Harvesting from Family Farms:
Stories of Feeding the Nation and Caring for the Earth
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and Caring for the Earth
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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
As we celebrated the IYFF, sharing of farmers’ experiences was 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 to 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 10 stories nominated by civil society organizations, is a second instalment of the case documentation of success stories and good practices of family farming in the Philippines. 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.
Executive Summary

In support of civil society organizations’ (CSOs) efforts to engage in the 2014 UN-declared International Year of Family Farming (IYFF) Campaign, the Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in the Rural Areas (AsiaDHRRA), with the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in the Rural Areas (PhilDHHRA), initiated a project entitled IYFF Story Harvesting and Policy Dialogue. The project aims to strengthen joint CSO advocacy for policies in favor of family farming and smallholder agriculture in the Philippines. Part of this project is the documentation of ten cases of good models of family farming, thematically and geographically spread out, in order to support priority policy issues of farmers’ organizations (FOs) and the national IYFF CSO committee.

The ten cases were selected based on the criteria set by the national CSO committee. The criteria for selection are: 1. geographic: coming from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao or administrative regions with upland or lowland family farmers; 2. sectoral: farming by fisherfolk, marginal fishers (hunting), IPs, Muslim, farmers, women (led), youth (led), Moro land settlers in Mindanao (Bangsamoro); 3. commodity-based: for farmers: coconut, rice/corn, fruits and vegetables, livestock; for fisherfolk: seaweed aquaculture and municipal fishing; and 4. programs: outstanding farmers highlighting successes of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform, Program Extension with Reform (CARPER), the Organic Agriculture Act, UPLAND development, and CBCRM/Delineation of municipal waters.
In selecting the cases, the national committee mounted a search for ten model farming families in the first half of 2014. Partner FOs and CSOs from all over the country sent their nominees to the search. The National Steering Committee, in consultation with the broader CSO committee, shortlisted and selected the cases based on the set criteria.

Selected cases highlight the importance of implementing existing asset reform laws, such as CARPer, Fisheries Code, and IPRA, the 2010 Organic Agriculture Act, the Magna Carta for Women or passing new legislations, such as young farmers act, institutional buying cum school feeding program, and social enterprise bill. Four elements cutting across the cases are: 1. resource tenurial security; 2. production inputs acquired; 3. market linkage; and 4. governance.

Of the 10 selected cases, five are in Luzon (Isabela, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, and Oriental Mindoro provinces), two in the Visayas (Negros Occidental, and Bohol provinces), and three in Mindanao (Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, and Agusan del Sur provinces). Except for one dairy cow farm and one forestland, family farms are mainly rice farms. Total land areas covered by family farms selected range between 2.5 hectares and 10 hectares. Total land area covered by the dairy cow farm is not indicated. One family farm is a recipient of a certificate of stewardship contract (CSC). Another farm is a beneficiary of the government’s community-based forest management program (CBFMP). The rest are privately owned, either purchased, inherited, or on lease.

All family rice farms apply the integrated diversified organic farming system (IDOFS). They are able to maximize their land by cultivating organic brown, red, or black rice and/or non-organic white race at the same time maintaining a vegetable or herbal garden and vermin compost, raising livestock, and/or managing a fishpond/s. The lone family forestland cultivates a variety of trees but is set to develop a portion of the land for organic rice cultivation.
They market their produce through direct selling, the cooperative to which they belong, or through middlepersons or marketing mediators. Common among family farmers are their practice of working together as a family, occasionally engaging the services of hired hands, properly managing daily routine, engaging with partners, including government, nongovernment and people’s organizations, acquiring and/or installing needed equipment and facilities, such as pre, during and post-harvest facilities, and irrigation system, and affiliation to various community or sectoral organizations as their key to success. Underlying all these practices are their strong belief in organic farming, their practical knowledge and skills in financial management, and the role of women. They are able to profit more from organic farming, as they know how to manage their earnings. Six of the ten selected family farms, including the dairy cow farm, are spearheaded by women, one of whom is a youth farmer leader.

Common challenges or stumbling blocks to the family farms’ success are the perennial problem of farmers in financial capital, calamities, both natural (super typhoons) and human-made (insurgency, peace and order problem), dealing with middlepersons, low price of commodities, and difficulty in marketing and transporting produce. The families’ creativity, resourcefulness and resiliency, their support system, including their community and organization, and assistance from concerned government, nongovernment and people’s organizations allow these families to rise above such challenges. Having had their lot in life improved through their organic farms, all selected families look forward to enhancing and improving their family farms in various ways as well as continuing their advocacy for organic farming in their community and beyond.

Family farming encourages all family members, especially the younger members, to put in their stake to ensure the success of the family farm. Stories of selected families under the project underscore this positive characteristic of family farms. Children are able to appreciate the value of farming. They continue or enhance what their parents have started, pursue a career in agriculture, or occasionally
go back to farming and help their parents when their time as urban professionals allows.

The cases documented debunk the myths that organic farming yields low produce and income; inverse relationship of farm size and efficiency; and small farmers are risk averse. The social and behavioral changes the families demonstrate as they shift to organic agriculture prove that sustainable agriculture practices are poverty alleviating strategies. Therefore, government and development organizations need to encourage scaling up of sustainable agricultural practices by their partner farmer families.

Big capitalists argue that large scale production is more efficient than small scale production. The ten model family farms, however, show that family farm production that maximizes land and labor can be more efficient and profitable.

Investing in smallholders can spur development, especially in rural areas where concentration of the most vulnerable people is high. Investments need not come from big capitalists. These selected cases of family farmers show that family farmers serve as catalysts of rural development. With proper support and needed facilities, infrastructure and equipment, they are able to manage risks. With assets, capacities, and access to capital (financial), family farmers are in a more favorable position to leverage for resources they need, bargain better prices, and lobby for suitable policies.

Central to the family farmers’ experiences is their affiliation 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 thus, development organizations and government agencies must continue investing in organizing and capacitating women and men farmers, including their families.
Introduction: 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 the former Maria Mateo. Known in his community as Mang Imias, he, with his wife and children, owns and cultivates a small piece of land totalling 2,500 sq m.

The family’s landholding used to be 8,500 sq m. They had to give up a portion of it when Mang Imias suffered from a respiratory illness in 2008. Mang Imias sold 6,000 sq m to a cousin in order to pay for his medications. His relative assured him though he could get back his land anytime he was able to do so.
Mang Imias and Aling 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 are in college. Jeffrey, a recipient of a scholarship grant from the DA-ACEF (Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund), is into agriculture at the Isabela State University. As of this writing, Herman, on the other hand, was awaiting the approval of his application for the same grant, so he could pursue the same degree at the same university as well. The other three children—Jay, Joy Ann, and Ana--have reached high school. John, the youngest, is still in elementary school.

The Sanchez family farm produces three rice varieties, namely, black, red, and aromatic. Organic black rice contains more fibre than white rice and is rich in anthocyanins. Black rice is priced higher than any special rice in the local community and out-of-town areas, including Metro Manila. In the last two years, with two cropping seasons per year, the farm averaged a net income of Php 11,000 per harvest from black rice sold at Php 70 per kilogram.

