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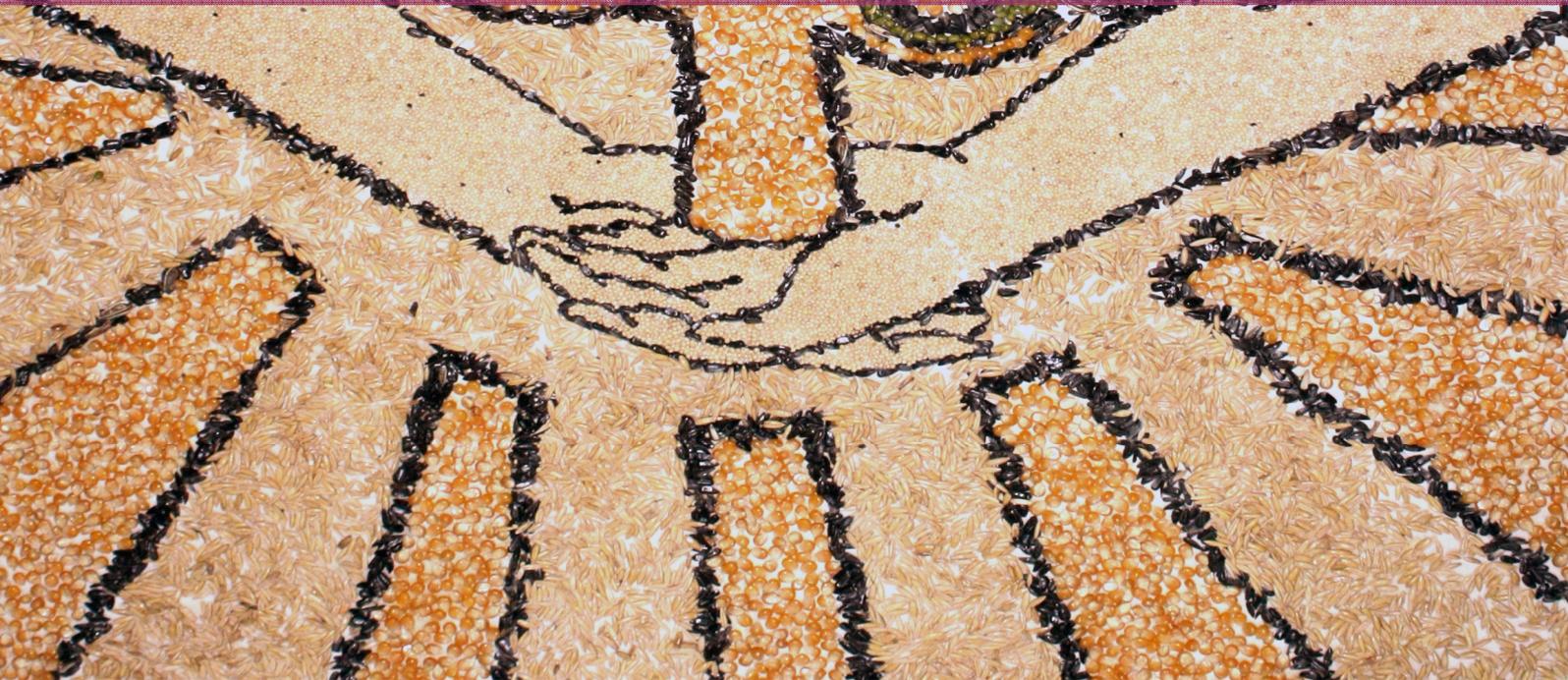


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**Harvesting from Family Farms:
Stories of Feeding the Nation
and Caring for the Earth**



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Harvesting from Family Farms:
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Foreword

The International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) is meant to drumbeat the issues of family farmers before policy makers and other stakeholders in the rural development community. But, it is not only that. It is also aimed at bringing back the dignity of farming by recognizing the contribution of family farmers in feeding our country and cooling our earth. It is important for us to put faces to the oftentimes unseen yet valuable members of our society.

Thus, this small initiative of AsiaDHRRA and PhilDHRRA to document stories of model family farmers to serve as inspiration to others in the farming and development community. We hope that the gains and challenges shared by the family farmers brings us lessons in our efforts to develop a sustainable smallholder agriculture that will benefit majority of our rural poor.

We believe that thousands more of these stories abound. While we are constrained to document as many, we hope that this

effort will help us become more mindful and respectful of their contribution and move us to do more and to commit to accompany them and their organizations in their journey as relevant participants in the development of their communities and our country. Let us continue to invest in documenting and sharing family farming experiences for their stories serve as our guide and barometer in policy engagement and programming work.

This initiative would not have been possible without the participation of the members of the national CSO Committee for IYFF 2014 in the Philippines,, of partners from the AgriCord agri-agency synergy, and, the support from Fondation de France. We thank everyone for the cooperation and the goodwill amidst the constraints faced in the conduct of the case documentation.

Marlene Ramirez
Secretary General
AsiaDHRRA

This year, as we celebrate the IYFF, sharing of farmers' experiences is timely especially in Asia where agriculture is being set aside or forsaken just like in any part of the world. People particularly the youth usually take other courses in school and go to the cities to find high-paying jobs. In the Philippines, given the farmers' average age of 57, no one would dare to replace them because of the sad plight they have suffered.

World food security is threatened because more than 60% of world food production comes from Asia. Hence it is necessary to organize young farmers and develop farm technology that would make farming more productive and profitable than what we can earn in the cities.

We can earn so much while in the cities but urban migration would lead to food insecurity. In life we really need professionals like teachers, engineers etc.

However, we don't need them every single day. Everyday we need farmers to produce food on our table, making our family healthy and secure our country's future. Energy and nutrition comes from food that we eat, and not from the pills we buy at drugstores.

We need food security and this can be achieved only if we can organize the youth, teach them the right farm technology, and provide them with enough capital. This would eventually lead to the development of farming and fisheries sectors.

IYFF gives us the opportunity to tackle such issues and concerns. We would like express gratitude to all our partners in development, the farmers who supported this endeavour and all those involved in this publication.

Ireneo R. Cerilla
President
PAKISAMA

About this book

This publication, featuring five stories nominated by civil society organizations, four stories nominated by the DA, and another three stories from the DAR, is a first instalment of the case documentation. It showcases distinct faces of family farmers selected based on following criteria:

- their geographic location – from upland to lowlands, representing Luzon, Visayas, and, Mindanao

- their sectoral representation – including farmers, fisherfolks, indigenous peoples,
- the commodity they produce; and,
- the programs they participate to.

This publication highlights the key elements that contributed to good practices of select farming families. It serves as modest contribution of AsiaDHRRA and PhilDHRRA, together with AFA and PAKISAMA, in promoting the rights and roles of family farmers in the country.

***“Family Farming** is a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on non-wage family labor, including both women’s and men’s. The family and the farm are linked, co-evolve and combine economic, environmental, reproductive, social and cultural functions”*

I.
CSO Nominated

About Jerimias Sanchez' Farm

Jerimias Sanchez, known in his community as Mang Imias, currently owns and cultivate a small piece of land with an area of 2,500 square meters. Mang Imias cultivates and produces a number of rice varieties - black rice, red rice, and aromatic rice. Organic black rice contains more fiber than white rice and is rich in anthocyanins. Black rice is priced higher than any special rice both in the local community and out-of-town areas as well as in Metro Manila.

In the last two years, with two cropping seasons per year, Mang Imias averaged a net income of nearly Php 11,000 per harvest from his black rice, which he sold at Php 70 per kilogram.

Aside from rice, Mang Imias also produces vegetables, specifically, bitter gourd, eggplant and squash. Production of these vegetables provides them with another source of food and cash incomes for the household. In addition to the vegetables and special rice varieties, Mang Imias also processes and produces bignay wine. Bignay¹ wine is produced from bignay fruits (*Antidesma bunius*), or Chinese laurel. Mang



Imias sells his bignay wine at Php 1, 200 per liter.

Mang Imias' wife, Maria, cultivates small herbal garden (herbanium) of herbs that include ashitaba, oregano, cerfentina among others. Maria sells herbal seedlings at Php 50 each. Maria also processes liquid probiotics food² from the herbs she have in her garden and sells the product at Php 450 per liter; while, Mang Imias earns Php 2,600 from the indigenous micro-organisms (IMOs)³ that he produces. IMOs are produced by fermenting different plant materials.

¹ Bignay is much like a cranberry or a wild berry in other countries. It is common in Southeast Asia, so you'll find the same fruit in Malaysia where it is called as "berunai", kholien tit in Laos; choi moi in Vietnam; wooni or hooni in Indonesia and ma mao luang in Thailand . In English, it is more popular as a salamander tree, Chinese laurel and currant tree.

