperative (La TOP) that he helped to manage until it achieved organic certification in 2010. Aside from LaTop, he is also a founding member of the Cordillera Organic Producers Association (COPA).



With his passion for learning, he keeps on attending seminars/trainings offered by the Agricultural Training Institute and other partner agencies. He learned about pest management, multi-cropping, crop programming, and record keeping. He also understood and experienced the different concepts and stages of bio intensive gardening, biodynamic, natural farming, Food Always on the Table (FAITH), and now organic agriculture.

Presently, he is progressing towards permaculture practice.

His Secret to Success

Mr. Marsan mentioned several factors that made his farm flourished and created a niche in the organic market . Foremost, is Mr. Rogel's choice of the farm name - "Cosmic Farm." Accordingly, cosmic is associated with being vegetarian- so when fellow vegetarian will hear of it, they know for sure that it is practicing safe farming. Eventually, his market expanded to non-vegetarians that are into organically grown food. Also, the farm name is so mysterious and inviting that probably, anybody who hears of it would be curious enough to visit the farm.

Second are his farm practices. As mentioned earlier, Mang Rogel's farm practices are the products of experiments and trial and error approaches he made through the years. Mang Rogel willingly shared his farming practices and inputs that made his production sustainable and profitable. One, is having a well-managed nursery. This allows him to schedule or program his operation such that right after harvest, a second crop is ready for transplanting, thus ensuring continuous production. Having a nursery also ensures that seeds really germinate ensuring that there will be no missing hills in the field unlike in direct seeding. Also, it lessens the exposure of the plants to adverse conditions such as extreme weather or pest and diseases. As such, Mang Rogel made sure that this part of the farm is taken-cared of.

Two, is having a good soil. He firmly believes in the OA dictum that goes "feed the soil and the soil will feed the plant." This is one of the principles of organic agriculture. The farm produces and applies its own organic fertilizers and composts whose ingredients, are found in his farm. These are also sources of additional income for the family.



Three, instead of cultivating the soil every cropping, he constructed permanent beds to minimize tilling and hilling up. This saves time and energy. Four, similar to other farms, his production is under the rain shelter (greenhouses) so that production is all year-round. Five, he practices the integrated farming system approach. Even though the family is vegetarian, livestock and poultry were included as source of raw materials for the compost and as an additional income.

Another factor is his passion for innovation and continuous learning. There is a business adage that goes, "it is better to lose than to stagnate," and Mr. Marsan practices that. He has expanded his products by adding food processing as a component. The family now processes health beverages such as yoghurt, ginger tea, ashitaba tea and turmeric tea.

Record keeping and documentation also played a big role for Mr. Marsan in achieving his feat. Through these, he convinced and proved to the Gawad Saka Evaluators that his 1,000 m² production area is very profitable and can earn as much as P1,000/ m², equivalent to 1 million pesos/year.



Getting the Involvement of the Family

It is a sad reality that farmers today would rather let their children enroll in courses (engineering, nursing and others) offering high paying jobs, than in agriculture which is perceived as hard and low income job. Who would like to work for long hours in the field under extreme weather conditions and remain poor? Probably, nobody. But, for Mr. Marsan, he made sure that the gains they achieved will be sustained and passed on to his children and grandchildren. So, he treated their operation as a business, showing to his children that it is their main source of bread and butter. He encouraged them to contribute and be part of it by hiring them as employees. He proved to his children, that the farm can provide for the net income that they will receive if employed as a regular employee in a private company. He also provided for their SSS, PhilHealth and PAG-IBIG contributions

and vehicles for personal and farm operations use. This way, he was able to sustain their farm enterprise while keeping his family happy and safe together.

Their Achievements

Prior to their remarkable achievements in organic agriculture given by DA, the family also received numerous recognitions. In 2005, their farm was awarded as “Organic Farm of the Year by 2 private organizations (Ang Kasama & Maharlika) based in Quezon City.

In 2007, during the 1st Benguet Ethnic Food Fair, they bagged 1st place in the following competition categories: Ethnic Beverage, Organically Grown Vegetable Salad, Mushroom Dish, and Root Crop Dessert.

In 2015, the Marsan patriarch won the National Organic Agriculture Achievers Award (NOAAA) for Small Farmer Category.

In 2016, their family, was accorded the NOAAA for Organic Farming Family Category during the National Organic Agriculture

Congress (NOAC) in Laoag City. The family held on to the award in 2017.

Recently, Mr. Marsan was awarded the Gawad Saka for Outstanding Organic Agriculture Farmer for 2018 at the regional level during the DA-CAR anniversary.

Aside from awards, opportunities for partnerships and income generation also opened. Their farm was certified as School for Practical Agriculture (SPA) by the Agricultural Training Institute in Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-CAR). As such, his farm is being tapped by ATI-CAR to host training program for 4-H youth and trainings under the organic agriculture program. In addition, the Department of Tourism (DOT) also accredited the farm as a farm tourism site. Presently, there are only 2 accredited in the region. Recently, TESDA also accredited their farm as TVET provider of OA Production NCII. These partnerships can contribute to the long term sustainability of the farm.

Add to these the consultancy services that Mr. Marsan provides.

Sharing the Advocacy to the Community

As his way of giving back to the community, Mang Rogel devotes half of his time in advocating organic agriculture. Aside from his involvement in OA organizations, he is tapped by partners (like ATI) to share his knowledge, skills, experiences, and advocacies during trainings in organic agriculture. With already established markets for organic products inside and outside the region, Mr. Marsan is consolidating the produce of other organic farmers to ensure there is a quality control to protect the trust of consumers.

This is the story of the Marsan Family who proved that farming is prestigious and profitable. Indeed, a family that farms together stays and achieves together! (JSSAGPA-EY)



Metapmorphosis of a Dream

(Remy Balliyao, Graduate of ATI-CAR's Training Management Training Program)

Watching her deliver her topics during trainings and conduct other extension activities, one could easily sense that she is enjoying her work, she is confident in dispensing her functions, she's proud of what she is doing.



She is Mrs. Remy Balliyao of the Office of Agricultural Services (OAS) of the Province of Kalinga. A graduate of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture at the Gregorio Araneta University Foundation, she joined the government service as farm management technician of the former BAEx in May 1, 1985. Destiny moved her to Kalinga and joined the OAS as Agricultural Technician (AT) in January, 1990. She is currently a farmcaster, seed inspector and corn coordinator. She is now a regular partner of the DA family in conducting trainings along corn, rice and farm enterprise development in Kalinga.

This is her story.

“What I am today as a facilitator and extension worker is a product of my passion to continuously learn and of people I’ve met in the process that served as my mentor, inspiration and guide especially during trainings” says Mrs. Balliyao.

Like any professional who strives to be competent in his/her field, Ms. Balliyao takes all opportunities to develop her knowledge, attitude and skills as agricultural extension worker. Attending trainings is one of her ways to achieve this. According to her, she draws inspiration from facilitators and resource persons



who impress her in the way they deliver their topics, how they answer questions from the participants and how they were able to encourage participants who were shy to participate in the discussions. Her admiration to people with such skills inspired her to dream that someday, she will be like them.

This dream motivated her to attend religiously all capability building activities she is invited to. She says, “every time I am invited to attend trainings I see to it that I could attend to empower me as a facilitator. Oftentimes, when trainings are to be conducted outside the province and money is not available, I have to make a way just to be able to attend the training. I believe that to be able to fulfill my dream as an effective and efficient facilitator I have to invest in acquiring the skills and knowledge and be willing to sacrifice.”

She said that one of the trainings that made a significant contribution to her transformation is the Farm Enterprise Development and Management Training Program (FEDMTP), a ladderized training program composed of four training courses offered by ATI-CAR. According to her, “my skill in developing project proposals was developed when I completed the FEDMTP.”