Aside from rice, the farm produces vegetables, specifically bitter gourd, eggplant, and squash. Vegetable farming provides additional income to the family. Apart from producing rice and vegetables, the family processes and produces bignay wine from bignay fruits (Antidesma bunius) or Chinese laurel. It is sold at Php 1,200 per liter. The family's matriarch, Aling Maria, initiated a small garden of herbs (herbanium), including ashitaba, oregano, cerfentina, and tsaang gubat. She sells herbal seedlings at Php 50 each. Also, she processes and sells liquid probiotics food at Php 450 per litre. Mang Imias, on the other hand, earns Php 2,600 from indigenous micro-organisms.

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1 Bignay is similar to cranberry or wild berry in other countries. It is common in Southeast Asia. It is called berunai in Malaysia; kho-lien tit in Laos; choi moi in Vietnam; wooni or hooni in Indonesia; and ma mao luang in Thailand. It is popularly known as a salamander tree, Chinese laurel and currant tree in English. In the Philippines, bignay is common in the local markets of Luzon, especially in the mountainous areas. This fruit is seasonal.

2 Probiotic foods are said to improve digestion and strengthen the body’s immune system. They contain gut-friendly “good bacteria” and are processed through fermentation.

3 IMOs decompose organic compounds, catalyze chemical processes in the soil, facilitate recovery of soil fertility, and suppress soil-borne diseases by circulating naturally active substances. IMOs and probiotic food supplements are almost the same; they vary only in the materials used for processing. Humans can take in fermented plant or fruit juice.
(IMOs) he produces by fermenting different plant materials. IMOs are used as supplement to organic fertilizer.

Apart from cultivating rice and vegetables and maintaining an herbal garden, the family raises livestock, such as swine, poultry, and ducks as additional source of income. They earn an average of Php 10,000 net of expenses per year from swine raising, Php1,600 a year from selling 10-15 ducks, and Php1,500 from selling 10-15 chickens.

Key to Success: Best Practices

All in the Family
All the children help in the farm, specifically in producing rice, raising small farm animals, vermin composting, vegetable gardening, and preparing the mixture for the IMO also used as supplement to organic. However, William, the eldest, works as a farm hand in their cousin’s farm, also.

Engaging with Partners
Mang Imias’s social orientation and experience in development work have been instrumental in ensuring the success of their family farm.

He used to serve as community organizer for PROCESS Foundation in 1982-93. He facilitated the formation of various farmer organizations (FOs) and cooperatives whose members included agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) in Region II. Also, he was involved in land rights advocacy towards the emancipation of landless farmers from tenancy. With FOs, he advocated for the passage of Republic Act 10068, otherwise known as the Organic Agriculture Act.

His involvement in the passage of the said RA started him in organic farming. He enhanced and equipped himself with knowledge and skills in organic agriculture through participation in various skills training, including the 2009 sustainable agriculture training from IYFF.
PAKISAMA and Agriterra, a Dutch-based organization supporting FOs through economic development.

With knowledge and skills in organic agriculture, he redesigned their family farm using approach and techniques such as Integrated Diversified Organic Farming Systems (IDOFS) and Korean Natural Farming System (KNFS). The KNFS keeps the farm’s pigsty clean and odourless and reduces expenses on swine feeds. Meanwhile, the enzymes in the IMO he uses keep flies away.

At present, Mang Imias serves as president of the Cagayan Valley Organic Farmers Alliance, Inc. (CAVOFA). Also, he serves as member of the pool of internal inspectors for CAVOFA’s organic certification and serves as farm technician for organic agriculture; Malasin Organic Farmers Association (MOFA), an affiliate-member of CAVOFA; Local Organic Technical committee (LOTC) of San Mateo, Isabela.

Producing own farm inputs

As mentioned earlier, the farm produces its own IMO, the principle ingredient in organic agriculture. Mang Imias and his children use as guide the pamphlet on IMO preparation Mang Imias got from a skills training he participated in. IMO concoction for the soil contains containing nitrogen-fixing bacteria. It is used to improve soil fertility.

Apart from IMO, the farm produces its own organic fertilizer through vermicasting, a method employing worms and earthworms to catalyze decomposition of a heterogeneous mixture of organic matter, farm wastes, and other organic materials. Vermicast, also known as worm castings, humus or manure, is the end product of the breakdown of organic matter by earthworms. These castings contain reduced levels of contaminants and a higher saturation of nutrients than do organic materials.
Overcoming Challenges

Respiratory illness

Suffering from respiratory illness was a major challenge for the family, especially to Mang Imias. As mentioned, they had to sell almost three fourths of their 8,000 square meter farm in order to pay for his medications. Some of his children had to work for their relatives who were better off.

From his sharing, Mang Imias attributed his cure not from doctor-prescribed medications but mainly from his indigenous concoctions of organic substances such as the IMO and oregano extract. Similar to the Yakult drink, the IMO contains good bacteria that can cure health problems. The oregano syrup, on the other hand, is good for coughs and colds.

His recovery encouraged him to continue working on herbal medicines and share his knowledge with his family and community members.

Conclusion: Way Forward

Mang Imias has not lost his keen interest in learning new things as far as their farm is concerned despite having reached first year high school only. He continues to update himself on current trends in farming, especially organic farming. He reads a lot of reading materials, such as on biology and herbal or medicinal plants. He shares the knowledge he gains from his readings especially with his wife and children. For instance, he learned that herbal plants are best harvested at night or early dawn when their nutrients are at their peak. He believes people need to be aware of this unique characteristic of herbal plants in order to maximize their potentials.
**Profile**

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<th>Name:</th>
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<td>Marital Status:</td>
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| 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 transform CAVOFA into a cooperative |
| Role/Position in organization: | President, CAVOFA  
Member of internal inspectors for CAVOFA Organic Certification Farmer Technician |
Introduction: The Family and their Farm

Edgar and Susan Madulin have engaged in farming since 1999. They have two teenage sons, Sugar Ray, 15, and Edgar Jr., 13, who are both in high school. Edgar serves as a Barangay Kagawad (Councilor) while Susan serves as manager of the Limbaan Small Coconut Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative (LSCFMPC).

Susan is happy about their sons doing well in school. Sugar Ray plans to pursue a degree in computer science. Edgar Jr., on the other hand, is still undecided about the course to pursue in college. He is more inclined to do farm work such as feeding the animals and constructing pens for them. Susan and Edgar hope at least a son decides to manage their organic farm after college in order to continue the work they have begun.
The family cultivates a combined total of five hectares of land which Edgar and Susan separately inherited from their parents. Edgar inherited three and a half hectares in 2002, while Susan inherited one and a half hectares in 2007. Of the five hectares, the couple have planted three and a half hectares with 350 coconut trees and 1,200 hills of a mixture of plantain and Cavendish banana and one and a half hectares with rice.