In the Philippines, bignay fruits is common in the local markets in Luzon sold by farmers and Indigenous peoples living in the mountainous area of Luzon. This fruit is seasonal , so there is an abundance in the market and it is very cheap during the fruiting season each year.

² Probiotic foods are food intended to improve digestion and strengthen your immune system. These foods contain gut-friendly "good bacteria" and processed through fermentation like yogurt, microalgae, kimchi, kombucha, etc.

³ IMOs or indigenous micro-organisms are organisms that enable the decomposition of organic compounds, catalyze the chemical processes in the soil, facilitate recovery of soil fertility, suppress soil-borne diseases by circulating naturally active substances. IMO's and probiotic food supplements are almost the same, they vary only on the materials that are being used. Fermented plant juice or fermented fruit juice can be taken by humans.

Mang Imias raises pigs utilizing the Korean Natural Farming System (KNFS) that utilizes special beddings in pig pens that remove unpleasant odor from pig wastes and reduces costs on feeds. This a technique of raising swine he learned from PAKISAMA's project interventions which was supported by Agriterra. From his swine raising, Mang Imias and family earn an additional average income of Php 10,000 pesos net of expenses per year.

In addition, Mang Imias also raises ducks and chicken to maximize the size of land areas planted with rice. Each year, he sells 10 to 15 heads of ducks that generates additional cash income of Php 1,600 and 10-

15 heads of chickens for an average revenue of Php 1,500.

Mang Imias and family produce their own organic fertilizer through vermicasting, a method that employs worms and earthworms to primarily catalyze the decomposition of a heterogeneous mixture of organic matter, farm wastes and other organic materials. Vermicast or worm castings, worm humus or worm manure is the end product of the breakdown of organic matter by earthworms. These castings have been shown to contain reduced levels of contaminants and a higher saturation of nutrients than do organic materials

The family and their farm

Jerimias Sanchez was born on 15 July 1948 in San Nicolas, Victoria, Tarlac City. He moved to Malasin, San Mateo, Isabela when he got married to his wife, the former Maria Mateo. Mang Imias, his wife, and children currently manage a 2,500-square meters of farm. The family's landholding used to be 8,500-square meters but they had to give up a portion of their land when Mang Imias succumbed to a respiratory illness in 2008. To pay for his medications, Mang Imias had to sell 6,000 square metres of his land to his cousin. His relative though assured him that he could get back his land anytime he is able to do so. It was a challenging period for the family with some of his children ending up working for kin who were relatively better off.

Jerimias and Maria have nine children, two girls and seven boys: William (31), Biljhun (29), Jeffrey (27), Mark-Jefferson (25, deceased), Jay (22), Joy Ann (20), Herman (18), Ana (16) and John (11). Of the nine children, two were able to reach college level with one still managing to continue his studies. Jeffrey, a recipient of a DA-ACEF (Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund) scholarship grant, is currently taking up agriculture at the Isabela State University. Another son, Herman, is waiting for the



approval of his application for a DA-ACEF scholarship so he can resume his studies in the same university. He also plans to take up agriculture.

Both sons help in the farm along with their two older brothers, William and Biljhun, who both reached only the third year of high school. William works as a farm hand for their cousin while Biljhun supports his father together with his younger siblings Jay, Joy Ann and Ana. Like their two older brothers, the three younger siblings only reached high school. The youngest, John, is still in the elementary grade but he sometimes helps in the farm work.

The children are collectively involved in other tasks related to rice production, raising small farm animals, vermicomposting, and vegetable gardening, among others. They were trained in preparing the mixture for the IMO

Facilitating Factors

Respiratory illness

Mang Imias has kept, all these years, the receipts of his medicine purchases to remind him of that particular low point in his life when he suffered respiratory illness earlier. In his accounts, it was not the medicines that ultimately treated him but rather his indigenous concoctions from organic substances. Similar to the drink Yakult, the IMO may be ingested by humans depending on what it is made of. The organic mixture made from fermenting rice is said to contain good bacteria that could cure health problems.

His eventual recovery led him to continue the practice and share the knowledge with other members in the community. During the interview, he gave anecdotal evidence on how his herbal plants have proven to be effective in treating common illnesses. For instance, his oregano concoction was said to be good for coughs and colds. Several members of the community regularly buy from him. Another type of his concoction was also said to have contributed to the fast recovery of his mother-in-law whose health had at some point started to seriously fail.

Despite having reached only first year of high school, Mang Imias has clearly not lost his keen interest in reading and even researching. He would casually refer to Biology books, which according to him, were actually used by his children in school. He also read out texts from photocopied materials that he kept for his reference.

He was particularly familiar about the work on medicinal plants done by Filipino scientists which he and wife use as guide for their herbarium. He learned from his readings that herbal plants are best

(indigenous microorganisms), which is also used as supplement to organic fertilizer. Maria manages the family herbarium, which produces medicinal concoctions from oregano, ashitaba, cerfentina and tsaang gubat. These products are sources of additional income for the family.

harvested at night or early dawn when their nutrients are at its peak. According to him, people need to be aware of this unique characteristic otherwise the herbal plants would be rendered useless.

In preparing the concoctions containing IMO, the principal ingredient in organic agriculture, he refers to the pamphlet he received in one of the numerous training he has participated as his basis. This is the same pamphlet his children also use. The IMO concoction for the soil, containing nitrogen-fixing bacteria, is used to improve soil fertility without needing anymore to apply other harmful inorganic inputs that diminish soil health.

Engagement in development of farmers' organizations

From 1982-1993, Mang Imias was a community organiser for PROCESS Foundation where he was able to develop his social orientation. He facilitated the formation of various farmer organizations and cooperatives whose members included agrarian reform beneficiaries from Region II. He was also involved in land rights advocacy for the emancipation of landless farmers from tenancy.

In the recent years, he was engaged in advocacy work with farmers' organizations working for the passage of Republic Act 10068, otherwise known as the Organic Agriculture Act. This started his practice in organic farming. His participation in 2009 in the sustainable agriculture training offered by PAKISAMA and Agriterra, a Dutch organisation that supports farmers' groups in fighting poverty with a focus on economic development, further cemented his work in promoting organic agriculture.

Following the training, he redesigned his farm using the Integrated Diversified Organic Farming Systems (IDOFS) approached promoted by PAKISAMA. He attended various training workshops on organic agriculture.

The interview and discussions with Mang Imias was held just next to the pen where he housed his pigs but there was no stinky odour that would have otherwise distracted the conversation. There were also no flies hovering in and around the area which he attributed to the enzymes used in the IMO he used.

Brief Profile

At present, Mang Imias is the president of the Cagayan Valley Organic Farmers Alliance, Inc. (CAVOFA). He is a member of the pool of internal inspectors for CAVOFA's organic certification and serves as a farm technician for the organic agriculture. He is

a member of the Malasin Organic Farmers Association (MOFA), an affiliate-member of CAVOFA, as well as a member of the Local Organic Technical Committee of San Mateo, Isabela.

Name:	Jerimias Sanchez
Gender:	Male
Age:	66 years old
Municipality/City/District/Country:	Malasin, San Mateo, Isabela
Urban/Rural:	Rural
Marital Status:	Married
Children (if applicable):	William Sanchez – 31 Biljun Sanchez - 29 Jeffrey Sanchez – 27 Mark Jefferson Sanchez – 25 (deceased) Jay Sanchez – 22 Joy Ann Sanchez – 20 Herman Sanchez – 18 Ana Sanchez – 16 John Sanchez – 11
Resource Tenurial Security (type and date of land ownership):	Unknown
Size of Farm	2,500 square meters (1/4 hectare)
Product(s):	Organic Colored-Rice (black and red rice), Duck, Native Chicken, Pigs, Bignay wine, herb seedlings, probio food supplements, IMOs
Market Linkage:	Direct selling
Working with the government:	Benefitted from the training organized by PAKISAMA, DA and CAVOFA
Organization/affiliation:	PAKISAMA Plans to tranform CAVOFA into a cooperative
Role/Position in organization:	President, CAVOFA Member of internal inspectors for CAVOFA Organic Certification Farmer Technician

Edgar and Susan Madulin

Limbaan, New Corella, Davao del Norte

Written by Skilty Labastilla

About the Madulin's Farm

Edgar and Susan are cultivating a total of five hectares planted with a diversity of crops. A total of one and a half hectares are devoted to rice, three and a half hectares are planted with 350 coconut trees and 1,200 hills of a mixture of plantain and Cavendish banana. Edgar inherited three and a half hectares land from his parents in 2002, while Susan inherited one and a half hectares in 2007 from her parents, who are also residing in Limbaan.

In January this year, the family planted 180 cacao trees, which will first bear fruit after three years.

The family raises goats and chickens. The goats provide cash incomes in extreme needs for cash. The chickens provide both food and cash incomes. The manure from goats and chicken is utilized as organic fertilizer.