With her skill in project proposal making, she helped their office and farmer associations prepare such. Some of her approved project proposals were the following: 1) The rehabilitation of the vermicomposting facility and Techno Demo on Corn Production of OAS-Kalinga, 2.) Rehabilitation of vermihouse project of Hentan Enterprises (Henry Angli) of Modopdop, Tabuk City, Kalinga, 3.) Livelihood Opportunities & Environment Conservation through Beekeeping – Beekeepers association of Tabuk (P490,000.00) all funded by DTI, DOLE and Tabuk City Office in the form of grant.

Other farmer organizations she helped prepare their proposals for funding were: 1.) Bulanao Farmers and Corn Growers’ Association for their acquisition of farm machinery and equipment, 2.) Calatagan RIC (Virac, Catanduanes) on their proposal for “Organic Vegetable and Fertilizer Production” (worth P1M), 3.) Office of Agricultural Services of Kalinga for a Rainshelter and Greenhouse Project (worth 20M) under the High Value Commercial Development Program.

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It is not impossible to become what
you want to become if you will work for
it with full dedication, industriousness
and perseverance

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Aside from preparing project proposals, Mrs. Balliyao claims that the Resource Person Development Course, a component course under the FEDMTP, helped her become an effective facilitator and resource person. According to her, it was her first time during this course to do microteaching and to develop a PowerPoint presentation. She was so nervous and tensed then that her coughing got worse as her turn to teach was nearing, to the point that she could not even find the cursor anymore during her presentation. She was only able to breathe normally after her turn. “Mahirap talaga kapag first time” she quips. “One of my realizations after the microteaching was that, to be able to discuss clearly a topic, mastery of it is a must” she says.

As a result of her experience, Mrs. Balliyao bought a second hand computer to master the operation of PowerPoint which she is now used to. Together with her co-participants from Kalinga, they were able to re-echo their learnings from FEDMTP through a training attended by AEWs and MA/MAOs of the different municipalities of the province.

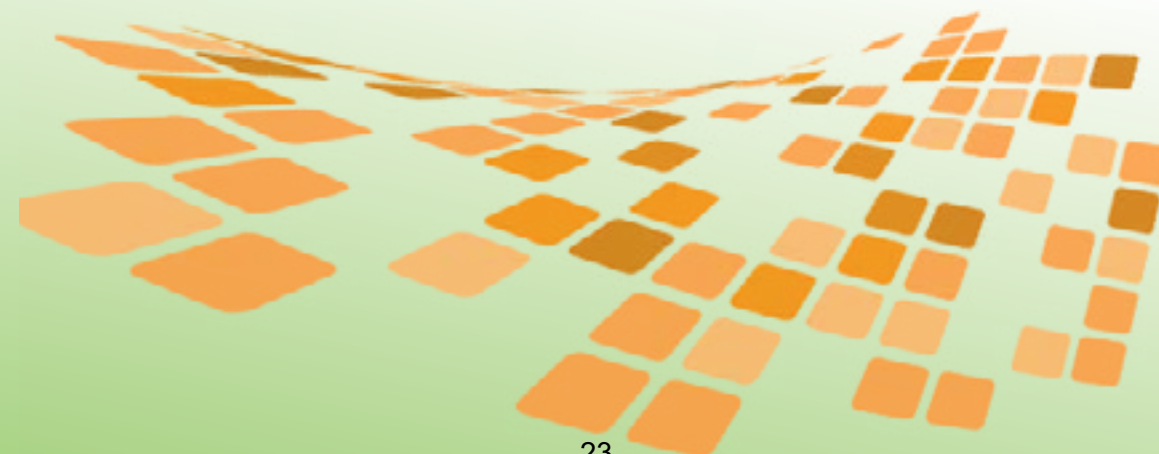
Throughout the years of continuous learning, Mrs. Balliyao’s sacrifices are now bearing fruit. Her dedication to improve herself and her passion to achieve were noticed and this opened opportunities for her to be tapped as facilitator/resource person in various trainings conducted by the ATI-CAR, DA-RFO-CAR and other organizations.

These, further built her confidence and broadened her experience as extension worker.

“Looking back, I would say it is not impossible to become what you want to become if you will work for it with full dedication, industriousness and perseverance. Interest and enthusiasm are also important. You have to like and love your work. You have to sacrifice. You have to invest. You have to inspire yourself” says Mrs. Balliyao.

“Who I am today as a facilitator, I will always be grateful to my mentors and to all who supported me. I may not be as skillful facilitator as the ATI-CAR

facilitators are, but I’m proud to say that somehow, ATI-CAR trainers were able to duplicate themselves in me, they have empowered me to be like one of them. As we are always told during trainings, we are the ATI-CAR in our service areas so we must act like one and strive hard to make quality service to the people and I’m trying to cope up with this expectation all the time. I will continue to learn and to do my work of helping the farmers.....I will continue to enhance my craft that I may be of greater help.” (MR Aromin, Jr.)



Digging in to the Sweet Gold

(Dexter D. Wasawas, participant to the Training on Beekeeping in Support to Organic Agriculture)

The municipality of Mankayan is more popular for its gold and copper compared to its other “golds” such as potato and cabbage. Recently, another form of gold is now buzzing in town, the golden honey. Its “vine” starts just below the towering Mt. Data National Park in Sitio Caew of Barangay Bulalacao, Mankayan, Benguet mined by Mr. Dexter D. Wasawas, the bee bachelor.

Mr. Wasawas, who was once a conventional vegetable farmer, is now captivated into honey production. He recalled that his first encounter with honeybees was with his brother-in-law, who started raising honey bees in 2004. During that time, Mr. Wasawas was not interested with beekeeping. He preferred to work as an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) in Japan together with his brother in 2006. However, fate played on him in 2008. He was left to tend his brother-in-law’s colonies when his contract was

not renewed. At first, it was a boring responsibility for him but still he was able to manage the 50 bee colonies left under his care.

Things started to change when he was sent to a Training on Beekeeping in Support to Organic Agriculture in July 23-27, 2012. This was a joint undertaking of the Agricultural Training Institute-Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-CAR) and the Saint Louis University-Extension Institute for Small Scale Industries Foundation (SLU-EISSIF) - a duly accredited Extension Service Provider (ESP) of the ATI-CAR. The training ignited his interest and enhanced his beekeeping knowledge and skills. According to him, the training though too short, was able to cover both basic and advanced features of beekeeping leading him to appreciate what he has been routinely doing in the past years. He was so excited that upon his return from the training, he went directly to his bee



colonies and immediately incorporated the ideas he learned. As post-training support, he received a beekeeping starter kit, a six-framer colony, from the ATI-CAR.

With his heart into it and applying all the knowledge and skills he acquired from his trainings, he was able to multiply the bee colonies to 105. The very fast and seemingly impossible growth of his colonies were due to two major reasons. First, he employed intensive feeding and maintenance system which further strengthened his bee colonies. Second, he timed the



splitting of his colonies during the early dry season when food for the honeybees is abundant in the surroundings.

Based from his records, the most notable harvest he had was that in December, 2012, where he extracted 800 kilograms of honey from the 20 colonies which was sold at P200 per kilo. Mr. Wasawas also attributed such volume of honey harvest to the extensive flowering of wild sunflowers in the area.



His craft was not limited to honey production; he also ventured into queen bee rearing and in June 2014, he was able to sell 28 queen bees to the SLU- EISSIF at PhP950.00 per queen. Moreover, with his sister's help, the bee bachelor is now planning to upgrade his honey products by having his own brand and bottle.

With what he has gone through in his beekeeping venture, he realized that it is obviously a more profitable enterprise compared to his conventional vegetable farming. The 37 year old bachelor plans to further expand his operations and for now he is currently surveying for additional beekeeping sites particularly in areas where more sunflowers grow.