They had used commercial fertilizers for six years, from 1999 to 2005. They shifted to organic farming in 2006. They are able to harvest about 300 kilos of bananas monthly, 1,800 coconut fruits every three months, and 140 bags of paddy rice twice a year. In January 2014, the family planted 180 cacao trees expected to start bearing fruit after three years.

Apart from cultivating various crops, the family raises livestock, such as goats and chickens, which serve as additional sources of food and income. They use goat and chicken manure as organic fertilizer.

In Limbaan, aside from the Madulins, one other farmer produces organic rice and eight other farmers produce “low-chemical” palay.

**Key to Success: Best Practices**

**Family Support and Hiring farm hands**

The two boys help in the farm. On weekdays, upon arrival from school, Sugar Ray feeds the chickens while Edgar Jr. feeds the goats. On weekends, both help their parents to clear the fields of overgrown weeds. Edgar supervises the work, especially on Saturdays, when Susan is out to work as part-time bookkeeper of a dairy plant.

Harvest season is a busy period for the family, as many hands are required to get the job done. The family hires farm workers to do the heavier tasks during harvest season. These workers get a share of the harvest as part of their compensation.
Properly planned daily routine

On weekdays, once her sons have left for school and her husband has left for work, Susan goes out to the farm to cut Napier grass and feed her goats in a pen about 500 meters away from their house. Apart from forage grasses, she feeds the goats with rice and corn bran. She recently sold ten goats to buy crossbreed Anglo-Nubian goats for dairy production.

By ten in the morning, Susan is finished with farm work and goes home to prepare lunch for Edgar and herself. Her two boys bring packed lunch to school. By three in the afternoon, she goes out to feed the goats again and drops by their cooperative headquarters to do some work until five.

Every two days, Susan collects the beddings from the goat barn. She uses goat manure to make compost (goat manure mixed with soil and rice straw, carbonized rice hull) with trichoderma (Trichoderma harzianum4).

Susan maintains a two-compartment vermin composting bed where she regularly feeds earthworms with leaves or grass and other organic matter. She weekly collects the vermicast and uses it to prepare the land for planting or fertilize her crops. The remaining vermicast is stored for future use.

Engaging with Partners

The family farm receives assistance in various forms from government, nongovernment, and people’s organizations through LSCFMPC. Government agencies include the Department of Agriculture (DA), Philippine Coconut Authority, Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO). Nongovernment agencies include Davao Federation of Farmers’ Integrated Services Cooperative (DAFISCO), Davao Federation of Fishers’ and Farmers’ Cooperative (DACOFARM), and Institute of Primary Health Care (IPHC).

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.
Department of Agriculture

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

The family took organic farming to the next level in 2010. A few key institutions were crucial to this scaling-up. The Davao Federation of Farmers' Integrated Services Cooperative, Inc. (DAFISCO) provided capacity-building interventions on Organic and Integrated Farming Technologies with the LSCFMPC, of which Susan and Edgar have been part since 2005. Edgar used to serve as LSCFMPC manager. Susan used to be the cooperative’s bookkeeper and now serves as manager.

The LSCFMPC received “kukum5” copra drying facility, a trailer/hand tractor, and equipment to carbonize rice hulls through the Department of Agriculture’s (DA) Mindanao Rural Development Project–Community Fund for Agricultural Development (MRDP-CFAD) project in partnership with the New Corella municipal government.

Coop members and coconut farmers use the drying facility to produce white copra while hand tractor/trailer helps farmers to transport coconuts from their farms to the drying facility and copra trader.

Apart from facilities and equipment, the DA’s program conducted skills training such as in Expanded Modified Rapid Composting (EMRC). DA, through its Bureau of Soil and Water Management (BSWM), approved funding to the coop for the purchase of 15 kgs of African night crawler earthworms and a shredder for vermin composting.

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1 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. Traditional copra drying kilns produce a brown to dark brown copra. 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 Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) of New Corella supports organic farming initiatives of farmers in the municipality.

**Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA)**

The PCA provided the 180 cacao trees the family recently planted. Also, the agency gave out 21 goats which Susan distributed to three coop members. The agreement is that once the goats produce offspring, the offspring will be distributed to other coop members.

**Davao Federation of Farmers’ Integrated Services Cooperative (DAFISCO)**

DAFISCO provides capacity-building interventions to improve farm productivity of members. Also, it extends farm financing services and facilitates market access by farmers. In 2013, DAFISCO extended a loan package of Php 8,000 each to eight LSCFMPC members engaged in organic farming to finance feeds for their farm animals. Also, DAFISCO gave out two bags of vermicast to 20 members of LSCFMPC.

**Davao Federation of Fishers’ and Farmers’ Cooperative (DACOFARM)**

DACOFARM’s social enterprise arm, the Davao Federation of Fishers’ and Farmers’ Cooperative (DACOFARM), is another institution instrumental in Susan and Edgar’s decision to shift 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 for palay was Php 21. DACOFARM was buying 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).

**Institute of Primary Health Care (IPHC)**

The Institute of Primary Health Care (IPHC) has helped develop capacities of officers and staff in management and leadership. Also, it has organized basic training workshops on organic agriculture.
Magsasaka at Syentipino para sa Pag-unlad ng Agrikultura (MASIPAG)-Mindoro

MASIPAG-Mindoro chapter provided 50 varieties of start-up organic rice seeds to coop members.

Overcoming Challenges

Lack of direct trade with consumers

Coop members and coconut farmers are forced to sell their produce, specifically white copra, to the sole copra trader in the barangay at the same price as that of regular brown copra. At the time of writing, the selling price of regular brown copra was Php25 per kilo. The copra trader often times serves as creditor to farmers who need capital to work on their farms. The farmers use their expected harvest as collateral. In effect, farmers' produce have already been sold even before they are harvested.

Susan, however, found ways to sell her white copra at Php30 per kilo or sometimes much higher depending on the situation at the global market. As of this writing, she was planning to talk with oil plant operators in Sta. Cruz, Davao City to see if she could negotiate for a direct trade between their coop and their plant. Unlike the copra trader, their coop does not have a truck but Susan said they could rent a truck from the local government in order to transport white copra to an oil plant in Davao City.

Lessons to Live By

Benefits of organic farming

Susan and Edgar attest to the benefits of organic farming to the family's health and to their farm. They no longer get sick as often as they did when they were still consuming their own pesticide-laden produce. They are aware that the damaged wrought by chemicals and synthetic fertilizers on the soil will take years to ameliorate and restore its natural fertility.
Support from various agencies crucial to success of family farm
The couple are grateful for the assistance the government and civil society organizations have been providing to family farmers like them. The various forms of assistance, such as skills training, farm inputs and equipment, and funds, they have received have been crucial to the success of their family farm.

Conclusion: Way Forward
Susan and Edgar have become passionate advocates of organic farming and have been using their positions as coop manager and as barangay official, respectively, to influence other coop and community members to shift to organic farming. They both know the transition does not come quickly. They also know some LSCFMP members are still using “low-chemical” farming, but they hope the latter would eventually move towards organic farming.