The couple started farming in 1999. Using commercial fertilizers from 1999 until 2005, they could harvest about 300 kilos of bananas every month, 1,800 nuts of coconuts every three months and 140 bags of paddy rice for each harvest in two cropping seasons annually.

Susan and Edgar attended seminars on organic farming in 2006 through the Department of Agriculture (DA) - Regional Field Unit in Region 12. The couple gradually shifted to the new system, mainly

The work at the family farm

On week days, Susan would be out in the farm to cut Napier grass from the fields and feed her goats by the time her boys leave for school and Edgar leaves for work. In addition to the forage grasses, she also feed the goats with rice and corn bran. Last September, she sold 10 of her goats. At the time of her interview, there were only four

for health reasons. Edgar, who graduated with a degree in Agriculture, is an avid reader of new ways of improving farm systems and learned about the health benefits of organic farming to his family, consumers, and the farm itself, especially on the health of the soil.

But, it was not until 2010 when the family took organic farming to the next level. A few key institutions were crucial to this scaling-up. The first was the Davao Federation of Farmers' Integrated Services Cooperative, Inc. (DAFISCO), which provided capacity-building interventions on Organic and Integrated Farming Technologies for the members of the Limbaan Small Coconut Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative (LSCFMPC), of which Susan and Edgar are members of. When Susan became a member of LSCFMPC in 2005, she was assigned as the group's bookkeeper due to her training in basic accounting. Edgar served as manager but had to resign in 2007 when he got elected as a barangay official. When Edgar left the cooperative, its business performance went low and accumulated a significant amount of collectibles delinquent loans. Through DAFISCO's coaching, Susan learned the ropes of cooperative management and in 2011 she was appointed manager of LSCMPC.

In Limbaan, there is only one other rice farmer, aside from the Madulins, who produces organic rice and eight other farmers who produce "low-chemical" palay.

left at the barn. She sold 10 of her goats to buy crossbreed Anglo-Nubian goats for dairy production.

Every two days, she would collect the beddings from the goat barn. Susan uses goat manure to make compost (goat manure mixed with soil and rice straw,

carbonized rice hull). Susan uses trichoderma (*Trichoderma harzianum*⁴) in her compost. It was not clear to her why she uses trichoderma in her compost pile.

Susan maintains a two-bed vermicomposting beds where she regularly feed earthworms with leaves/grass and other organic matter. After seven days, she would collect the vermicast and would use it to prepare the land for planting or to fertilize her crops. The remaining vermicast are stored for future use.

By 10 o'clock every morning, Susan would be finished doing whatever needs to be done out in the farm, and she comes home to prepare lunch for her and Edgar. Her two boys bring packed lunch to school, so it is only she and Edgar who will have lunch at home. By three o'clock in the afternoon, she would be out on the field again to feed the goats, which are housed in a pen located about 500 meters from her house. If there are things to be done in the cooperative office, she would drop by the headquarters and work until 5:00 in the afternoon. Shortly after then, Edgar and the boys would be back home.

Harvest season is a busy period for the family, as many hands are required to get the job done. Since her two sons and Edgar would not be able to help out much on weekdays, she pays a few farm hands to do the heavy tasks and she would just supervise the work. By the time her boys arrive from school, they would help out in various farm activities. Sugar Ray would feed the chickens while Edgar Jr. would tend the goats. On weekends, both boys would help their parents clear the fields of overgrown weeds, with Edgar supervising the work, especially on Saturdays, when Susan would be out of the house as she attends to her part-time job as a bookkeeper of a dairy plant in New Corella.

Susan is happy that her sons are doing well in school. At 15, Sugar Ray is already planning to pursue a degree in computer science; while Edgar Jr. is still not sure what course to take up, although he is more inclined in doing farm work such as feeding the animals and constructing pens for them.

Susan and Edgar would be happy if at least one son decides to manage the farm after graduation from college, so as not to put their efforts in establishing an organic farm to waste.



Susan and Edgar pose in front of their garden.

⁴ *Trichoderma harzianum* is a fungus that is also used as a fungicide. It is used for foliar application, seed treatment and soil treatment for suppression of various disease causing fungal pathogens

Facilitating Factors

Susan has committed herself at improving the business and services level of LSCFMPC, from one that is beholden to the grip of the very few local traders who can keep the buying price of their produce at a low rate to one that can directly market farmers' produce to factories around the Davao region.

Bargaining Higher Prices

A second palay harvest season of the year begins in September and ends in October (the first harvest is April). On the second harvest this year, the family was blessed with 120 bags⁵. Eight of the 120 bags are shared to the owner of the rice thresher and another eight are given to agricultural laborers that harvested the palay. Susan sets aside 20 bags for their family consumption. Only the remaining bags are sold to DACOFARM.

A week before the interview, the family harvested coconuts. They also bought coconuts from the neighboring farmers who do not owe Mr. Saning Yabung, the only copra trader in the barangay who provides loan or money advances to farmers. Over-all, the family processed some 3,000 nuts.

The 3,000 coconuts she processed into white copra last week took five days and Susan had to pay two laborers to do the drying.

The family also harvests an average of 150 kilos of bananas, which they sell directly to a buyer at an average farm gate price of P6 per kilogram.

Working with Partners

Even if she is thankful for the Mindanao Rural Development Project – Community Fund for Agricultural Development (MTDP-CFAD) project, she thinks that all the efforts of producing white copra are not worth it if cooperative members and coconut farmers

still have to sell the product to Mr. Yabu at the same price as the regular brown copra, which is Php 25 per kilo. Susan sells her white copra at Php 30 per kilo (sometimes much higher) depending on the situation of the global markets. She plans to talk to oil plant operators in Sta. Cruz, Davao City to see if she could negotiate for a direct trade to the plant. The coop does not have a truck, unlike Mr. Yabu, but Susan says she can rent a truck from the local government unit. They can use the truck to transport to an oil plant in Davao City the white copra that she and her coop members would produce using the “kukum” copra dryer.

The LSCFMPC received a “kukum” copra drying facility and a trailer/hand tractor from the DA through the MTDP-CFAD in partnership with the local municipal government of New Corella. The hand tractor/trailer helps farmers transport coconuts from their farms to the Kukum Dryer⁶ and to the copra trader in the barangay. The traditional copra drying kilns produce a brown to dark brown copra. In addition to the kukum dryer and hand tractor/trailer, DA also provided LSCFMPC equipment used to carbonize rice hulls, to LSCFMPC.

In addition to the benefits they got from the DA's MRDP-CFAD program, they also received training services such as the Expanded Modified Rapid Composting (EMRC) among others. Most recently, DA, through its Bureau of Soil and Water Management (BSWM), has approved funding LSCFMPC's purchase 15 kilograms of African night crawler earthworms and a shredder for vermicomposting by coop members.

⁵ One sack of dried palay weighs an average weight of 65 kilos.

⁶ Kukum dryer is designed to send off heat unto the coconut meal without the dirt from the road if it is by the sun-drying or without the smoke if drying by the kiln. Improperly dried copra is vulnerable to fungal invasion largely by *Aspergillus flavus*, the fungus that produces toxic metabolites known as aflatoxin, and on the other hand, it may contain PAH due to surface contact of smoke. PAH is cancer inducing compound and known as a genotoxic carcinogen. International food safety standards set the limit of aflatoxin contamination at 20 ppb (parts per billion). Meanwhile, the German Society for Edible Oils proposed an upper limit of 5 ppb for heavy PAH together with a total PAH content of less than 25 ppb.

The 180 cacao trees that Susan recently planted were provided by the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA). PCA also gave out 21 goats to LSCFMPC, which Susan distributed to three coop members. The agreement is that once the goats produce offsprings, the offspring would be distributed to other members of the cooperative. The Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) of New Corella also supports organic farming initiatives of farmers in the municipality.

DAFISCO provide capacity-building interventions aimed to improve the farm productivity of members. In addition, it also extended farm financing services⁷ and facilitated market access by farmers. In 2013, DAFISCO extended a loan package of Php 8,000 each to eight members of LSCFMPC who were engaged in organic farming so to finance feeds of their farm animals. DAFISCO also gave out two bags vermicast to 20 members of LSCFMPC.

DAFISCO's social enterprise arm, the Davao Federation of Fishers' and Farmers' Cooperative (DACOFARM), is another institution that was crucial in the decision of Susan and Edgar to shift full-time to organic farming. DACOFARM buys produce from farmers engaged in organic farming at a rate higher than the prevailing market price for non-organic produce. As of this writing, the prevailing Limbaan market price of palay is Php 21. DACOFARM buys organic paddy rice at Php 22.00 and Php 21.50 for "low-chemical" palay (rice produced with the use of small amounts of commercial fertilizers and chemicals).