With his accomplishments in beekeeping, Mr. Wasawas believes that he would be able to persuade his relatives and neighbors to go into bee farming and to heed the call for a sustainable agriculture as well. (ACPVelasco)

“I Found the Better Haven for Investment”

(Marilou Pasi Dulnuan, participant to the Training on White Corn Farming Systems for the IPs in CAR in Support to the FSSP)

Steadfast in applying her knowledge acquired from the various trainings she attended through the years, Mrs. Marilou Pasi Dulnuan is now reaping what she had sown. A daughter of the hilly and fertile land of the Municipality of Sablan dubbed as “the fruit basket of the Province of Benguet,” Mrs. Dulnuan is now operating a number of farms and agribusiness enterprises providing her family not just income and better life but most importantly the opportunity to help farmers in her community.

The 53-year old Ibaloi finished her Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education at the Mountain State Agricultural College, now the Benguet State University. She worked as an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) from 1984 to 1988, and in 1996 she started her agribusiness ventures in their ancestral land and with her experience as starting capital. Her journey to where she is now is a story of series of trying and learning until finally she found her better haven for investment.



Her eagerness to learn something new led her to a lot of opportunities in agriculture and business, that made her an agripreneur. Mrs. Dulnuan has a big appetite for learning seeing all opportunities to learn. This made her a familiar face in trainings. On May, 2013, she attended the Training on White Corn Farming System for IP's in support to the Department of Agriculture's Food Staple Sufficiency Program (FSSP) sponsored by the Agricultural Training Institute-Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-CAR) held in Galicia Farm, Pidigan, Abra. The training inspired her to establish her Corn Demo farm in Lower Monglo, Sablan, Benguet where she integrated indigenous practices and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) that gave her increased production.

Through her attendance to the Regional Cassava Stakeholders' Forum and Workshop on April 3 to 4, 2014 and the Stakeholders Consultation Workshop on the High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) for Benguet on February 28, 2014, she was able to link her products to more markets and to other

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Mrs. Dulnuan has always thought of ways to prolong the shelf life of fresh cassava while retaining its quality and essential nutrients.

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stakeholders. Moreover, she was able to acquire new ways and techniques in the production and processing of her products from her linkages with technical experts and advanced farmers she met during these activities. She applied all of these to improve her products and her agribusiness. Her persistence in trying various technologies, which she successfully adopted, was recognized by various concerned agencies including the Department of Agriculture and the Municipal Local Government Unit (MLGU) of Sablan. As a result, she was chosen to host techno-demo activities and projects on cassava production and processing.

Mrs. Dulnuan has always thought of ways to prolong the shelf life of fresh cassava while retaining its quality and essential nutrients. This enabled her to cover a wider market. She was able to further diversify her products through her attendance to cassava processing trainings and by reading Information, Education and Communication Materials (IEC) materials on cassava processing such as the “Cassava Recipes” distributed by the ATI-CAR. She did not end her endeavors by just plainly applying what

she learned from the trainings and from the IEC materials, rather she further experimented on these. She continued searching for more ways which could better suit the conditions in her locality and her target markets thus, through her innovativeness she has developed more products from cassava and discovered more market opportunities.

After her attendance to the Stakeholders Consultation Workshop on the HVCDP for Benguet on February 28, 2014 she established connections with various market outlets of processed banana products thus she was able to promote her products such as the well-known Sablan Tumok, and Lakatan. In addition, Mrs. Dulnuan also runs a piggery which gives her family an additional income amounting to ₱100,000.00 every six months and a poultry adding another ₱45,000.00 income every 45 days.

Mrs. Dulnuan also manages ChenJoy's Store and Eatery, a business she cared for almost 17 years and the five-year old Pitpitan Eatery, both in Sablan, Benguet, where she also markets her processed cassava products. Due to

the strong demand of her products, she was able to extend her outlets to other stores. These agri-enterprises earn her a monthly income of ₱45,000.00 and with these she was able to employ a total of seven workers from their community.

Her achievements were commended in 2013 when her family won the Regional (Land-based Category) Model OFW Family of the Year Award (MOFYA) as exemplified by their successful transition from an OFW-dependent family to a leading family of agripreneurs. Mrs. Dulnuan is also a favorite entry of the MLGU of Sablan during food processing and novelty items production contests. On November 24, 2012 she represented the municipality in two contests namely, the Indigenous Vegetable Salad Preparation Contest and the Prototype Contest for

Adivay and Municipal Souvenir Items during the annual agro-industrial fair of the Adivay Festival of the province of Benguet. She proved her wits in food processing when a year later she won first place in the Nutri-snack (Rice-based) Preparation and Presentation during the same annual event.

As a testament to her achievements in the field of agripreneurship she was able to send her children to school, one of them is now a registered teacher and another is a registered nutritionist. Her youngest child is now taking Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at the Benguet State University.



Mrs. Dulnuan, being a proactive leader, is also involved in various civic activities, she is currently the president of the Salat-Sawili Farmers Association of Sablan. Moreover, she also serves as the treasurer of the Sablan OFW Migrant Workers Family Organization, a member of the Board of Directors of the Sablan Greenthumb Cooperative and the assistant treasurer of the Assemblies of the First Born, Bilis Full Gospel Church.

Mrs. Dulnuan’s journey is indeed a remarkable time line of success. Indeed, sowing with patience, dedication and perseverance will surely lead you to a bountiful harvest. Her practices shall continue to influence the community through her profession that indeed a better haven for investment can be found in farming enterprise. Truly, she is a proactive community builder, selfless leader and an outstanding agripreneur. (ACP Velasco)

Bee My Honey Coffee!

(Martin Dep-et, participant to the Training on Beekeeping in Support to Organic Agriculture)

The crisp and fresh pine scent will surely entice anyone who steps into this farm and as the trail gets farther within, the magnificent flight of busy buzzing bees atop the iconic Igorot stone wall will surely uplift a visitor's exhausted spirit. Then the verdant coffee trees beneath the cooling pine trees will tell you that you are finally at Mr. Martin Dep-et's farm. Perched high at the splendid mountain ranges of Guinzadan Norte, Bauko, Mountain Province the nearly a hectare farm is a showcase of the blending of bees, coffee, bananas, citrus and vegetables.

Mr. Martin Dep-et, who was used to the conventional way of cultivating semi-temperate vegetables, is now captivated with the diversified and natural farming system as evidently seen in his farm. His success was brought about by years of patience and perseverance amidst the challenges and difficulties of converting from monocropping to a more sustainable way of farming.

Mr. Dep-et narrated that in 1982, he planted coffee seedlings under the pine trees beside his vegetable farm. However, he was too focused tending to his vegetable farms that he did not mind his coffee plants

not until 2009 when he took time to go around the area and noticed ripe coffee berries. This made him realize that indeed coffee can survive and bear fruit under the pine trees of Bauko. This prompted him to attend to the coffee trees and with proper cultural management such as weeding, pruning, detopping and rejuvenation he was able save his coffee plants from disappearing among the thick weeds and grasses. His coffee farm gave him his first produce of 20 kilograms coffee parchment. The produce may not be enough to compensate his efforts of saving the coffee trees but Mr. Dep-et did not give up. Instead, he continued to properly manage the coffee trees for he understood that these neglected coffee trees needed time to recuperate. His patience brought him a second harvest of 300kg coffee parchment that increased to 400kg during the third harvest. His coffee production became a buzz in their town that eventually inspired his town folks to plant coffee and tend to their own coffee trees.

Asked how he was able to rise from all the challenges he faced, he always answered - "having the right attitude and love for knowledge." His sustained patience since the first few years when his coffee production was at its lowest

yield, reinforced with his personal readings helped him establish his coffee farm. Having no professional education in agriculture, he always emphasized the importance of reading printed materials. He testified that he gained most of his knowledge and mastery in coffee production from printed IEC materials, particularly from the coffee primer jointly produced by ATI-CAR, DA-RFO-CAR, and the Benguet State University in 2005.