Susan has committed herself at improving the business and services of LSCFMPC. She wishes to see the day when their coop is able to directly market farmers’ produce to factories in the Davao region. Such is the only way for the coop and the farmers to free themselves from their dependence on the sole trader in the barangay and take control of the value chain of agricultural products in Limbaan.

Susan and Edgar are optimistic about the future of white copra, because they have heard the national government, through the DOLE and PCA, is supportive of white copra production. She hopes the government and CSOs would continue to work with them.
## Profile

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| Family        | Husband: Edgar (44) – farmer, barangay kagawad  
                Children: Sugar Ray (15) – high school student  
                                Edgar Jr. (13) – high school student |
| Resource Tenurial 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 |
Introduction: The Family and their Farm

At the tender age of eight years, Sabas Bolanio learned to plough the fields under the tutelage of his father. As the eldest son and second child among five children, Sabas served as the “right hand” of his father in the farm.

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. Each morning before school and upon coming home from school in the afternoon, Sabas and his siblings had to fetch water for their mother a couple of kilometers from their house.
Sabas stopped schooling when he was in first year high school to concentrate on farming. At the time, he did not fully appreciate the value of education. At 22, Sabas married his childhood sweetheart, Alberta, fondly called as Abing. The couple used to be elementary schoolmates. To help the couple start a life together, Sabas’ parents gave them one hectare of land while Abing’s parents 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 see themselves as parents wanting their children to live in a better world. They have four reasons why they are strongly committed to organic farming: 1. Jesrel, 26 years old; 2. Jessa, 22; 3. Jun Mark, 18; and 4. Sabas Jr, 10.

Sabas and Abing were able to build a home for their family. Their house, which used to be a small hut of cogon and bamboo, is now a concrete bungalow with galvanized iron roof. They are able to send all their children to school. Their eldest, Jesrel, recently passed the bar exams and now serves as an associate at a law office in Tagbilaran City. The second, Jessa, earned her degree in banking and finance and now works with one of the biggest establishments in Tagbilaran. The third, Jun Mark, is in high school, and the youngest, Sabas Jr, is in elementary.

Sabas and Abing are simple and down-to-earth couple who have been farmers for more than 24 years. Over the years, they had been able to buy an additional one hectare, thus making their rice field a total of two and a half hectares.

A strong advocate of organic farming, Sabas has taught his children to respect mother earth. He told them, “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).
A trained farmer technician (FT), Sabas believes organic farming can help promote and preserve a clean and healthy environment. He and his family are caretakers of the earth; they have an obligation to protect and preserve the environment for the good of future generation.

The Bolanio family’s farm serves as a showcase for organic farming. To support their organic farm, the family engages in vermin composting using African Night Crawlers, a kind of worm that efficiently compost organic matters. They are able to produce about 20 sacks of vermin compost per cropping season. Aside from vermin compost, the family uses animal manure as fertilizer.

The family raises livestock such as organic chickens and ducks, swine, cows, and carabaos. The family has six heads of hogs for fattening and a sow for breeding. They have two carabaos and six cows.

Aside from raising livestock, the family manages a small fish pond where they propagate tilapia, carp and mudfish (locally known as “Halwan”) for 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 weighs half kilo. The family does not sell tilapia but gives them to relatives, friends, and neighbors to showcase there is no need to invest in expensive commercial feeds to produce fish in the backyard.

In return for all the blessings they have been enjoying, the Bolanio family regularly participates in tree planting activities organized by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the National Irrigation Authority (NIA). As FT, Sabas continuously imparts knowledge and skills in organic farming to other farmers in the community. Abing, an active member of a bible community, regularly helps in organizing environmental protection related activities. She and her family participated in the mangrove planting their church organized early this year. For Abing, protecting the
coastal area through mangrove planting is very important. Without mangroves, breeding grounds for fishes will be limited.

Key to Success: Best Practices

All in the Family: Working as a Team

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

Engaging with Partners

Support from various government and nongovernment organizations has 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.

Department of Agriculture and Department of Agrarian Reform

Sabas trained as farmer technician (FT) under the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Bohol Australian Community Assistance Program (BOCAP) in 2006. As FT, Sabas serves as peer educator on organic farming.

In the late 90’s, Sabas’s 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, DA provided the San Miguel Organic Farmers Association (SAMOFA), of which Sabas is a member, with a small tractor locally known as kuliglig. A kuliglig has a trailer the farmers use to transport up to 15 sacks of palay.
Also, the DA provided the community with a communal flatbed dryer facility that can accommodate up to 120 sacks of palay per loading. With the help of the dryer, the palay of the Bolanio family now fetches higher prices. The family sells organic palay to the Carmen Samahang Nayon MPC at Php 26.50 per kilo for the red variety and Php 24 per 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 to save on transportation cost.

Both the DA and DAR provide training and market linkage services to farmers. Such services have helped to improve the production of the Bolanio’s family farm and increase their earnings.

**Bohol Australian Community Assistance Program (BOCAP)**

SAMOFA was organized through the assistance of BOCAP in September 2006. The organization started with 24 members, 10 of whom were male and 14 were female. SAMOFA was registered with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) as a people’s organization (PO). To date, the organization has 34 active members and offers the following services to its members: 1. hand tractor rental; 2. use of shredder; 3. livestock dispersal; and 4. hands-on training in rice duck technology. Sabas is among the farmer trainers for the rice duck technology and his farm serves as the learning site.

Carmen Samahang Nayon Multi-Purpose Cooperative (CSNMPC)

Through the Samahang Nayon, SAMOFA members were able to access financial support to buy farm inputs. Government’s support through irrigation, provision of tractors and post-harvest facilities, and seed dispersal enhanced the competitiveness of the Bolanio family.

**National Irrigation Administration (NIA)**

The NIA built the Malinao dam in Pilar, Bohol in 2006. The dam supplies water to rice fields in the surrounding areas, including the farm of Sabas. With irrigation, the family is able to plant and harvest
at least twice a year. At present, their two and a half hectare farm produces a total of 200 sacks of palay per cropping season.

Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA)

PAKISAMA, under its Philippines Farmers for Food Project, extended assistance to SAMOFA in market linkage in 2009. The national farmers’ federation linked SAMOFA to the Carmen Samahang Nayon Multi-Purpose Cooperative. The cooperative offers loans to farmers, provides organic farm inputs, and serves as wholesale buyer for organic rice in the province of Bohol. To date, the interest rates of production loans are at 25 percent per annum. The cooperative offers patronage refund to members at the end of the year.

South East Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment (SEARICE)

SEARICE is another international NGO based in Manila that has provided assistance to family farms such as Sabas’s.

Overcoming Challenges

Refusal of neighbors to shift to organic farming

Sabas noted many of their neighbors refuse to adopt organic farming because it is laborious and produces lower yields. Since lower yield is equated to lower income, most farmers shy away from organic farming. However, despite the many challenges they encounter, the Bolanio family continues to engage in organic farming.