Apart from DAFISCO and DACOFARM, other NGOs also provided assistance to LSCFMPC over the years. The Institute of Primary Health Care (IPHC) has helped developed capacities of officers and staff in management and leadership. It also organized basic training workshops on organic agriculture. The Magsasaka at

Syentipiko para sa Pag-ulad ng Agricultura (MASIPAG)-Mindoro chapter provided 50 varieties of start-up organic rice seeds to coop members.

Susan and Edgar are optimistic about the future of white copra because they heard that the national government (thru the Department of Labor and Employment and the Philippine Coconut Authority) is supporting white copra production. Susan sees the irony of the situation where a private trader with no members can have control over the value chain of the agricultural products in Limbaan while LSCFMPC with 74 members remains helpless. She hopes that the government and civil society organizations will continue to work with them.

Susan is thankful for the assistance that the government provides for family farmers like them.

Brief Profile

Susan and Edgar attest to the benefits that their organic farming has brought to the family's health. They would no longer get sick as often as they did when they were still consuming their own pesticide-laden produce. They have also become passionate advocates of organic farming and are using their positions as coop manager and as barangay official to influence their members and constituents to shift to a more beneficial way of farming. But, they both know the transition does not come quickly. The damaged brought about by chemicals and synthetic fertilizers to the soil will take years to ameliorate and restore its natural fertility. Susan and Edgar understand that some of LSCFMPC members are still using "low-chemical" farming, but both hope that they will eventually move towards organic farming.

⁷ The agricultural financing and market facilitation services of DAFISCO are supported by funds provided by WE EFFECT, a Swedish agri-agency and member of Agricorn.

Name	Susan Madulin
Gender	Female
Age	45
Urban/ rural	Rural (Limbaan, New Corella, Davao del Norte)
Marital status	Married
Family	Husband: Edgar (44) – farmer, barangay kagawad Children: Sugar Ray (15) – high school student Edgar Jr. (13) – high school student
Resource Tenorial Security (type and date of land ownership)	The family owns a total of 5 hectares. In 2002, the title of 3.5 hectares of land was transferred from Edgar’s parents to him, while in 2007, the title of 1.5 hectares of land was transferred from Susan’s parents to her.
Produce	organic rice, coconuts, bananas
Market Linkage	Organic rice is sold to the Davao Federation of Fishers’ and Farmers’ Cooperative (DACOFARM) while coconuts and bananas are sold to traders in Davao del Norte
Working with the government	Department of Agriculture, Philippine Coconut Authority, New Corella LGU
Organization/affiliation	Limbaan Small Coconut Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative (LSCFMPC)
Role/Position in organization	Cooperative manager

Sabas Bolanio and Family

San Miguel, Dagohoy, Bohol

Written by Maria Ligaya Anasco-Camilon

About the Farm

At the tender age of eight years, Sabas Bolanio learned to plow the fields under the tutelage of his father. Life was not easy in the far flung barangays of Bohol during the 70s and 80s, thus, everyone in the Bolanio family needed to pull their share of the load. As the second child among five siblings and the eldest son, it was his duty to serve as the “right hand” of his father.

While helping his father plow the fields and doing other household chores, Sabas also had his formal school at a local elementary school. Before leaving for school in the morning and after they returned home from school in the afternoon, he and his siblings would fetch water for their mother from a couple of kilometers away from their home.

Sabas stopped schooling when he was in first year high school to concentrate on farming. At such a young age, he did not really fully appreciate the value of education.



Sabas Bolanio at work in his 2.5 hectare rice farm. The rice paddies used to be rainfed and during dry season, the family would plant corn instead of rice.

At the age of 22, Sabas married his childhood sweetheart, Alberta, fondly called as Abing. The couple used to be schoolmates during their elementary days. To help the couple start a life together, Sabas’ parents gave them one hectare of land while the family of Abing gave them a half hectare of land to farm together. They were also given one female carabao and one female cow as start up gifts.

Sabas and Abing have been farmers for more than 24 years. Over the years, they were able to buy an additional one hectare of land, thus, totaling to two and a half hectares of rice fields. The title of the half hectare land from Abing’s family is still in the name of her parents; while, the tax declaration of one hectare lot from Sabas’ family and another hectare that the couple bought are already under the couple’s name.

The home and farm of the Bolanio family served as show window for organic farming. To support their organic farm, the family engaged in vermin composting using African Night Crawlers, a kind of worm that efficiently compost organic matters. From their own backyard, they could produce about 20 sacks of vermin compost per cropping season.

Aside from vermin compost, the family also used animal manure as fertilizer. They raise ducks, chicken, hogs and cattle then use the animal wastes as fertilizer. Currently, the family has six heads of hogs for fattening and a sow for breeding. They have two carabaos and six cattles, one of which is under the family’s care while the others are being taken cared of by some neighbors.

The family also raises organic chickens and ducks, but, it is a bit challenging for the family.

Aside from raising ducks, chickens, hogs, and cattle, the Bolanio family also has a small pond where they propagate tilapia, carp and mudfish (locally known as “Halwan”) for their personal consumption. They feed the fishes with rice hulls from the farm. They do not follow a regular harvesting cycle but they can harvest about 40 kilos of tilapia every five to six months. On the average, one tilapia would weight around half kilo.

Bolanio’s Farming Family: Caretakers of the Earth

Sabas and Abing are simple, down to earth farmers who see themselves as parents wanting their children to live in a better world. They have four reasons why they are still strongly committed to organic farming: 1) Jesrel (26 years old), 2) Jessa (22 years old), 3) Jun Mark (18 years old), and, 4) Sabas Jr. (10 years old).

Sabas and Abing are able to build a home for their family. Their small hut made of cogon and bamboo is now a concrete bungalow with a galvanized iron roof. They are able to send all of their four children to school. Their eldest child, Jesrel, recently passed the bar exam and is now an associate in a law office based in Tagbilaran City. His second daughter, Jessa, earned her degree in Banking and Finance and is now working in one of the biggest establishment in Tagbilaran. The third child, Jun Mark, is now in high school; while the youngest, Sabas Junior, is in elementary.

Working Together

The family worked together in their farm as a team. Sabas and Jun Mark till the land; while, Abing and Sabas Jr. do the household chores and take care of the pigs, chicken and ducks. Before going to school, Jun Mark herds the cows and the carabaos to their grazing area while Sabas Jr feed the ducks and the fishes. Jesrel and Jessa, who are now professionals and have careers in the city, still help in the farm whenever they are home. During planting season, Atty. Jesrel and Jessa would help wield the plow in the rice paddies.

The family does not sell the tilapia but gives it to relatives, friends, and neighbors to showcase that there is no need to invest in expensive commercial feeds to produce fish in the backyard.



The proud parents showing off the awards of their kids.

Commitment and respect for the earth

Sabas always wanted to give his children the education he never had and for them to continue enjoy a healthy environment that he always had. Sabas firmly believed that organic farming is the better way of life. Over the years, he joined trainings about organic farming sponsored by several government and non-government institutions. He is a trained Farmer Technician (FT) by the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Bohol Australian Community Assistance Program (BOCAP) in 2006. As FT, Sabas served as peer educator on organic farming.



Abing and Sabas Jr. Feeding the hogs in their backyard

As a strong advocate of organic farming, Sabas taught his children to respect mother earth. He said, *“kung atong abosohan ang kalikupan, moabot ang panahon nga maglisod na unya ta ug pagkaon.”* (If we abuse nature, time will come when it will be difficult for us to produce food.)

He believed that organic farming can help promote and preserve a clean and healthy environment. According to him, he and his family are caretakers of the earth and they have an obligation to protect and preserve the environment for the good of the future generation.

Paying Forward

In return for all the blessings they are enjoying, the Bolanio family gives back to

the community by regularly participating in tree planting activities organized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the National Irrigation Authority (NIA).



Harvesting tilapia from the pond in the frontyard

Facilitating Factors of Bolanio Family’s Success

Sabas noted that many of their neighbors refused to adopt organic farming because it is laborious and produces lesser yields. Since lower yield is equated to lower income, naturally, most farmers would shy away from organic farming. However, despite the many challenges that they encountered, the Bolanio family continued to engage in organic farming.

Marketing Organic Products

Marketing and transporting their organic

farm products was very challenging for the family. During the 80’s and 90’s, the family used to sell their farm products to the buyers at the local market place of Dagohoy. At that time, there was no farm to market roads from barangay San Miguel to the town hence transporting farm produce was difficult. In the 80’s, the family used a “balsa” (a wagon made of wood or bamboo and has no wheels) to bring their produce to the market. A balsa can only carry up to three sacks of palay at a time so the family had to make several trips just to bring their harvest to the market. The trip to and from the market would usually take about an hour of walk (30 minutes walk going to the market and another 30 minutes going home). The buying rate of palay at that time was just less than five pesos per kilo.