The focus of Mr. Dep-et shifted after some time from vegetables to coffee. He was motivated to integrate beekeeping in his coffee farm when he noticed that the coffee flowers are luring swarms of honey bees. This gave him the idea to incorporate these wonderful insects in his farm. Mr. Dep-et became very interested in beekeeping that he even bought four bee colonies which he hoped to multiply. However his limited knowledge on basic beekeeping hampered him from maximizing the potential of his new venture. Mr. Dep-et is now faced with the dilemma whether to abandon his beekeeping activity or to continue it but with no assurance of gaining any profit or even getting back his initial investment. The news of Mr. Dep-et's acquisition

of bee colonies reached the Office of the Municipal Agriculturist (OMAg) of Bauko which was very timely for an invitation from the ATI-CAR in cooperation with the SLU-EISSIF for a Training on Beekeeping in Support to Organic Agriculture on December 12 to 16, 2012. Mr. Dep-et did not give any second thoughts about the training when it was referred to him by the OMAg of Bauko. He immediately accepted the invitation and by God's grace, the training became Mr. Dep-et's foundation in realizing his beekeeping dream.

In 2013, he managed to split his bee colonies into a total of 12 colonies which yielded him a total harvest of 500 kilograms of honey. It was from these harvests that he produced 178 bottles of honey which he sold at ₱250.00 per bottle. At present Mr. Dep-et has 27 colonies and is working out to multiply these into 40 colonies. His produce, both coffee and honey, are mostly being marketed by the Local Government of Bauko through their souvenir shop at the municipal hall. His beekeeping venture combined with his coffee and vegetable production significantly increased his income.



Mr. Dep-et keeps his farm open and willingly shares his knowledge and skills in farming to those who would like to learn specially his fellow farmers. His openness in sharing his farming experiences and technologies, made him a favorite as resource speaker on coffee and honey related activities being organized by the Office of the Municipal Agriculturist of Bauko.

Armed with nothing but his dreams which are as high as the cloud-capped mountains of Bauko, Mr. Dep-et is determined to keep his coffee sweetened with honey as he gradually inches his way to his farming dream. He is also making ways to ensure that these will be passed on to his children and continuously be shared to the community by involving them into his farming activity.

The journey of Mr. Dep-et along with his coffee and honey continues as long as his passion on these lives on. Similar stories will surely be heard while there are people like him who are ready to embrace similar undertaking coupled with perseverance and continues search for knowledge.

The Sweet Harvest

The sight of buzzing busy bees braving the chilling Siberian breeze atop the misty mountain ranges of Bauko, Mt. Province leaves this farmer smiling to the heart as he tenderly checks his bee colonies that early morning of January 14, 2015. Mr.

Martin Dep-et has been observing this routine since 2012. Today he was able to reach another milestone in his beekeeping venture as the annual honey flow reaches its peak.

The honey flow, which usually falls during the months of December to January, is the harvest time for beekeepers. During this time the Dep-et family keeps their selves busy all around their bee-swarmed home. Their routine covers the careful exhumation of honey-filled frames from the colonies then the delicate scrapping of the wax seal which prevents the honey from spilling and from contamination while inside the comb, and consequently the extraction through a manual honey extractor.

The extractor is a stainless cylindrical barrel which contains rotating compartments where the frames are then lodged during extraction. The process is an arm-twitching exercise as it requires the person operating the extractor to maintain a constant and rhythmic rotation inside the extractor causing the frames to spin and release the honey. The honey flows to a basin below the extractor, bottling then follows.

After extraction the frames are then gently returned to their respective colonies where the bees will repair and fill it up again. Considering that nothing is wasted during the honey harvest, Mr. Dep-et collects the wax seal they previously removed from the

frames which is later processed into what is popularly known as beeswax. During this year's honey flow the Bauko's honey king was able to harvest 123 bottles of honey from just seven colonies starting December 22, 2014 to January 4, 2015 or an average of 18 bottles per colony and as of December 2014 he has a total of 27 colonies.

His bountiful harvest of course does not end with his family. The Municipal Local Government (MLGU) of Bauko, recognizing his successful agripreneurial endeavor, has been tapping him as a resource speaker during trainings on beekeeping. Recently, the MLGU Bauko conducted a specialized training course on beekeeping where Mr. Dep-et served as resource speaker and this January he distributed 20 starter colonies for the 20 participants he previously trained. According to Mr. Dep-et he is more inclined with the practical aspects of beekeeping and during trainings his discussions and demonstrations usually focus on box making, frame wiring, varoa treatment, and many more.

Asked about his beekeeping strategy, Mr. Dep-et smiles as he confesses that he often asked other beekeepers on their approaches, he would later try such to his own bee colonies and later modify or add some. (ACP Velasco)

Young Agripreneur Unleashed

(Mary Grail Paredes, recipient of the 4-H Club Financial Assistance under the Youth and Agriculture and Fisheries Program)

Responding to the world's call to the youth for a better future may be a herculean task but this does not dwarf a brave 4-H'er lady into pursuing her dreams.

Ms. Mary Grail Paredes is another sapling of the strong Balawag 4-H Club of Tabuk City, Kalinga. Her agripreneurial story started after she graduated from college. Unable to find a suitable job, Ms. Paredes ventured into business. She opened a sari-sari store while she assists in the farming activities of her parents. To enhance her innate agripreneurial skills, she joined the Balawag coffee processing group. Today, she is one of the distributors of Balawag ground coffee and a marketer of Unoy rice to local buyers in Tabuk City, Baguio City and outside the Cordillera Region.

In 2013, Ms. Paredes attended a series of trainings implemented by the ATI-CAR. One of which was the Training on Food Staple Sufficiency Program: Rice-Based Food Processing. The training enabled her to expand her agribusiness enterprise to include the

production and marketing of rice-based snacks such as puto, bibingka, and others. Further, she was also equipped with skills in dealing with community affairs through the ATI-CAR's Training on Public Speaking and Conducting Meetings for 4-H officers and members of CAR. This training along with her other credentials, gave her courage to apply as a secretary to their Barangay Local Government Unit. Luckily, she is now serving her barangay while attending to her agri-enterprise. Ms. Paredes actively joined the Experience-Based Integrated Farming System for 4-H Club Coordinators and Members of Kalinga on September 2013 where they were trained on-field and first hand by Mr. Teodoro Kub-ao, one of CAR's Gawad Saka Awardee on Rice-Based Integrated Farming. Her latest training from the ATI-CAR was the Local Farm Youth Exchange on August 2014 where she had a first-hand and actual experience on the unique technologies practiced by outstanding farmers in the Cordillera Region.



The Balawag 4-H Club which was established in 2010 serves as a training ground for Balawag's aspiring young agripreneurs as leaders like Ms. Paredes. With her leadership and the help of her members, they were able to convince more of their fellow youths to join their cause thus bringing their membership to 29 in 2014. After attending trainings and being informed of the ATI's 4-H Club Youth Development Program which has a livelihood component she immediately seized the opportunity to further improve their Club by availing of the Program. After consulting her fellow 4H'ers Ms. Paredes prepared a proposal for their Club's Peking duck production project. In January 2014 their Club was able to avail of the ATI-CAR's Financial Assistance to Livelihood Projects for 4-Clubs with an amount of ₱50,000.00.

Ms. Paredes who is now a promising young agripreneur gives credit to her experiences and trainings being a 4-H'er which prepared her to be abreast with the constantly changing trends in agribusiness, employment and in managing her family, and community relations as well.

Full of faith, Ms. Paredes is continuously exploring more opportunities to further develop her agribusiness venture. In doing so, she hopes to inspire her fellow youth to give importance to agriculture, most especially in their barangay. She firmly believes that as 4-H'ers, through constant learning by doing, they can change the world and make the best better.
(ACP Velasco)



Youngsters Sweat to Make the Future Sweet

(Masla-Hoyohoy 4-H Club, recipient of the 4-H Club Financial Assistance under the Youth and Agriculture and Fisheries Program)



Awarded as the Outstanding Young Farmer/Fisherfolk Organization (OYFFO) in CAR by the Department of Agriculture in 2013, the Masla Hoyohoy 4-H Club of Tadian, Mountain Province remains steadfast in continuing what they have started. Aiming for greater years ahead of them, they continually excel in their endeavors to help their Club members and the community as well.