Difficulty in marketing and transporting organic products

Marketing and transporting their organic farm produce used to be a major challenge to the family. In the 80’s and 90’s, the family used to sell their produce to buyers at the local market in Dagohoy. At the time, there was no farm to market road from Brgy. San Miguel to the town, thus transporting farm produce was difficult. The family
used to use a “balsa” (wooden or bamboo wagon with no wheels) to transport their produce to the market. A balsa could carry a maximum of only three sacks of palay, so the family had to make several trips from their farm to the market. The market was about a half hour walk from their farm. The buying rate of palay at that time was less than Php5 a kilo.

**Producing low quality palay**

The quality of the palay the Bolanio’s family farm used to produce was another challenge. In the 80’s and 90’s, the family did not have access to a drying facility; they merely relied on sun-drying. During rainy seasons, the palay would not dry well and would turn black from over exposure to moisture.

**Conclusion: Way Forward**

The boy who learned to plough the fields at an early age has gone a long way. He was awarded as Outstanding Farmer by BOCAP in 2007 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. As FT, he has been able to train a number of farmers in organic farming.

Sabas finds it difficult to convince his fellow farmers on the benefits of organic farming. Nevertheless, he stays committed to his advocacy. His wife Abing supports his advocacy and serves as his “ambassadress” to women farmers in their area. Sabas has always wanted to give his children the education he has not had and allow them to continue to enjoy a healthy environment he has always had. He firmly believes organic farming is a better way of life.

Given thus, Sabas, with the help of Abing and their children, hopes to accomplish the following activities in the next five years:
• Increase the number of birds in his yard and release more mudfish into the rice paddies to help restore ecological balance.

• 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 and assisting the NIA, the DENR, DAR and their church in conducting activities that can help protect the environment.

• Help strengthen SAMOFA and increase its membership. As SAMOFA president, Sabas plans to seek assistance from the DA in educating more people on organic farming. SAMOFA has requested the agency for assistance in setting up a solar dryer for palay and egg incubator for ducks and chickens in their area. SAMOFA is willing to donate land and labor for the construction of the solar dryer.

• Further work with different GO and NGOS in helping their members gain access to much needed capital for farm inputs and market, so that small farmers like him can stay competitive.
Profile

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Jesryl (26) – lawyer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jessa (22) - BS in Banking and Finance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun Mark (18) - High School</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Sabas Jr. (10) – Elementary</td>
</tr>
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<td>Produce</td>
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<td>Market Linkage</td>
<td>Samahang Nayon</td>
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<td>Department of Agriculture, National Irrigation Administration (NIA)</td>
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<td>Organization/affiliation</td>
<td>San Miguel Organic Farmers Association (SAMOFA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role/Position in organization</td>
<td>President (3 terms), Farmer Technician</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction: The Family and their Farm

Dante “Buboy” Rocas grew up struggling with the realities of poverty-- scarcity of food, a tiny hut with the barest of necessities, two sets of clothing for school, and others. At an early age, Buboy realized that education was his only passport to prosperity but his parents could not afford to send him to good schools. Most of his childhood was spent working in the farm. As the eldest child, he had to help his parents in earning for the family.

Wanting to pursue a college degree, Buboy applied for and received a scholarship grant from the Foster Parents Plan for tuition fees and other educational expenses. Despite getting married to his wife Marilou in college, he was able to graduate with a bachelor of laws.
degree. He took a break from farming and worked full-time as a legal assistant in a private firm and part-time as a teacher.

Buboy and Marilou have been blessed with five children, all boys. Their eldest, Jomar, 28, is an Information Technology (IT) graduate and works with the Land Transportation Office (LTO) in Bulacan. The second, Jerome, 27, also finished IT and now works with the LTO in Cavite. The third, Jovan, 23, earned a degree in criminology and now helps in managing their family farm. The fourth, Joven, 20, is soon to complete his marine transportation course. Their youngest, Jomer, 18, is pursuing an IT degree.

A turning point in Buboy and Marilou’s marriage and family life came when a neighbor offered for sale a parcel of rice land near their house. Such offer resurfaced Buboy’s interest in farming. The couple discussed the matter and decided to purchase the land with their lifetime savings. Buboy started participating in various trainings in current trends and technologies in agriculture by the MAO and worked part-time on the farm, even as he continued working full-time as legal assistant.

In two years’ time, Buboy’s family farm was blessed with good harvest in four sustained cropping seasons. An initial investment of Php 18,000 per cropping period gained an average yield of 140 cavans equivalent to Php 72,500 gross. With such income, the family started to acquire farm machineries such as a motorized hand tractor and one unit rice thresher. Buboy eventually resigned from his legal assistant job to work full-time in their farm. Meanwhile, Marilou, upon completing her education degree, started teaching in a nearby public school.

At present, their nine-hectare farmland produces more than enough revenue for the family’s needs. The Rocas family now owns vehicles, a duckery of about 300 heads, a cock farm, a vegetable garden, and a mini-piggery. They have four units of hand tractors, three palay threshers, one stand-by generator, two motorcycles for hauling of
produce, and three single motor for monitoring and scouting for clients. Buboy has invested in micro-lending and gone into rice trading as well.

As rice trader, Buboy no longer buys rice for family consumption for the entire year. He usually sets aside 30 sacks, which are more than enough for one year consumption. With their mini piggery, they butcher a pig every weekend, set aside a few kilos for their weekly consumption, and sell the rest. If there is no pig to slaughter, they buy and butcher a pig, set aside the head and legs for their consumption, and sell the rest. Their vegetable garden produces enough for their needs. Surely, gone are the days of hunger and deprivation.

Key to Success: Best Practices

All in the Family: Farming as a family endeavor

All the five sons of Buboy and Marilou practise basic farming. Most of the family’s weekends used to be spent working together in the farm and cleaning dikes and canals to improve waterways. The family farm hires workers when needed though. At one point, they had to hire 50 farm helpers.

Engaging with Partners

Labo Progressive Multi-Purpose Cooperative

In 2009, Buboy joined the Labo Progressive Multi-Purpose Cooperative. The multi-awarded cooperative started out as a “paluwagan” (community saving) in 1987 with 15 incorporators and lending capital of Php 5,000. It has evolved into a service cooperative and diversified into agri-business. It now 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 24,100,116.82; and total assets of Php 85,652,532.95.
At present, the coop engages in cassava and pineapple production and processing. It produces pineapple juice, dried pineapple, handwoven piña cloth, handmade paper and decorticated pineapple fibre. Also, it is into virgin coconut oil production.

Acknowledging Buboy’s entrepreneurial skills, initiative and hard work, the coop granted him permission to use its warehouse and multi-purpose drying pavement. 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 coop and purchased additional three hectares of rice-farm beside his existing one hectare farm. Later, he further availed a regular loan of Php 300,000 to augment his capital for palay and rice trading.

**National Food Authority (NFA)**

After several years of progressive harvest, Buboy decided to enter into a partnership contract with NFA and activated his membership to the Camarines Norte Rice Retailers and Millers Association to help him expand his market. He was able to develop 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.