SAMOFA members use this tractor trailer to bring their products to the market

During the late 90’s, the family was able to buy a “karomata” (wooden wagon with wheels), which can be hitched to a carabao. A karomata can carry up to 10 sacks of palay per trip. Later on, the Department of Agriculture (DA) provided San Miguel Organic Farmers Association (SAMOFA), where Sabas is a member of, with a small tractor that is locally known as “kuliglig.” A

kuliglig also has a trailer, which the farmers can use to transport up to 15 sacks of palay.

Aside from transportation, the quality of the palay was also a challenge to them. In the 80's and 90's, the Bolanio family did not have access to a drying facility and just relied on sun-drying. During rainy seasons, the palay does not dry well and turns black from over exposure to moisture.

Working with Partners

In 2006, the NIA built the Malinao Dam in Pilar, Bohol. The dam supplied water to rice fields in the surrounding areas, including the farm of Sabas. With the irrigation system in place, the family was able to plant and harvest at least twice a year. Currently, their two and a half farm produces about 80 sacks of palay per hectare with a total harvest of around 200 sacks per cropping season.



The irrigation canal that supplies water to the rice paddies

In September 2006, SAMOFA was organized through the assistance of BOCAP. The organization started with 24 members of which 10 were male and 14 were female. SAMOFA was registered with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) as people's organization. To date, the organization has 34 active members and is offering the following services to its members: a) hand tractor rental, b) use of shredder, 3) livestock dispersal and 4) hands-on training for rice duck technology. Sabas is among the farmer trainers for the rice duck technology and his farm serves as the learning site.

In 2009, Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahan ng mga Magsasaka (PAKISAMA) through its Philippines Farmers for Food Project, extended assistance to SAMOFA through market linkage. PAKISAMA linked SAMOFA to the Carmen Samahang Nayon Multi-Purpose Cooperative. The cooperative offered loans to farmers, provided organic farm inputs and served as wholesale buyer for organic rice in the province of Bohol. To date, the interest rates of production loans offered by the cooperative are at 25% per annum. The cooperative offers patronage refunds to the members at the end of the year.

The DA also provided the community with a communal flat bed dryer facility, which can accommodate up to 120 sacks of palay per loading. With the help of the dryer, the palay of the Bolanio family now fetch higher prices. Currently, the family sells organic palay to the Carmen Samahang Nayon MPC at Php 26.50 for the red variety and Php 24/kilo for the white variety. The cooperative picks up palay from SAMOFA's buying station located in front of the house of Sabas, hence, he is able do away with the transportation cost.

Working with Partners

The support from the DA, NIA, the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) and various non-government agencies such as BOCAP, PAKISAMA, South East Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment (SEARICE) and other institutions opened a lot of opportunities for the Bolanio family. Through the help of these agencies, Sabas gained access to trainings that enhanced his knowledge and skills in organic farming. With the help of BOCAP, SAMOFA was organized, which paved the way for linkage building. PAKISAMA served as bridge between SAMOFA and the Carmen Samahang Nayon MPC. Through the Samahang Nayon, the members of SAMOFA were able to access financial support to buy farm inputs. Further, government's supports through irrigation, provision of tractors and post harvest facilities, and seed dispersal, enhanced the competitiveness of the

Bolanio family. The trainings and market linkage services provided by certain government agencies such as the DA and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) also helped improved the production of the family and increased their earnings.



The buying station where the Carmen Samahang Nayon MPC buy the farm produce of SAMOFA members

Future Plans

Sabas has many plans for the future. Some of the things that he would like to do in the next five years include:

- a. To continue to practice organic farming and increase production. He plans to increase the number of birds in his yard and release more mudfish into the rice

Brief Profile:

The boy that learned to plow the fields at the tender age of eight had come a long way. In 2007, he was awarded as Outstanding Farmer by BOCAP for his exemplary dedication to organic farming. He served as President of SAMOFA for three terms and was instrumental in coordinating activities of SAMOFA with government and non-government agencies. He assisted fellow farmers in marketing their products through the Carmen Samahang Nayon MPC.

paddies to help restore ecological balance.

- b. To continue serving as FT and promote organic farming. Together with his wife Abing and their children, he intends to continue making his home and his farm a show window for organic farming. The family also intends to continue assisting the NIA, the DENR, DAR and their church in conducting activities that can help protect the environment.
- c. To help in strengthening SAMOFA and increase its membership. Now on his third term as President of SAMOFA, Sabas plans to seek assistance of the DA in educating more people on organic farming. He is currently requesting the DA, through SAMOFA, for assistance in setting-up a solar dryer for palay in their area. SAMOFA organization is willing to donate land and labor for the construction of the solar dryer. Also, he and the rest of the officers of SAMOFA are planning to set-up an egg incubator for ducks and chickens.
- d. To further work with different government and non-government organizations in helping their members gain access to much needed capital and market. He believes that with enough capital for farm inputs, small farmers like him can stay competitive.

As a Farmer Technician, he was able to train a number of farmers in organic farming.

Though he found it difficult to convince his fellow farmers regarding the benefits of organic farming, Sabas stayed committed to his advocacy. His wife Abing supported his advocacy and also served as his "ambassador" to women farmers in the area.

Name	Sabas Bolanio
Gender	Male
Age	50
Urban/ rural	San Miguel, Dagohoy, Bohol
Marital status	Married
Children	Jesryl (26) - lawyer Jessa (22) - BS in Banking and Finance Jun Mark (18) - High School Sabas Jr. (10) - Elementary
Resource Tenurial Security (type and date of land ownership)	own and occupied by the family for more than 24 years, (part of the land is titled under the name of Alberta's parents, the rest of the land is supported with Tax Declaration under the name of the spouses)
Produce	organic rice, cattle, ducks, chicken, tilapia
Market Linkage	Samahang Nayon
Working with the government	Department of Agriculture, National Irrigation Administration (NIA)
Organization/affiliation	San Miguel Organic Farmers Association (SAMOFA)
Role/Position in organization	President (3 terms), Farmer Technician

Dante Rocas and Family

Malasugui, Labo, Camarines Norte
Written by Gertrudes Bartulaba

About the Rocas Family Farm

Dante “Buboy” Rocas grew up struggling with the realities of poverty: having scarce food, living in a tiny hut with the barest of necessities, going to school with only two sets of clothing, etc. At an early age, Buboy realized that education is his only passport to prosperity yet his parents do not have the financial capacity to afford him a quality education. Most of his childhood days were spent working in the farm rather than playing with friends. Being the eldest in the family, he had to help his parents in earning income for their daily subsistence.

Wanting to pursue a degree in college, Buboy applied for a scholarship from the Foster Parents Plan, which paid for his tuition fees and covered most of his college education expenses. However, Buboy got married even before completing his college education.

Buboy eventually earned his Bachelor of Laws degree and worked as a legal assistant in a private firm while working as part-time teacher. During that time, Buboy took a break from farming and depended solely on his full-time employment salary to support his family.

When Buboy's neighbor offered to sell him a parcel of riceland near his house, he became interested again on farming. At that time, his income from employment could barely sustain their daily needs. He discussed the feasibility of acquiring the land with his wife, Marilou, who was very supportive with the idea of acquiring the land from their savings.

However, Buboy still continued his job as legal assistant but actively participated in the various trainings conducted by the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) to update and enhance his knowledge about trends and technologies in agriculture.



After two years of part-time farming, Buboy's family was blessed with good harvest in four sustained cropping seasons. He initially invested Php 18,000.00 per cropping period, which gained an average yield of 140 cavans equivalent to Php 72,500.00 gross income per cropping. Out of this abundance, Buboy decided to start acquiring farm machineries. He bought one motorized hand tractor and one unit rice thresher. He eventually resigned from his job and went back to full-time farming.

It was during this time when his wife Marilou decided to finish her Bachelor of Arts in Education degree. Consequently, she was hired to teach in a nearby public school. Buboy then decided to quit his job and become a full-time farmer.

Currently, their nine hectares of rice land produce more than enough revenue for what they need. The Rocas family now owns vehicles, has a duckery of about 300 heads, a cock farm, and, a mini-piggery. He also invested in micro-lending. Gone were the days of hunger and deprivation.

From his income in rice production, Buboy has also acquired four units of hand tractors, three palay threshers, one stand-by generator, two motorcycles for hauling of his produce, and, three single motor for monitoring and scouting for clients. At some point, Buboy even needed to hire about 50 farm helpers.

Farming as a Family Endeavor



Buboy is very thankful to God for all the blessings he and his family is now enjoying and takes pride in being a farmer.

Buboy's marriage to his loving wife Marilou was blessed with five sons who all grew up practicing basic farming. Most of the family's weekends are spent working together in the farm, and, cleaning dikes and canals to improve waterways.