The Club is one of the most active Rural Based Organizations (RBO) being assisted by the ATI-CAR. In 2011, the Club was granted with a soft loan amounting to PhP75,000.00 for their Muscovado Production Project. This amount enabled the Club to procure a total of 20 tons of raw sugarcane for processing and 2,000 pieces of sugarcane planting materials. The raw sugarcane yielded the Club a total of 2,000 kilos of muscovado which earned them a total income of PhP47,734.50. The Club, with the commitment of their advisers, officers and members, was able to pay back the loan to ATI on September 23, 2014.

The operation of the Club is sustained through the various enterprises being managed by the members like their muscovado production, vegetable garden, tilapia, swine, poultry, goat production, and a nursery where the members produce planting materials for various crops. They also maintain

a consumer's store where they sell their produce. Each member also attends to their respective vegetable and swine projects as their source of income for their respective families, some of which are funded by the club.

The Club has been serving as an active catalyst for youth development and an active participant in the affairs of the community. The organization serves as a molding entity for the community youth, where they can enhance their skills, promote camaraderie and acquire desirable values. All of these molded and prepared them to become a productive and responsible citizen which is a building block for a progressive community.

As a testimony to its dynamic involvement and contribution in community development, the Club received various awards, recognitions and citations within the community, provincial and regional levels. The Masla Hoyohoy 4-H Club was a Regional Awardee and national finalist for the most coveted Outstanding Young

Farmer/Fisherfolk Organization (OYFFO) Award granted by the Department of Agriculture in 2013. In 2014, the Club was able to defend its crown as the regional winner for the OYFFO in the Cordillera Administrative Region. After a series of rigorous evaluations among competing 4-H Clubs finally nationwide the Masla Hoyohoy 4-H Club emerged as the 2014 National Outstanding Young Farmer/Fisherfolk Organization (OYFFO).

Though bestowed with various accolades because of their accomplishments, the Masla-Hoyohoy 4-H Club members chose to be true to their pledge to be one in heart, head, health and hand, as they continue to strive for the betterment of the lives of their fellow youth, their families and community. For this end, the Club members commit themselves to keep the 4-H motto of "making the best better" burning and to be able to pass it on to future members. As of 2014, the Club has already 105 members and still counting. (ACP Velasco)





The Salvino Organic Farm: An Age-old Wisdom

(Mr. Noel and Mrs. Aida Salvino, Learning Site on Organic Agriculture)

Dynamic duo. This would aptly describe Mr. and Mrs. Noel and Aida Salvino, who, despite their age (72 and 68, respectively), are still actively involved in managing their organic farm tagged as Salvino organic Farm (SOF). Located in the hunting grounds of the famous Apo Anno (mummified) in sitio Taba-ao, Loo, Buguias, Benguet, this farm has simple yet another inspiring story to share.

The couple started farming way back in 1984 but it was only in 2003 that the couple started shifting to organic farming after Mr. Salvino attended a seminar on organic gardening. This event spurred the couple's interest in organic agriculture and increased their participation to various trainings and seminars. The couple's interest in organic farming led them to meet, visit and learn from the advocates of organic agriculture, like Mr. Pat Acosta, Mr. Greg Kitma, Mr. Jefferson Laruan, Mr. Eric Tinoyan, and others who are advanced organic farmers and awardees in the field of organic agriculture.

The couple recalled that they too struggled when they began to shift their conventional farm to an organic one. They endured the negative criticisms and comments from their neighbors and relatives. They felt alienated by their new practice. Physically strenuous work added to the challenge of putting up an organic farm.

Mrs. Salvino vividly remembered the times when they had to carry forest soils from the hilltop down to their farm located beside a stream. They also experienced the difficulties of putting up a durable rain shelter for their vegetable farm for they need to rebuild it over and over again for they used wood and bamboo which are short-lived and are easily destroyed by storms.

They also admitted that at first, they failed to realize a more competitive income. Nonetheless, they were never discouraged. Rather they continued on experimenting various techniques and attending trainings on organic agriculture.

In the later part of 2008, the SOF became a member of the La Trinidad Organic Producers Multi-Purpose Cooperative (LaTOP MPC). This gave them an opportunity to avail of a loan

from the cooperative which they used to build a more sturdy rain shelter reinforced by metal bars which up to the present is still being utilized. The farm had an initial production area of 1,200 square meters in 2003. It underwent continuous development and in 2008 up to the present, the area being planted expanded to 3,214 square meters. The farm is devoted to highland vegetables both through green house and open field production. Like any other organic farm, the SOF relies heavily on compost as their main farm input. The couple also have their own nursery. They emphasized that through the nursery, they are able to facilitate easier crop management and maximize their production area.

Today, they adopted a more efficient farming system and are realizing a better income through the continuous planting and harvesting system of organic agriculture, compared to the one-time planting and harvesting system in conventional farming. Through their persistence and hard work, the couple were able to gradually pay the loans they incurred in the establishment of the SOF. Moreover, the new farming system brought them a weekly supply of fresh vegetables for their own consumption. Aside from their household consumption, they also supply LaTOPMPC and similar marketing outlets in Baguio City.

The various skills enhancement activities they attended, most of which



were through the ATI-CAR, reinforced the couple's knowledge, skills and interest for organic farming. Mr. Salvino was able to join the Training in Support to Organic Agriculture Internal Control System (ICS Upgrading for LaTOP MPC) from June 17 to 21, 2013. On December 17, 2013 he graduated from the Organic Agriculture Farmer's Field School for Buguias Farmers conducted by the ATI-CAR. These trainings widened their knowledge in the production of organic vegetables in a more effective and efficient farm management.

Finally, the couple's hard work paid off and after completing the rigorous requirements, the ATI-CAR certified the Salvino Organic Farm (SOF) as one of its Learning Site for Organic Agriculture. Inspired by the recognition, they plan to turn their farm into a model organic farm and secure a third party organic certification.

Lastly, with a smile, Mr. Salvino said "we are already old and whether we like it or not, we are already near the end of

the race, that is why we have to do good as much as we can". He further added "if we wish to do good then we should start by growing safe food for ourselves and for others. We will not feel good feeding others with pesticide-packed vegetables that we produced". The couple also stands on the principle that through organic farming they are able to "respect the right of everyone, including themselves, to be served with the best produced vegetables." Above all, the couple strongly believes that by doing all these they are able to follow the commandments of God.

With the future in mind, the couple is currently training their grandchildren by getting them involved in the daily activities in the farm. The couple keeps their farm open for those who want to learn from their experience, most especially their neighbors.

The SOF is a standing testament most especially for their relatives and neighbors that organic agriculture is possible and productive in their locality. (ACP Velasco)



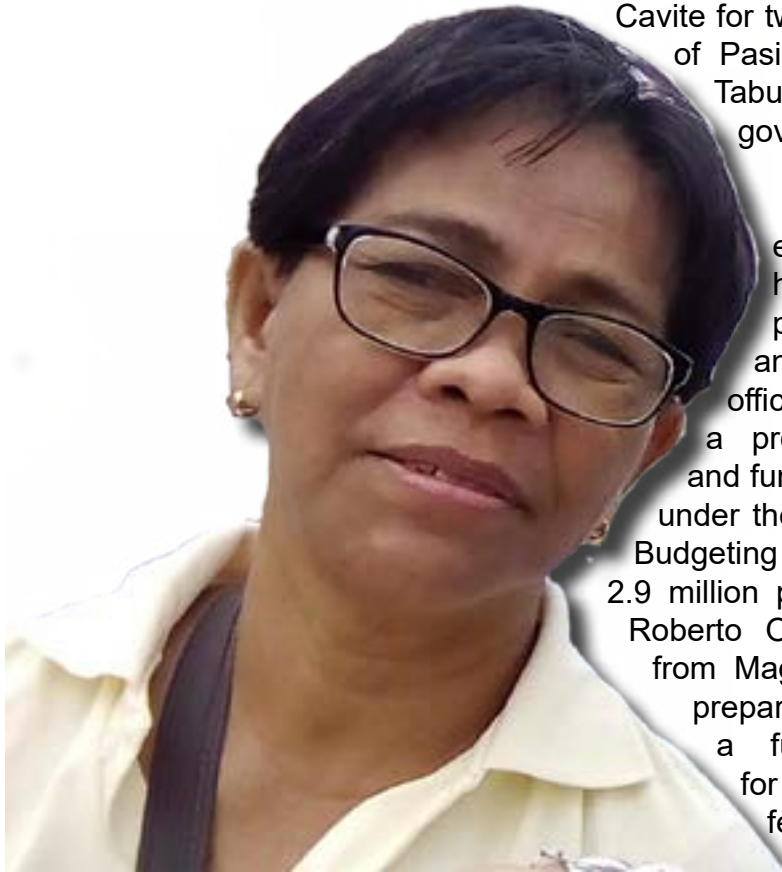
The Unselfish Knowledge Sharer

(Fatima Solimen, Agricultural Technician, participant to various training programs of ATI-CAR)

The effectiveness of an extension worker is seen through the clientele served.