**Conclusion: Way Forward**

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

Buboy may have gone full-time into farming and rice trading but he continues to use his professional knowledge and skills for the good of others. He gives free legal counselling services to those who come to his house for assistance. At the same time, he encourages his fellow farmers to be observant, efficient and hardworking; he reminds them to devote at least eight hours of farm work. For him, land is a seedbed of abundance.

Buboy makes sure his sons see him as a role model in achieving a full and enriching life.
### Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dante “Buboy” Rocas</th>
</tr>
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<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>Role/Position in organization</td>
<td>Member since 2009</td>
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</table>
The Family and their Farm

As a farmer’s daughter, Ana Sibayan, 24, grew up being taught how to help out in the farm. As the second child and eldest daughter among six children, she knew she had to act as a model to her younger siblings in helping their parents in household chores and farm work. Her parents, Eduardo (Eddie), 53, and Nelia, 52, have always told them they all needed to put in their share in order for the family to rise from poverty. Her five siblings are Emanuel, 26; Anonuevo, 22; Sarah, 20; Crisol, 17; and Ezekiel, 14.

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.
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 while Eddie was not able to graduate from high school.

Eddie and Nelia had not considered shifting to organic farming until Ana convinced them of the benefits of the said method. In 2013, Ana attended a skills training in organic farming by the DA-ATI upon the invitation of Nelia’s relative, Jonjon Sarmiento, a PAKISAMA member. 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, an empty lot full of overgrown weeds.

In the same year, Ana stopped schooling to give way to her younger siblings. She devoted her time employing various elements of IDOFS in their farm. She aimed to lessen their family’s dependency on buying food from the market. She, with her mother, planted various vegetables, such as squash, ampalaya (bitter gourd), 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). Also planted were fruit trees, such as rambutan, lanzones, pomelo, durian, marang, jackfruit, pineapple, mango, and papaya.

Nelia got increasingly involved in tending their backyard garden, as she realized they were saving on food expenses from consuming vegetables and fruits from their garden. With their food savings, the family bought chickens. Grudgingly at first, Eddie constructed houses for their free range chickens. As of this writing, they had 20 free-range chickens for consumption and sale.

The family gets much of their income from non-organic white rice they sell to individual rice traders. They, however, are now getting to
be known in the community as producer of organic red and black rice. Neighbors and other people from nearby villages come to their house to buy their organic produce, including vegetables. The children sell organic rice to interested classmates and teachers.

Key to Success: Best Practices

All in the Family: All children helping in the farm

As much as possible, Eddie keeps the work within the family to save on cost. He does most of the hard labor in the farm, especially in their four-hectare white rice farm. During planting and harvesting seasons, when not in school, all the children help in the farm. Novo, the second child, serves as his father’s right-hand man. He is quite adept at fixing and maintaining farm equipment. Eddie enlists the help of his younger brother, Arnold, who lives nearby.

Nelia takes charge of tending the vegetable garden. Eman, the eldest son, no longer stays in the family's house but sends money whenever his family needs financial assistance. Ana takes charge of preparing the bedding for the hogs. The bedding is used as organic fertilizer for the crops. She, with Sarah and Crisol, daily clean the pigpens. Ezekiel takes care of feeding the chickens and fish every morning before going to school and in the afternoon after school. Also, he sweeps dried leaves in the backyard every afternoon.

Engaging with Partners

Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Technical Institute (DA- ATI)

When the DA-ATI called for proposals on organic farming, Ana submitted one 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. As of this writing, they had five sows, one of which was 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 behind their house. Ana suggested to her parents that they construct a fish pond to make use of the free-flowing water. Eddie dug a canal around one plot of rice field nearest their house. The DA-ATI further provided the family with 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.

**Overcoming Challenges**

**Financial difficulties**

The family has always been challenged by financial concerns. Their family life could be described as an endless cycle of taking and repaying loans with the next harvest especially in early 2000s when Edgar and Nelia decided to build a house for their growing family. Ezekiel, their sixth child, had just been born then. Even as the family experienced financial difficulties, the couple never allowed their children to work as farm hands in other farms like they used to do when they were younger.

Given her family’s financial situation, Ana had to stop school several times. At present, she is on her second year pursuing a degree in secondary education (major in biology) at the Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology (MinSCAT). Her older brother, Eman, practically sent himself through college. He worked part-time while pursuing a marketing degree at a university in Manila. He was able to earn his degree and had the opportunity to work abroad, in Saudi Arabia. He came home for good after two years with some savings which he shared with his family. Nelia used part of the money to buy a carabao for the farm.
Conclusion: Way Forward

Eddie and Nelia are happy they have raised their children appreciating farm work. They are confident their children will be able to manage their farm well once they retire or are no longer around.

Ana, in turn, is grateful to her parents for raising her and her siblings as they have done. Unlike other farmers’ children who do not even know how to operate a plow, she said they appreciate and actually are working in their farm. She understands their crucial role in sustaining the country’s food production. She asks, “Who will feed the world if all the children of today’s farmers decide to abandon their farms and work in town centers and cities.”

With her dedication in ensuring the success of her project, Ana is now recognized in Victoria, Mindoro Oriental as a future farmer leader. Early this year, she presented her family’s experience in organic farming at the provincial and national workshops entitled Bahaginan ng mga Isyung Kabataang Magsasaka, and in the 2nd International Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development in Southeast Asia. At present, Ana serves as a young farmer leader of PAKISAMA.

Ana’s family now fully appreciates the benefits of organic farming. Eddie, who used to be the most unenthusiastic, is now the most passionate in ensuring that the animal pens are well-maintained and the animals are regularly fed. They always share their produce, either organic rice or vegetables, with farm visitors, especially those in most need. They continue to convince their neighbors on the countless benefits of organic farming.
## Profile

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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| 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 |
Introduction: The Family and their Farm

Juvy and Abdul Bucay came from a family of farmers. They cultivate a total of 3.5 hectares of land in San Isidro, Davao Oriental. One hectare of the 3.5 hectares is from the 2.5 hectares of land owned by Juvy’s family. They plant coconuts, bananas, cassavas, sweet potatoes, corn, and vegetables. Also, they raise farm animals, such as ducks, goats, cows, among others. Juvy started to specialize in homemade organic fertilizers from siga and animal wastes after attending workshops on organic farming, natural farming, integrated diversified farming, and alternative livelihood conducted by PAKISAMA.

Juvy and Abdul are blessed with four children. The couple makes sure their children understand their source of livelihood and help
in the farm and household chores. They have instilled the value of
discipline and hard work in their children, thus enabling the latter to
balance their studies and responsibilities in the house and the farm.
Their eldest, Rahimah, (18?), is in her second year in agriculture, the
second, Emar is 16, the third, Faisa is 13, and the youngest, Alim is
11. Abdul devotedly carries out his fatherly duties to his children. He
takes and fetches his children to and from school on their tricycle.
Juvy, on the other hand, prepares the family’s meals and attends to
the children's needs.

Juvy’s biggest dream is to see her children graduate from college.
Thus, she has been working hard in their farm in order to generate
more income for their education.