Their eldest son, Jomar, 28, is a graduate of Information Technology and is currently

Facilitating Factors

Access to Capital and Increase in Investment

In 2009, Buboy joined the Labo Progressive Multi-Purpose Cooperative. The multi-awarded cooperative actually started out as a "paluwagan" (community saving) in 1987 with 15 incorporators and lending capital of Php 5,000.00. Now, it has evolved into a service cooperative and has diversified into agri-business. Currently, it engages in cassava production and processing.

The cooperative also engages on pineapple production and processing (e.g. pineapple juice, dried pineapple, hand-woven piña cloth, handmade paper and decorticated pineapple fiber). It has also ventured into virgin coconut oil production. It has three branches and satellite offices with a total paid-up capital of Php 17, 118,189.69, total savings and time deposit of Php

employed with the Land Transportation Office (LTO) in Bulacan. The second son, Jerome, 27, also finished a course on Information Technology and is now working with the Land Transportation Office (LTO) in Cavite. Jovan, 23, has just earned his Bachelor of Science (BS) in Criminology and is currently helping his parents in managing their farm. The fourth son, Joven, 20, is soon graduating from his Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation course. Their youngest son, Jomer, 18, is taking up BS Information Technology.

Being a rice trader now, Buboy's family no longer buys rice for the entire year. He usually sets aside 30 sacks, which are more than enough for a year of consumption. Since they have a mini piggery, they butcher a pig every weekend, sell it, and, set aside a few kilos for their weekly consumption. If there is no pig to slaughter, Buboy buys a pig, butchers it, sets aside the head and legs for their consumption, and sells the rest. They also have a vegetable garden that produces enough for their needs.

24,100,116.82, and, total assets of Php 85, 652,532.95.

Acknowledging Buboy's entrepreneurial expertise, initiative and hard work, the cooperative through its General Manager, Mario M. Espeso, granted Buboy a permission to use the warehouse and the multi-purpose drying pavement beside the cooperative's office.

In 2009, Buboy started to purchase palay harvest from neighboring farms and sold it to bigger rice traders and millers. After two years of palay trading, Buboy availed a loan from the cooperative and purchased additional three hectares of rice-farm beside his existing one hectare farm.

After several years of progressive harvest, Buboy decided to enter into a partnership

contract with the National Food Authority (NFA) and activated his membership with Camarines Norte Rice Retailers and Millers Association to help him expand his market. He eventually developed a total of seven hectares of rice land with an average yield of 160 cavans per hectare during wet

season and 180 cavans per hectare during dry season.

Later on, he further availed a regular loan of Php 300,000.00 from the cooperative to augment his capital for palay and rice trading.

Brief Profile

Buboy's home is frequented by neighbors who need legal advises and he willingly gives free counseling to them. But, aside from providing legal advice, he has always been encouraging his fellow farmers to be observant, efficient and hardworking,

reminding them to devote at least eight hours in doing farmwork. He believes that land is a seedbed of abundance.

Buboy also ensures that he is seen as a role model to his sons in enriching their lives.

Name	Dante "Buboy" Rocas
Gender	Male
Age	50
Urban/ rural	Rural (Malasugui, Labo, Camarines Norte)
Marital status	Married
Children	Jomar - 28 Jerome - 27 Jovan - 23 Joven - 20 Jomer - 18
Resource Tenurial Security (type and date of land ownership)	Private ownership
Produce	Organic rice,
Market Linkage	Palay trading with bigger millers and traders
Working with the government	National Food Authority (NFA)
Organization/affiliation	Labo Progressive Multi-purpose Cooperative Camarines Norte Rice Retailers and Millers Association
Role/Position in organization	Member since 2009

Ana Sibayan and Family

San Narciso, Victoria, Oriental Mindoro

Written by Skilty Labastilla

About the Sibayan Farm

As a farmers' daughter, Ana Sibayan, 24, grew up being taught how to help out in the farm. As the second child (and eldest daughter) among six siblings (Emanuel, 26; Anonuevo, 22; Sarah, 20; Crisol, 17; and Ezekiel, 14), she knew she had to act as a model to her younger siblings in contributing to household chores and farm work to ease up the burden of her parents. Her parents, Eduardo (Eddie), 53, and Nelia, 52, have always told them that in order for the family to rise from poverty, each one of them had to put in their share.

In 1998, Eddie and Nelia got married and bought two hectares of agricultural land. They also tenanted one hectare and leased another hectare. For several years, they planted the four hectares with rice using commercial fertilizers and pesticides.

The shift to organic farming

Eddie and Nelia never considered shifting to organic farming believing that organic farming yields less produce. It was not until in 2013 when their neighbor and Nelia's relative, Jonjon Sarmiento, member of Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA), invited Ana to attend a training to be conducted by the



Sibayan family photo

Department of Agriculture - Agricultural Training Institute (DA-ATI). In the said training, Ana learned the basics of Integrated Diversified Organic Farming System (IDOFS). Soon after, she convinced her family to try out the new system, beginning with cultivating a vegetable garden in their backyard, which used to be just an empty space with overgrown weeds.

In that same year, Ana stopped schooling to give way to her younger siblings. She devoted her time at home implementing various elements of IDOFS in their farm. She aimed to lessen their family's dependency on buying their food from the market. With the help of Nelia, she planted various vegetables: squash, ampalaya (bitter melon), upo (bottle gourd), chili, chili pepper, cucumber, malunggay (native horseradish leaves), camote (sweet potato), okra, tomatoes, ube, gabi, potatoes, string beans, kangkong (watercress), dill, and pechay (Chinese cabbage); as well as fruit trees, such as rambutan, lanzones, pomelo, durian, marang, jackfruit, pineapple, mango, and papaya.

When Nelia realized that harvesting and consuming vegetables and fruits from their backyard actually lessened their expenses, she became increasingly involved in tending



Ana showing her a portion of the family's vegetable garden

the backyard garden. The family was able to earn some savings from it, which they used to buy chickens. Eddie, begrudgingly at first, constructed free-range chicken cages. Right now, they already have around 20 free-range chickens for consumption and sale.

When the DA-ATI sought proposals on organic farming, Ana submitted one requesting assistance for seed money to expand their small piggery. The DA-ATI approved the proposal and provided her a loan amounting to Php 12,500 to be paid in 18 months without interest. At the moment, they have five sows (one is expected to give birth by the end of November 2014) and

seven piglets. The family mixes organic hog feeds with commercial feeds.

The family's rice farm is irrigated by a water pump located just behind their house. Ana suggested to her parents that they construct a fish pond to make use of the free-flowing water. Eddie dugged a canal around one plot of rice field nearest their house. The DA-ATI further provided the family with assistance by providing them 1,500 fingerlings of tilapia. It was further augmented by the local government of Victoria with 3,000 more fingerlings. The family harvests fishes mostly for consumption. But, at the moment, the family is already considering to sell tilapia once its price goes up.

The Sibayan Family: Cultivating the Next Generation of Farmers

Both Eddie and Nelia lived difficult lives as children working as farm hands in order to augment the income of their landless parents. Because of their difficult situations, both had to quit school: Nelia stopped before graduating from elementary school, and, Eddie was not able to graduate from high school.

Even when the family experienced many hardships, the couple never allowed their children to work as farm hands in other farms, like they used when they were young. When times would get hard, which was often, they would borrow money from Nelia's siblings or from friends and would pay it with money from their next harvest. In fact, for most of the 1990s and 2000s, their life could be characterized as a seemingly unending cycle of borrowing money and paying it with their next harvest, especially in early 2000s when the couple decided to build a house for their growing family. Ezekiel, their sixth child, had just been born then.

Because of the family's difficult financial situation, Ana stopped schooling for several instances. Even though she loved school and would always be in the honor roll, she understood that she had to give way to her siblings. At present, she is on her second year college taking up BS Secondary Education (major in Biology) at the Mindoro

State College of Agriculture and Technology (MinSCAT).

Her older brother, Eman, though, was adamant against stopping his schooling, and so he would always find a way to find a part-time job to support himself. He eventually graduated in a university in Manila with a degree in marketing. He worked in a bank for six months before deciding to work abroad. The family borrowed a substantial amount of money to pay his employment agency, which turned out to be bogus, so the money went down the drain. Still determined to work abroad, he eventually found a work in Saudi Arabia for two years and came back to the country just this year with Php 100,000 savings that he shared with his family. Out of that money, Nelia bought a carabao to help out in farm work.

Family effort

As much as possible, Eddie likes to keep the work within the family to minimize cash outflow. He does most of the hard labor in the farm, especially in their four hectares white rice farm. During planting and harvesting season, when the kids are not in school, they would all be out in the fields helping their parents. Anonuevo ("Novo"),

his second child, is also very active in the field. He acts as his father's right-hand man in the farm. He is also very adept at fixing and maintaining farm equipment. Eddie also enlists the help of his younger brother Arnold, who lives nearby.