Ms. Fatima Solimen or “Fat” as she is fondly called, is an agricultural technician working with the City Agriculturist Office of Tabuk City, Kalinga. She is from Albay, worked as Livestock Technician at the Philippine Rural Life Center in Cavite for two years, married a native of Pasil, Kalinga and moved to Tabuk City, Kalinga to join the government service.

As an agricultural extension worker, Fat helps her office and the clientele prepare project proposals and training designs. For her office, she was able to prepare a project proposal accepted and funded by the DA-RFO-CAR under the Grassroots Participatory Budgeting Program amounting to 2.9 million pesos. She assisted Mr. Roberto Oticao, a livestock raiser from Magasoso, Bulo, Tabuk City prepare a proposal that received a funding of P100,000.00 for the establishment of a feed garden for livestock.



She was also able to conduct various enterprise trainings for the rural women of barangays San Julian, Calanan and Tuga in Tabuk City funded by her office. The Tuga RIC adopted most of the technologies and became part of their organization's projects. For this, the RIC organization was adjudged as the Most Outstanding RIC in CAR in CY 2014.

Skills in organic agriculture is also part of her arsenal of expertise. One of her clients who adopted her teachings

on this is Mrs. Rosario C. Rosito, a swine raiser of Purok Liwanag, Dilag, Tabuk City. From Fat, she learned a low-cost yet effective way of raising pigs. According to her, the technology she learned is three times more beneficial than her old commercial practice. Aside from being low-cost, emission of foul smell is zero, thereby contributing to a healthier environment. She is able to sell her piglets at the same price as the commercially raised ones but



earns more with a lower production cost. Mr. Alfredo Matbagan, president of the Magasoso Vegetable Growers and Animal Raisers Association (MaVeGARA) in sitio Magasoso, Tabuk City, is another client served by Fat who claims that he has benefited from Fat's teachings on swine production. He says that although he did not follow fully the technology as he injected his own innovation, still he claims that the learnings he gained from Fat was more advantageous than his former practice.

In addition to enterprise development and organic agriculture, Fat also shares her knowledge and skills on rice technologies, particularly on climate change mitigation, and trainings on livestock. She is frequently tapped by various agencies and groups such as the DepEd, DAR, DA-RFO-CAR, CHARMP, and other LGUs to share her expertise. She applies her computer literacy and computer-based data management and internet browsing trainings so that she is able to prepare powerpoint presentations that enhance her delivery.



Fat developed her knowledge and skills through the years along the various concerns of agriculture and rural development by attending trainings especially those conducted by the ATI-CAR, as she claims. This, together with her love for work and passion for helping others, made her a competent, well-rounded agricultural extension worker and a multi-awarded public servant.

For her exemplary services, she was awarded the Rice Achiever's Award for three consecutive years from 2011-13, together with her co-workers; she is one of the recipients of the Civil Service Commission's Pag-asa Award, both at the regional and national levels.

For Fat, attention and love for work and family can go together. Her three children are now all successful professionals with her guidance – an engineer, a Certified Public Accountant, and an aircraft technician. For all her services, all she needs is a sincere “thank you.” (ACP Velasco)

A Woman's Hands Sowing the Seed of Change

(Berlina Clemencia, participant to the PalayCheck System Farmers Field School)

The colorful beads and intricate tattoos of the Kalinga women are exquisite depiction of their determination and persistence in life amidst an increasingly challenging world, such is Mrs. Berlina Clemencia, a rice farmer of Balong, Tabuk City, Kalinga. Mrs. Clemencia had spent 35 years of her life with her husband, Mr. Honorio Clemencia, tilling their four hectare farm under the scorching sun

and the pouring rain. As a family they were able to survive and break through the challenges of an agriculture-based living and became a concrete testimony of a successful farm family.



Mrs. Clemencia undeniably is a co-equal pillar, who in loving harmony with her husband and their children worked their way out of the vicious cycle of agricultural unproductivity. She is not a typical housewife, who just stays at home and takes care of the kids and house chores. Her dream for a better life motivated her to help her husband in the field to make a living for the family.

The years of hardwork and persistence made Mrs. Clemencia a

master of her own craft and complemented her husband's efforts in enriching their livelihood. The Clemencia family successfully adopted the integrated rice-based farming system. Mrs. Clemencia's often unnoticed contribution in their rice production comes during the planting and harvesting season where she has to secure the necessary logistics such as food and other arrangements in managing the planting and harvesting activities. Her husband's increasing focus on rice production made Mrs. Clemencia's involvement in their farm more evident.



Out of their four hectare farm, two hectares are devoted to rice production while the remaining two are devoted to vegetable, fruits, poultry, livestock and fishery production. Aside from assisting her husband in rice production, Mrs. Clemencia's daily routine devoted to managing the other components of their farm. Her daily schedule includes tending to their swine, duck and tilapia from cleaning, feed formulation and feeding activities. She devotes the rest of the day at their vegetable garden growing various vegetables both for home consumption and for marketing.

She has also been effective in adopting farming technologies which she and her husband acquired from attending various trainings and seminars. Among these are the series of trainings on Palay Check System conducted by the Agricultural Training-Institute-Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-CAR) and other trainings conducted by other Government agencies such as the DA, PhilMech, DENR, the Provincial Local Government Unit of Kalinga and the City Local Government of Tabuk and even by the private sector. One of the technologies adopted from her trainings with the ATI-CAR is the formulation and use of fermented fruit and plant juices which she uses in her vegetable garden and this significantly lowered her input expenses. Her passion in growing ornamentals particularly flowers became a very

substantial part of the farming system when she learned about insect repelling plants. Today, the long lines of marigolds decorate her vegetable plots and rice paddies. Mrs. Clemencia's vegetable production became a sustainable food source for their family and an income generating venture. In fact in 2013, her vegetables earned an average ROI of 274% or an additional net income of ₱71,000.00.

Besides her family, Mrs. Clemencia is also actively into community service as a member of the Balong Rural Improvement Club. She hosts club meetings and barangay meetings.

In 2014, she was chosen as host to ATI-CAR's Farm Business School.

Others may see Mrs. Clemencia as an "exception to the rule" that a housewife should only be in the house taking care of the children and doing household chores. However, she believes that all women can also be empowered like her, given a right and strong motivation. It's just a matter of choice. She believes that husband and wife should team up to provide better future for their family. Thus, for a farm family, agriculture cannot exist without women. For this end, she calls on all women in agriculture to step out, stretch their hand and sow the seeds of change. (ACP Velasco)

Celebrating the Fruits of the Golden Roots

(Milagros Justo, Magsasaka Siyentista of FITS-Itogon, Benguet)

In the year 1624, the Spanish explorer Don Q.M. Quirante reached the mysterious mountain lands of Benguet in search for the fabled gold of the mountain people. His quest for gold never materialized due to the cunning methodologies of deception and hiding by the people of Benguet. What he found instead were sweet potatoes, taro, rice and other crops planted during those times.