Apart from farming, Juvy engages in teaching Arabic and training
other farmers in organic farming. She attended non-formal
secondary classes to complete high school. She studied a short course
in Arabic in a school in Lupon and now teaches both youngsters
and adults on how to speak and write in Arabic. She became a staff
member of the Provincial Educators in the Arabic school. Also, she
trains other farmers in IDOF through the workshops conducted by
PAKISAMA. She has travelled the whole of Mindanao to share her
personal knowledge and experience in IDOF. She is a member of
Local Poverty Reduction Action Team (LPRAT) in San Isidro where
she and the other members speak on behalf of their community on
their economic and social needs. She represents the Calagan IPs in
the LPRAT.

**Key to Success: Best Practices**

**All in the family: Each doing share**

Each one in the family does his or her share in tending their farm.
Abdul does the strenuous works in the farm. He tills their two and
a half hectare farm and grazes the cows and goats on the meadow.
Juvy, on the other hand, is very much involved in vermin composting and organic fertilizer production. Rahimah leads her younger siblings in harvesting their crops. Emar and Alim take charge of tending the cows and goats every weekend and during vacant time from school. Faisa helps in planting vegetables. With everyone in the family participating in the farm, Juvy is certain their family farm will succeed.

Engaging with Partners

Farmers’ Organization for Development (FOD) and PAKISAMA

Juvy learned organic farming from the FOD, of which she is the incumbent vice president. FOD members have a communal farm where they share their harvest. Through PAKISAMA and FOD, the local farmers have been able to engage in Bottom-Up Budgeting (BUB) and request for funds for their development, business, and community projects.

Local Government Unit (LGU) and Department of Agriculture (DA)

The LGU of San Isidro, through its Livelihood Assistance Program, granted Juvy six goats, worth Php 1,500 - Php1,700 each when sold. Their income from livestock helps a lot in their house renovation. On the other hand, the DA granted her three heads of hens and two goats, as she is involved in organic farming and qualified to own such farm animals.

Overcoming Challenges

Terror of War

During the administration of former President Joseph Estrada, misunderstandings that turned to war spread like wildfire in some areas in Mindanao. Many innocent men—husbands, fathers, brothers, and other relatives—mistaken as rebels and terrorists, were imprisoned or killed by the military and vigilantes. During those troubled times, Juvy sent Abdul to Pantukan for safety and joined the Bangsamoro Women’s Organization.
Juvy is grateful the war is over. Things are much better at this time, during the administration of Pres. Benigno C. Aquino III. The national government listens more to the plea of the Bangsamoro people and implements development projects to improve their plight.

**Lack of Financial Capital**

Lack of capital to finance and expand their business is a prime concern of family farmers, including Juvy’s family. They are not aware of any organization or agency that can provide such assistance. The government does not provide capital assistance.

**Dealing with Middlepersons**

Dealing with middlepersons has been a perennial problem of farmers, specifically coconut farmers. Middlepersons squeeze them of their meagre profit from the sale of copra. They buy copra at a rate less than the going rate in the market. At the time of writing, the market price for copra was at Php30 per kilo but middlepersons bought them at Php 27 per kilo, Php3 less than the market price.

**Conclusion: Way Forward**

Juvy believes one of her major achievements is learning organic farming. She has realized organic farming and integrated diversified farming are cost-effective and eco-friendly. As they apply the principles of integrated diversified organic farming and maximized the use of their land, their income has increased. They are able to earn Php 26,000-Php30,000 on good months an Php20,000 on lean months. Also, they are able to harvest 500 kilos of bananas and earn Php 4,000 monthly.

As a community leader, Juvy wants to encourage smart entrepreneurship among Muslim women. She hopes the government would approve the proposal of the women’s group for a community/training center with function hall and comfort rooms. The women in their community envision a business that would provide catering
services for events, such as weddings, held at the center. Apart from funding for a center, the women also requested funding for a bakery and a loom to weave their own fabrics.

**Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Juvy Bucay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>Municipality/City/district/Country</td>
<td>San Isidro, Davao Oriental</td>
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<td>Urban/Rural</td>
<td>Rural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Rahimah, 2nd year college; Emar, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faisa, 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alim, 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Tenurial Security</td>
<td>2.5 hectares of land in San Isidro, Davao Oriental and 1 hectare from the 2.5 hectares of land owned by Juvy’s family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Produce</td>
<td>They plant coconut, banana, cassava, sweet potato, corn, and vegetables. They also raise farm animals such as duck, goat, and cow among others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Market Linkage</td>
<td>Direct selling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with the government</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture (DA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization/Affiliation</td>
<td>PAKISAMA, Farmers Organization For Development (FOD), Local Poverty Reduction Action team (LPRAT), and Bangsamoro Women’s Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role/Position in the organization</td>
<td>Vice president of FOD and member of PAKISAMA, LPRAT, and Bangsamoro Women’s Organization</td>
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</table>
Susana and Elirey Cabataña and Family

Talacogon, Agusan Del Sur
Written by Doris Obena

The Family and their Farm

The Cabataña family cultivates a total of nine (9) hectares of farm land. They plant a variety of crops, including organic rice, raise farm animals and fishes, make bio-organic fertilizers, and produce rice seeds for agencies such as the AADC and DA. They started lean and mean but are now immensely expanding their farm without forgetting the people and values that have helped them to achieve success.

Susana was born to a family of rice farmers. She is a native of Talacogon, Agusan del Sur. In 1988, she married Elirey who is from Cabadbaran, Agusan del Norte. Elirey grew up in a coastal community, thus fish farming is not new to him. The couple have
four children, namely, John Rey, Sheryl, Resan Jean, and Vincent. The family tills one fourth hectare of inherited land in Brgy. Buena Garcia as their source of income.

Susana had engaged in various endeavors to earn a living before returning to farming in 2002. She used to wash clothes for neighbors and sell second hand clothes and other goods. She became an Avon dealer and a sales agent of appliances. Returning to farming made her realize farming is where she is good at. She is convinced their family farm would thrive through hard work and perseverance. Susana is now a farmer technician and serves as cluster leader of her organization.

Their first harvest yielded more than enough to meet their basic needs and earned for them an income of about Php 23,000. They invested this income in a mud boat/hand tractor which they rent out for three sacks of rice per hectare covered “charged to crop.” They bought a thresher with their income of about Php 18,000 from selling a total of 54 sacks. With the thresher, they were able to collect about 90 sacks of rice which they added to the 54 sacks of rice they earned from renting out the tractor. They sold the sacks of rice at Php6.70 per kilo earning for them a total of Php 50,000. They used the money to purchase a rice milling equipment.

In April 2004, Juvy and Elirey were able to pay in full the 8.3 hectares of land adjacent to their own land. They titled the land under three names: Susana, Elirey, and Sheryl. The family started diversifying by planting vegetables upon realizing they had nothing for daily consumption until harvest time. Susana’s previous experience in various small scale enterprises prepared her in managing their business enterprise.

The family was first introduced to organic fertilizer by the Diocese in 2008 but it was only in 2010, following a training on IDOFS technologies by the DA, PAKISAMA, and AGUS Pinoy, that they
went totally organic. They learned about IMO, Fermented Plant Juice (FPJ), and Fermented Fruit Juice (FFJ).