Nelia is in charge of tending the vegetable garden. Eman, their eldest, no longer stays in the family's house but he still plays a very important role in remitting funds to the family whenever they need assistance.

Ana takes charge in preparing the bedding for the hogs, which would be used as organic fertilizer for the crops. She, together with Sarah and Crisol, takes charge of cleaning the pig pens every day.

Facilitating Factors of Sibayan Family's Success

Eddie and Nelia are happy that they have raised children who are not averse to doing farm work. They are confident that when they need to retire or no longer be around, their children would be able to manage their farm well.

Ana is also thankful to her parents that she and her siblings were raised to really be involved in farm work, unlike some children of farmers who do not even know how to operate a plow. She understands the crucial role that farmers' children play in the sustainability of the country's food production. She asks, "who will feed the world if all the children of today's farmers decide to abandon the farms and work in town centers and cities."

Market linkage

Although the family gets much of their income from the non-organic white rice that they sell to individual rice traders, they are now getting to be known in the community as a producer of organic red and black rice. Neighbors and some people from the nearby villages go to their house to buy their organic produce. The children also sell

Ezekiel takes care of feeding the chickens and fish every morning before going to school and every afternoon. He also does the sweeping of dried leaves around the

Eddie feeding the fish



backyard every afternoon.

organic rice to their interested classmates and teachers. They also sell their extra vegetable produce to those who visit their place.

Plans

The Sibayan family has plans to plant more crops and vegetables, especially soya, which they can process into soy milk, tofu and soy sauce.

They also want to learn different techniques in food processing to further minimize their dependence on commercial food products. Right now, they are using coconut oil, which they process themselves, for cooking purposes.

They are also planning to increase the area of their organic rice farm and eventually replace their commercially processed white rice into pure organic rice. This would entail increased production of their animal husbandry and vermicompost. Hence, they need to solicit for external assistance from government and/or other concerned stakeholders.

Brief Profile

The family has now truly appreciated the benefits of organic farming. Eddie, who used to be the most unenthusiastic about organic farming, is now the most passionate among the family in making sure that the animal pens are well-maintained and that the animals themselves are regularly fed.

They would always give whatever extra produce they have (be it organic rice or vegetables) to those who visit their place, especially those whom they know need it the most. They also continue to convince their neighbors of the many benefits of organic farming.

Due to Ana's dedication in seeing through her project, Ana is now recognized in Victoria, Mindoro Oriental as a future farmer leader. Early this year, she presented her family's experience on organic farming at the provincial and national workshops on "Bahaguinan ng mga Isyung Kabataang Magsasaka," and in the 2nd International Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development in Southeast Asia. Currently, Ana is the Young Farmer leader of PAKISAMA.

Name	Ana Sibayan
Gender	Female
Age	24
Urban/ rural	Rural (San Narciso, Victoria, Mindoro Oriental)
Marital status	Single
Family	Father: Eduardo (53) – farmer Mother: Nelia (52) – farmer Siblings: Emanuel (26) – BS Marketing graduate Anonuevo (22) – farmer Sarah (20) – studying Midwifery Crisol (17) – high school student Ezekiel (14) – high school student
Resource Tenurial Security (type and date of land ownership)	2 hectares are titled to the family since 1988; The family is a tenant of 1 hectare and is renting 1 more hectare for three years (they are now on their last year)
Produce	non-organic white rice, organic red and black rice, vegetables, hogs, chicken, tilapia
Market Linkage	Individual buyers
Working with the government	Department of Agriculture
Organization/affiliation	Mindoro Ecological Sustainable Agri-Federation (MESAFED)
Role/Position in organization	Youth leader

II.
Government
Nominated

Demosthenes Aquino and Family

2013 Outstanding Gawad Saka Farm Family
Cabasagan, Matanao, Davao del Sur



As early as 2009, the province already recognized the outstanding performance and significant achievements of the Aquino Family, particularly in the production/breeding of tilapia fingerlings (GIFT and GET EXCEL) and ornamental fishes.

The family of five earned a total of Php 493,888.75 from their various agricultural activities on their 4.55 hectare farm in Matanao, Davao del Sur. Aside from being recognized by the DA-BFAR and DTI as sole distributor of certified tilapia fingerlings to fishpond owners of the province, the family cultivates organic palay, ampalaya, eggplant, string beans, onion and coconut to augment their income. They are also into swine raising with 10 head of fatteners and goat, and raises chicken and ducks for their consumption. Their farm served as a show window of various fishery and agricultural projects, multiplying efforts of the government to reach out to more beneficiaries and ultimately contributing to

higher productivity and profitability among farmers in the locality. The family also attends various production and livelihood trainings and farming seminars conducted by the Department of Agriculture, LGUs and SUCs to further enhance their knowledge and skills.

Demosthenes Aquino, the head of the family, was commended in 2007 for his active involvement in research and unselfish efforts in sharing his farming technologies and technical expertise to fellow farmers in their locality. As MAFC chairman, he vigorously monitors projects funded by the DA and implemented by the LGU ensuring the project's success. Wife, Ligaya, an AB Economics graduate is an active vice president of both RIC and Student Government Council. She assists her husband in sharing their technology in preparing organic fertilizer and in establishing organic vegetable garden. All the Aquino children are active members of the local 4-H club.

Bernardino P. Nuñez, Sr. and Family

2012 Outstanding Gawad Saka Farm Family
San Rafael, Bulacan

In 2003, Bernardino Nuñez realized that his income from commercial rice production on his leased two and a half hectare land was not enough for his family.

Determined to find ways to improve the family's life and livelihood, the man of the house attended seminars and trainings on palay and vegetable productions conducted by the Municipal and Provincial Agriculture Office (MAO).

With the support of the whole Nuñez family and the assistance of the DA-High Value Crops Development Program, Tatay Bernardino ventured into vegetable production in 2005. Then, he planted quality seeds during off-season which provided for the whole family a continuous supply of quality farm produce and a stable income.

Through a series of hands-on lectures, and training/seminar on palay seed production, Tatay Bernardino was certified as an accredited palay seed grower in 2008 and a supplier of certified seeds. Today, eighty percent of their certified seeds are being supplied to the LGU of San Rafael for their seed distribution program and the remaining 20% to cooperatives and other farmers.

In 2010, ARGENT laboratories Inc. selected Nuñez' rice field as a techno demo area for the promotion of the efficiency of hybrid rice. Results show, that the Bigante yielded 149 cavans per hectare for the family, while SL8H produced 150 cavans per hectare.

The family also ventured in other income-generating projects including a livestock breeding and milk processing and mallard and chicken production. The Nuñez' also practice the use of alternative organic



pesticide for pest management, an environment-friendly and cost-saving technique.

The family netted an income of close to P1.2M in 2010 from their upo, ampalaya, sitao, rice and egg & salted egg production. In 2011, their ampalaya, rice, milk and egg production gained them almost P1M.

The family's valuable contributions were recognized when Tatay Bernardino was named Modelong Magsasaka by the San Rafael MAFC in 2009 and 2010. He was also awarded "Outstanding Producer of Ampalaya" by the Bulacan provincial government in 2009. With every member of the family showing passion in what they love doing together, they were awarded "Dangal ng Bayan" by the Sangguniang Barangay og Dagat-dagatan in 2011.

Their trophies speak of their noteworthy achievements, and their hardwork proves that working together towards a noble goal is inspiring.

Ceferino Durez and Family

2011 Outstanding Gawad Saka Farmy Family
Brooke's Point, Palawan

Mr. and Mrs. Ceferino Dureza and their family of six from Palawan, consider farming as a fun family activity cum enterprise. Engaged in various agricultural projects, majority of their income metaphorically comes from the land.

Husband and wife Rey and Virgie, respective resigned from their jobs as a security guard ad clerk, to try their luck in farming when they transferred from Aborlan to Brooke's Point.



Starting with an eight-hectare lot, the family persevered and worked hard together amidst challenges. With their best efforts, matched with the assistance from the Department of Agriculture and concerned units, the family-owned farm expanded to 51 hectares giving more room for the production of a variety of agricultural crops and animals.

The lot was now planted to rice, corn, coconut, cacao, banana, cashew, and other cash crops.

The Dureza's also ventured into animal raising and now grow chickens, cows, swine and goats.

For additional income, the family embarked into milling & palay trading while some parts of their land were planted to mahogany and paper trees for lumber.

With the profits they earned, the children were sent to schools in Manila to earn their degrees. Geoffrey is a Mechanical Engineer, while Jeffrey is an Industrial Engineer. Reggie is now a Medical Technologist, while

Gerald is a Computer Science Specialist. Jennifer works as a Nurse, while Glenn, the youngest of the brood, is still in second year college taking up electronic communications engineering.