Almost 400 years later, the culture of planting taro, sweet potatoes, rice and many other crops survived and still being practiced by the people of Benguet. One of them is Mrs. Milagros Justo, the “gabi queen” of the Municipality of Itogon, dubbed as the “land of golden opportunities of the province of Benguet”. The 59-year old mother of four has mastered both the art and science of planting taro as this is her family’s source of living for almost 30 years.

The lack of formal education in agriculture did not prevent her from exploring and rising from the standards of an ordinary farmer. Starting with what she has, she combined and harmonized the indigenous farming practices she inherited and the modern farming technologies she continuously acquire from various trainings and IEC materials. Her hard work, dedication and openness to change in farming became her key towards improving her production and marketing of her





products. Her farm served as experimental stations for the Northern Philippines Root Crops Research and Training Center (NPRCRTC) of the Benguet State University. This propelled her towards improved farming systems as she learned better technologies from selection of planting materials, spacing, fertilization, weed management, harvest and post-harvest technologies.

Her efforts were recognized when the Municipal Local Government of Itogon endorsed her as the Municipality's Magsasaka Siyentista under the TechnoGabay Program when it was still with the Highland Agriculture Resources Research and Development Consortium (HAARRDEC). Under the Program she serves as the Municipality's farmer expert in taro production wherein she acts as resource person during trainings. Likewise, she is a source of local technologies on taro and became a model to other farmers in her community.

Like any mothers, Mrs. Justo dreams for a better life for her children thus she did her best to send them to school. Today all of her children have graduated from college and are not just practicing their respective professions but are also into farming. Thanks to the fruit of the golden root. Asked about how she did it through those 30 long years, she just smiled and said, "It's all about trying," this, she believes is the heart of her farming practice. (ACP Velasco)





A Good Life in Rice and More

(Bonifacio Q. Dumagay, participant to the Training Course on PalayCheck System for Farmers of Kalinga)

The refreshing view of sparkling morning dew often blankets a humble farm located on the foothills of Cawagayan, Pinukpuk, Kalinga. Staying on top of the hill would offer anyone a view of a busy family starting their daily farm routine through the leadership of the family's patriarch, Mr. Bonifacio Q. Dumagay. The Dumagay's three hectare farm is another exceptional model of an integrated rice-based farm showcasing a basket of crops intertwined with livestock and fisheries adopting improved technologies for a more productive and profitable farm enterprise.

Mr. Dumagay's passion for agriculture convinced him to take Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and upon graduation he returned home to farm, a decision he says he will never regret. Like many farmers Mang Bonnie, as he is often called by his neighbors, had experienced the challenges of farming such as limited land and water resources, expensive inputs, lack of capital and many more.

Nonetheless, despite these obstacles, Mang Bonnie was unfazed. He took advantage of his very strong asset - the knowledge and skills he obtained from his education. Mr. Dumagay related that it took him a lot of patience and persistence in adopting, experimenting and innovating from technologies he accumulated from his formal education, fellow farmers and extension service providers such as the Department of Agriculture, Local Government Units, other government agencies and the private sector. His years of hard work indeed paid him back and opened more opportunities for him and his fellow farmers. His successful adoption of technologies improved his production, increased his income, and convinced his neighbors and fellow farmers to do the same.

Mang Bonnie advocates the principle of a self-sufficient farm, where as much as possible, all farm inputs must come from the farm itself. This promotes zero-waste management where all by-products in the production becomes an

input of crops, livestock and fisheries. Out of his three hectare farm, Mr. Dumagay devotes two hectares to rice while the remaining hectare hosts his vegetables, corn, livestock, tilapia, composting facilities, and a receiving area for farm visitors. Mang Bonnie produces carbonized rice hulls out of the rice hulls from his farm which he uses as soil enhancer. He also uses fermented fruit and plant juices for his vegetables. He practices integrated pest management system by planting pest repellant plants, insect attractants

and crop rotation and diversification. He also raises swine, chicken, goats and tilapia both for home consumption and for additional income.

Mr. Dumagay, though had been farming for a long time still attends trainings and seminars. He was able to finish the Agricultural Training Institute's series of trainings on the Palay Check System. He also consistently seeks the advice of agricultural extension workers in their locality. Mang Bonnie, through his attendance to various trainings and seminars and his consistent adoption of improved technologies and farming systems improved his production and significantly decreased his expenses on farm inputs, thus increasing his income. In 2012 Mr. Dumagay's farm recorded an ROI of 226.49 or a net income amounting to ₱775,764. This continued to grow and in 2013 the farm was able to realize an ROI of 187.45 with a corresponding net income of ₱802,367.00. (ACP Velasco)



Pitcher Plants and Organic Farms: The V & L Farm Success Story



Agricultural land, water, trees, mountains, plants and animals surround most of the childhood life of Mr. Valerio Ramos, 63 years of Poblacion, Bauko, Mountain Province. He grew up in the farmlands of this municipality until college when he took a course in Geodetic Engineering at the Saint Louis University, Baguio City. After graduation, he landed a job as Geodetic Engineer at Itogon Suyoc Mines, Benguet (1968-1972), Lepanto Mining Corporation, Mankayan, Benguet (1978-1983), Atlas Mining Corporation in Masbate (1986-1989); Gold Fields Philippines, Camarines Norte (1990); Paragon Mines, Camarines Norte (1997-1998); Lepanto Mining Corporation, Mankayan, Benguet (1999-2003) as consultant; He also worked as a private land surveyor for 4 years (1972-1978) and as construction surveyor in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (1983-1986). He retired as a Mining Consultant in Lepanto Mines in 2003.

Mr. Ramos recalls that in one of his surveying activities for the operation of an open pit mining in Paragon Mines, he saw a rare pitcher plant standing alone on top of the

hill where he was standing. With this were a few wild geese and other assorted forest cover and wildlife. After only a few weeks, all of these were gone, the mountains and the topsoil were pushed to the sea because of the bulldozing and leveling activities that were being done. Mr. Ramos then thought deeply and said to himself, "the pitcher plant and the wild geese are only a few of the many species that had become extinct because nature was replaced with an industry called mining. While still working for the mining firms, Mr. Ramos pondered deeply about the plight of the pitcher plant, the wild geese, the plants and the wildlife. While the mines provided jobs for many people, it has degraded wildlife and its habitat. It has eventually affected the life of man, animals and marine life too.

One year after his retirement in October 2004, Mr. Ramos and his wife, Lydia, started to develop a modest piece of land about 4,000 square meters in Palina, Taloy Sur, Tuba, Benguet. They bought this property in 2001 as an investment and tried to sell it a year later but there were no buyers. Tired of city life with all the pollution, traffic, noise and crowd, they decided to develop the place into a small farm and retirement home. The farmlot has existing coconut, mango, tamarind and bamboo trees when they bought it but were unattended. Thus, they started clearing the area by removing the weeds, grasses, wild vines, shrubs and bushes. They planted additional fruit trees such as bananas, avocados, atis, guava, guyabano, lemon and papaya. Later, they started building their farm



house and introduced other developments like terracing the slopes with ripraps, building perimeter fence, and concrete access steps from the road to the property. In February 19, 2005, their 39th wedding anniversary, they moved to their new home and continued developing their farm lot. Other developments introduced were the installation of steel tank and construction of concrete tank for water storage, construction of chicken house, construction of water impounding ponds and installation of pipelines for irrigation.

Finally, he started to develop lowland vegetable and fruit tree gardens by leveling and terracing the area with stone ripraps. The shoulder or outer edge of the sloping portions were terraced with the use of shrubs, nitrogen fixing plants (flamengia, caliandra and rhinzoni) and lemon grass. Lately, he planted pineapple as hedgerows and as cash crop. At the terraced walls, waterways and pathways, he planted Australian peanut and carabao grass as

cover crops to control soil erosion. The flat portion of the terraces were planted to string beans.