For the love of farming Geoffrey, Jeffrey and Gerald resigned from their jobs and are now full-pledged farmers like their parents.

Today the family shares their blessings to others particularly to a Palawan tribe who they encourage to grow their bananas and cassavas for food.

Aside from this, the family teaches the natives how to read and write as part of their social responsibility. They have also continuously provided livelihood to other minorities and other residents of the community.

The Durezas, a family worthy of emulation, are living example that against all odds, working together towards a common goal will bring success and victory.

Abias Rosalita and Family

2010 Outstanding Gawad Saka Farm Family
Valencia, Bukidnon



Abias Rosalita migrated in his teen years, met his wife Mercedes, and raised their own family. They were blessed with five children: three girls and two boys.

From there on, the family depended on agriculture for their livelihood. At present, the family continued to till the land that Abias used to farm and rented another piece of property to address their growing needs. With the perseverance and industry of the family, they were able to buy the five-hectare farm they are tilling.

The couple with the help of their children continued on discovering new farming techniques, one of which is integrated farming.

They applied what they learned from agricultural workshops, trainings, seminars, farmers' field schools, and school-on-their programs sponsored by DA, other government agencies and NGOs.

They optimized their farm production by venturing into other alternative sources of income like fish culture, handicraft making, food handling and processing, and livestock raising. Being innovative, the farm family used carbonized rice hulls and bones for soil inoculants, and cultured mushroom using "tiki-tiki" for early maturity.

They applied Natural Farming Technology System (NFTS) by planting leguminous

plants in almost 75% of their farm lot attracted pests which they control using organic extracts from plants and fruits.

Postharvest losses from fruits were minimal as the family processed these into jams, pickles, purees and chips sold during trade fairs, town fiesta and in the provincial hospital where the two Rosalita daughters are currently working.

The family attributed their success in farming through their cooperation and hardwork which helped their children pursued their college degrees – Mirajen Rosalita, registered nurse; Decemm, B.S. Medical Technology, Novie Lyn, B.S. Pharmacy; Oct Chill, B.S. Pharmacy; and May Grale, B.S. Agriculture.

Because of their strong agricultural background, the family members continued to receive numerous awards. Mrs. Rosalita was adjudged as an Outstanding Farmer in Bukidnon and was chosen as Barangay Agriculture Fishery Council Chairman of Lurogan, Valencia City and RIC Barangay president.

Their youngest son, a 4-H club member, was a recipient of Japan's Young Filipino Training program, and the Japanese Program Exchange Council in the Asian Youth Leadership Program and awarded as Young Farmer for Gawad Saka 2001-2002.

Truly, Mr. and Mrs. Abias Rosalita made outstanding agricultural practice a family affair.

Exequiel Bahalla

Farmer-scientist

An Agrarian Reform Beneficiary of Bohol

The three-hectare farm in Bohol tells the story of Exequiel Bahalla's life. As a young boy in grade three, he had to quit school to help his father work in the farm. He wanted to be a soldier, but life was tough and all hands were needed in tending the crops.

The tipping point for this life-long farmer came in 2002, when he was able to acquire through the government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) a three-hectare rice land that his family had been tilling for decades.

Exequiel along with his fellow farmers formed the Katipunan Multi-Purpose Farmers Cooperative. His membership in the organization became his ticket to learning. He had gone through training such as Rice Seed Production and Seed Certification with Post-Harvest Technology, Farmer-led Extension Delivery Planning,

Corn Seed Production, and Retooling Course for Rice Seed Production. All this, he applied in his farm and it delivered. His earnings from the farm enabled him to send his five children through college.

Exequiel's successful farming method has become well-known that even farmers from other barangays sought his advice on how to improve their harvests. In 2008, he was cited as Magsasaka Siyentista (farmer-scientist) for his contribution to his community.

He is currently breeding rice seedlings of high-yielding varieties, with the provincial government as one of his clients for distribution to other municipalities. He also conducts lectures on viable farming techniques.

Norma De Lara

Farmer-entrepreneur

An Agrarian Reform Beneficiary of Surigao del Sur

For as long as Norma de Lara could recall, the agsam vine, a plant endemic to Nurcia, Surigao del Sur, supported the needs of their brood of nine. Her mother weaved agsam vine into bracelets and sold them to the market to augment the family income.

She couldn't remember how her mother learned about the vine's elastic properties, but what she could recall was that her mother spent hours weaving the vines into bracelets. Each bracelet fetched a good price.

In 2002, Norma became an agrarian reform beneficiary (ARB) under the DAR and joined the Lanuza Agham Crafts Development Cooperative.

Seeing the potential of agsam products to be a fashion hit in Manila, Norma decided to show off her accessories in one of the

annual stagings of the Agraryo Trade Fair at the SM Mega Trade Hall. She also exhibited them in regional trade fairs where her products gained the market's attention.

Her Manila sojourns allowed her to touch base with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), which certified Norma's products as having passed the standards set by the agency.

Today, agsam accessories like bracelets, hairclips, cellphone cases, penholders, and other products made by the De Lara Agsam Novelties are found on the shelves of SM's Kultura, the Balibayan Handicrafts in Makati City and the CM Bamboo Craft Center in Quezon City. They are also exported to countries like Japan.

Trinidad Domingo

Farmer-leader

An Agrarian Reform Beneficiary of Nueva Ecija

Trinidad Domingo or “Ka Trining,” as she is fondly called in the farm and in her organizations, started farming when she was 16. When her father died, her mother told her to quit school and help tend the family’s two-hectare farm. Farming is second nature to her. She applied everything she learned from her father in the farm to support her mother and 10 siblings.

A herculean task, but with sheer determination and perseverance, she was able to make the farm profitable by planting vegetable crops, which enabled her to send her siblings to school.

Their two-hectare farm was part of Hacienda de Leon in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija. She was 20 years old when the land was awarded to them under Presidential Decree 27 in 1972.

Through the years, she saw and experienced the inequality and injustices of the farming system to women farmers. She wanted to change the situation to where fellow women-farmers could be active decision makers in the community.

In 1975, Ka Trining joined and became the president of the Katipunan ng mga Bagong Pilipina (KABAPA), a group of women who believes in pursuing agrarian reform advocacies and fighting for gender equality in the farm. She also used to head the Pambansang Koalisyon ng mga Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK), which fights for rights of women-farmers.

Today, she is a picture of contentment. Oh yes, she is still into farming, supervising her farm that has expanded into organic vegetable and organic rice farming. During her free time, she dedicates it by promoting women’s rights.

Synthesis

The cases documented debunked the myths that (1) organic farming yields low produce and income; (2) the inverse relationship of farm size and efficiency; and, (3) small farmers are risk averse.

The social and behavioural changes demonstrated by the families that have shifted to organic agriculture are but some of the few empirical evidences that sustainable agriculture practices are poverty alleviating strategies. Hence, there is a need for government and development organizations to encourage scaling up sustainable agricultural practices by the beneficiaries it serve.

While big capitalists would believe that large scale production is more efficient, hence, higher return on investments, these cases revealed that family farm production where land and labour are maximized is also, or more, efficient.

Investing in small holders could spur development, especially in rural areas where the concentration of vulnerable people is high. Investments need not come from big capitalists. These cases showed that family farmers investing on themselves are also catalysers of rural development. With the proper support, they can manage risks. With assets, capacities, and access to capital (i.e. financial), family farmers are in a more favourable position to leverage for resources they need, bargain better prices, and, lobby for suitable policies.

Central to these experiences of family farmers, as documented here, is their membership to organized local groups. Farmers' organizations help facilitate family farmers access to infrastructure, harvest and processing facilities, pro-poor financing and credit mechanisms, and, agricultural extension services. Given these experience, development organizations and government agencies must continue investing to organizing farmers.



Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (AsiaDHRRA)

AsiaDHRRA traces its earliest roots to the 1974 Development of the Human Rural Resources in Asia Workshop (DHRRAW) which was held in Swanganiwas, Thailand. About one hundred and twenty (120) rural development workers and practitioners gathered to engage in dialogues that focused on the challenges and responses to rural development. At the end of the eventful three-week workshop, a call for continuous dialogue among the participants was made. As such, a support structure, the Center for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (CenDHRRA), was created to facilitate the sharing and exchanges across the Asian region. In 1994, the movement formally evolved into its present state, a regional network of country DHRRAs known as AsiaDHRRA. After more than two decades, the regional network is now composed of DHRRAs from Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, South Korea, Taiwan-ROC, and Japan.

AsiaDHRRA is a regional partnership of 11 social development networks and organizations in 10 Asian nations that envisions Asian rural communities that are just, free, prosperous, living in peace and working in solidarity towards self-reliance.

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