At the wider and flatter areas of the terraces, he made plots. He separated each plot with the use of cement-clay bricks which he himself makes with minimal cost. The plots were filled with compost which he too produces. His compost is made of shredded grasses, shrubs, plant residues, and twigs gathered in the area and are fermented with the use of effective micro-organisms (EM). The plots are planted to lowland vegetables such as talinum, string beans, okra, eggplant, and kangkong.

He also raises range chicken (Kabir) and lately, he bought one head of goat and is feeding it with legumes, grasses, and nitrogenous fixing plants that he planted in the farm.



This 4,000 square meter lot is now called the V & L Farms (Valerio and Lydia). It is located along the Marcos Highway near the boundary of Benguet and La Union. It is about 40 minutes ride from Baguio City and about 10 minutes to Pugo, La Union. It has an elevation of about 450 meters above sea level, overlooking Lingayen gulf and the lowland municipalities of Pangasinan & La Union. The climate is rather warm.

Mr. Ramos is not a farmer by profession, but he recalls that he was introduced to natural farming methods during his early childhood years in his hometown. They do not use any chemical fertilizers or pesticides in farming at that time. His experiences with the destruction of the natural environment and wildlife during his stint with the mining firms and his awareness of the importance of preserving the same sparked his interest to venture into organic farming. His desire to gain additional skills and knowledge led him to attend training courses, visit other organic farms, talk and exchange information with organic practitioners and



agricultural technologists of Tuba. He also joined organizations engaged in organic farming. His visit to the Master's Garden convinced him further to go into natural farming.

Of all the training courses he attended, he considers the "Farmer-Led Extension Cum Technology Demonstration" sponsored by the Agricultural Training Institute-CAR in May 23-25, 2006, as the one that gave him a strong impact. This is part of the ladderized training program designed to hone and enhance the organic farming skills of LGU selected organic farmer-participants. As a farmer extensionist, his farm is now becoming a laboratory for organic farming where farmers, interested groups and individuals come to observe and be trained. His farm was also validated as "organic" by the officers of the La Trinidad Organic Producers Multi-purpose Cooperative (LATOP) Cooperative where he is now an associate member. Other training courses that he attended at ATI-CAR which are also part of the ladderized

training program on Organic Farming were: Internal Quality Control System for Organic Vegetables held on October 24-26, 2006 and the Technology Exchange through inter-farm visits among farmer-extensionists held on December 12-14, 2006.

In addition to the ATI-CAR sponsored trainings, he also attended the Second Cordillera Organic Agriculture congress in Feb. 15-16, 2007 and other organic farming trainings sponsored by the Department of Agriculture-RFU, Local Government Unit of Tuba, and private entities, namely: Orientation on Organic Agriculture Certification, Crop programming seminar, observation tour to organic farms in Tagaytay and Batangas.

He is an active member of the Good Roots Association, a group working on the multiplication of different forest & fruit bearing trees; and Tuba Organic Farmers Association (TOFA), a group spearheading the organic farming movement in the municipality.

He sells his farm produce either on Wednesdays & Saturdays or both at the LATOP's market outlet located at La Trinidad public market. With the income that he is getting from his farm, he says that he is happy because after all, his effort were not put in vain. Mr. Ramos has recently expanded his organic farming operations by cultivating an adjacent lot owned by his relative.

Finally, Mr. Ramos has this to say, "Organic farming is really a worthy undertaking; you don't need a wide track of land to operate. Once the soil is grown and the initial farm is fully put in place, input cost is very minimal, only the seeds and labor. But you can also produce your own seeds." With his experiences and initial successes in organic farming, he hopes to help spread the practice to other farmers and interested individuals so that they will also advocate the safe, environment-friendly and relatively cheap farming system called organic farming.

(CCSagudan)



The Hands-on Supervisor: the Marlita Basingan Story

"Seek Information, know your programs by heart and establish good working relations with your Local Chief Executives" quipped Ms. Marlita Basingan, 61 years and an outstanding Municipal Agriculturist of Pidigan, Abra when asked what advice she can give to fellow supervisors.



“We, the Municipal Agriculturists are the most significant strategists in the development of the agriculture and fisheries sector of our respective municipalities. We should be updated with the latest information and technologies that affect our sector. These will help us make sound judgement and decisions,” continued Ms. Basingan.

Among the noteworthy Agricultural programs and projects of the municipality under her leadership are the following:

Palayamanan- an intensified rice based integrated farming system for rainfed barangays. With sponsorship of Philrice based at Batac, Ilocos Norte, it started as a pilot project in barangay Naguirayan until it branched out to six sites in 2005 and 15 in 2006.

Fertilizer loan for farmers. This is initiated and funded by LGU Pidigan in 2005 where a farmer beneficiary is allowed to loan one bag of 21-0-0 fertilizer costing 300.00 per bag. The farmer returns the cash value of the fertilizer after one cropping cycle. The money is again used to buy fertilizers to be loaned to other farmers. Initially, the project started with 150 farmer-beneficiaries. At the end of 2006, this expanded to 300 farmers.

“ We should be updated with the latest information and technologies that affect our sector ”

Farmers Field School on Rice and Corn. Pidigan has more corn areas, thus every cropping, an FFS on corn is established. In 2005, two FFS on Rice was held

Propagation and distribution of High Value Fruit tree seedlings. The nursery of Pidigan propagated seedlings of ashete, papaya and mangoes. Each farmer is given 25 seedlings each for their livelihood and income generation.

Improved Glutinous Corn Production. This is an open pollinated variety being made into “cormick or chickacorn”

Hybrid Rice Production. This project is done only in selected irrigated areas of the municipality since Pidigan is mostly rainfed.

Institutional Development, Pidigan has 15 Primary Rural Improvement Clubs (RIC) and one Municipal Federation. It has also 15 Farmers

Associations (FA) and one municipal Federation. It has two local Irrigators Association (IA) and one municipal Federation. All the 15 barangays have 4-H clubs each .

In the implementation of these programs and projects, Ms. Basingan employs varied and a combination of extension methods and strategies. Among these are the following;

Barangay Consultation and planning to identify the needs, validate projects and prepare the agricultural development plan for the year. Invited to participate in the consultations are the barangay and municipal officials, leaders of rural based organizations and People’s Organizations like the RICs, 4-H Clubs, FAs, IAs, and Cooperatives. Also involved are the officers

of the Municipal Agriculture and Fisheries Council and her Agriculture Technologists. ATs. Invited to participate in the consultations

Establishment of good and close working relations with LGU officials and employees and transparency of programs and projects. Every project or activity being implemented by her agriculture office is being known, endorsed and approved by these officials. They are consulted and if possible are encouraged to be involved in the implementation.

Linkage and partnership with government and private agencies and institutions and People’s organizations. Aside from the Barangay, municipal and provincial LGU offices, Ms. Basingan also partners with the DA-CAR





Regional Field Unit, PhilRice, NIA, BPRE, BPI, ATI-CAR, MAFC and with non-government organizations (NGOs) in introducing and co-funding of programs and projects.

Continuous Development of herself and her staff. Ms. Basingan believes that since she and her staff are at the front line in the implementation of the agricultural and fisheries projects, they have to be equipped with the latest information and technology so that they can make right and sound decisions .

Since budget for staff development in the LGUs are very limited, she haggles for funds during budget hearings. She also links with research, extension and training institutions. Aside from attending trainings, Ms. Basingan encourages her staff to research in libraries, read books, magazines, and other information materials. She also asks her staff to research at internet cafes, go to agencies and ask for

information from experts, co-extension workers and farmers.

Provision of technical and supervisory assistance to her subordinates and leaders of various RBO organizations in order that they can be guided in what they are doing. Eventually, they will develop their skills and improve their morale.

Ms. Basingan, 56 is the former provincial president of the association of Municipal Agriculturists/ Municipal Agriculture Officers(MA/MAO) of the Province of Abra. She is also the former Treasurer of the Regional Association of the MAOs/MAs of CAR.

Furthermore she was awarded as the outstanding MAO during the celebration of “Arya Abra” in 2004. She was recognized as outstanding MAO by the PhilRice in 2005 and by DA-CAR in 2001.

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