The farm uses IMO with molasses to control the odor of the piggery. The swine are fed with rice bran from the farm’s rice mill, thus minimizing the cost in the value chain and maximizing income. Meanwhile, swine wastes are used in vermin composting.

As of this writing, apart from organic rice and vegetables, the family farm had 21 heads of swine, 100 heads of rice ducks, 20 heads of ducks, and 100 heads of free range native chickens.

At present, the five hectare rice farm generates an average gross income of Php 432,000 per cropping season or Php 864,000 per year. Income from rice mill is almost the same as the income from organic rice production. Aquaculture and livestock production also earn considerably for the family. They earn a better margin from diversified farming, as they do not have to buy fertilizers and feeds. Income from all their farming activities is ploughed back to the farm.

The family has opened their farm, called Cabataña Farm, to the public with an entrance fee of Php5 per head. The farm has a cottage, called Cottage ni Cabs, located across the large fishpond, for catering services and for the convenience of visitors.

**Key to Success: Best Practices**

**All in the family: Strength in Unity**

Susana believes that in unity, there is strength especially as far their farm is concerned. Each member of the family has his or her own duty to perform. Elirey takes charge of the management and operation of aquaculture production, rice mill, carpentry and other mechanical works. Susana takes charge of rice production and overall financial management.
The children--John Rey, Sheryl, Resan Jean, and Vincent--know all things needed to be done in the farm; they take charge whenever either of their parents needs to attend trainings every now and then. The family makes sure any member of the family is able to attend any available seminar-workshop on current trends and technology in farming practices in order to improve farm operation and production.

**Installation of Irrigation System**

The family used to do rain-fed farming until they installed a mini irrigation system in their farm upon the advice of a friend. They dug a deep well and constructed canals in every two hectares of land. Apart from supplying water for irrigation, the deep well supplies water to their three fishponds which are slightly elevated to facilitate water supply to the adjacent rice field.

**Engaging with Partners**

Susana and Elirey appreciate the assistance they have received from GOs and NGOs, such as the DA, BFAR, LGU, AGUS Pinoy, and PAKISAMA. The farming knowledge and technologies she learned from trainings AGUS Pinoy, DA, and PAKISAMA jointly conducted have greatly helped in improving their farm operations.

AGUS Pinoy Producers Coop consolidates the organic rice they produce, thus marketing their produce is less burdensome. The DA provided funds for the trainings she and Elirey attended. The BFAR provided the fishpond with fingerlings and technical assistance. The LGU provides technological assistance and takes charge of attending to their farm visitors. The availability of farm to market road in their area facilitates transporting of their produce from their farm to the market.

**Overcoming Challenges**

**Pests Infestation**

A major challenge of the family was infestation of pests, such as rice blast (pula pula), black bugs, rats, leaf hopper (pyangaw), steam
borer, and nick rats. In 2007, when they could already afford it, they bought and applied synthetic fertilizers worth Php168,000. As a result, rice blast attacked their rice field. The attack greatly affected their harvest. From the 18 sacks of seeds they planted, they harvested only four sacks of palay.

**Stubborn Weeds**

Weeding is another major challenge. Weeds easily grow and reproduce when there is no water. They spend more for farm labor due to weeding.

**Lessons to live by**

The Cabataña family has become more convinced about organic farming practices following the 2007 rice blast attack on their rice farm. They realized synthetic fertilizers make rice fields become more resistant to harmful insects, bugs and pests. They even kill helpful insects.

Organic fertilizers allow them to earn more from their rice farm than synthetic ones do. Susan attests, “Himsug ang tanum, minus ang sakit (Plants are healthier, less diseases).”

**Conclusion: Way Forward**

Susana compares conversion to organic farming to conversion of faith. She has been efficient in welcoming people to their church, as they also provide a way to physical nourishment through organic farming. As a farmer technician and leader, Susan leads by example. She daily mentors interested farmers on how to do IDOF in their family farm.

She is happy that most of her neighbors are now going organic. She observes the number of complaints about lack of money to buy medicines among her neighbors has decreased. Margie Namoco, a neighbor, recalls their neighbors used to posture a wait and see attitude as far as organic farming was concerned. The success of the
Cabatana’s family farm has inspired and convinced them to go into organic farming.

## Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Susan Rocero Cabataña</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender:</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
<td>46 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipality/City/District/Country:</td>
<td>Talacogon, Agusan Del Sur, Caraga Region, Philippines</td>
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<td>Urban/Rural:</td>
<td>Rural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital Status:</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>John Rey Cabataña, 25/Male Sheryl Cabataña-Orias, 24/Female Resan Jean Cabataña, 21/Female Vincent Cabataña, 17/Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Tenurial Security</td>
<td>Land Title dated April 2004 under the following names: Susana Cabataña 1.88 hectares and 2.5 hectares respectively, Elirey Cabataña, 2.5 hectares and Sheryl Cabataña-Orias, 2 hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce:</td>
<td>Organic Rice Production, Duck Raising, Native Chicken Raising, Fish Pond, Swine, Fruit Trees, Bio-Organic Fertilizers production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Linkage:</td>
<td>Aside from Organic Palay that has been consolidated by AGUS Pinoy Producers Cooperative (APCO), the farmer sold her Aquaculture products, vegetables, fruits, and livestock produced to the local market</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working with the government:</td>
<td>beneficiary of trainings of the Local Government Unit of Talacogon, the Department of Agriculture and of fingerlings from BFAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization/affiliation:</td>
<td>AGUS Pinoy Producers Cooperative (APCO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role/Position in organization:</td>
<td>Farmer Technician/Cluster Leader</td>
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</table>
Like any other uptown adolescents, young couple Arliza and Toto dreamed of experiencing life in the city. It was in Bacolod where Toto and Neneng met while working and pursuing their dreams for a more prosperous life. Toto and Neneng realized that life in Sugarlandia’s “ciudad” was not sugary sweet and that could turn sour and even bitter with the hardship and exploitation. They decided to go back to their rural farming roots and settle in the cool, mountainous, bucolic and pine tree-lined municipality of Salvador Benedicto—the “Summer Capital” and “Little Baguio” of Negros Occidental.

In Salvador Benedicto, Arliza Canete and Toto became family farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs. They were able to buy a piece of land in Sitio Benejiwan, Brgy. Bunga in 1988. The government,
under the Integrated Social Forestry Program, awarded Toto and Neneng a tenurial instrument, Certificate of Stewardship Contract (CSC). Through this program, the couple has been tilling, farming, and developing a 2.25 hectare-land awarded to them. Sixty percent of this land is used for producing rice wherein they combine upland and lowland cultivation. The upland cultivation is similar to the rice farming practised in the Mountain Province. The rest of the property, which is forty percent, is used for agro-forestry farming system that promotes the cultivation of various crops, such as corn, cassava, banana, jackfruit, squash, tomato, eggplant, string beans, bitter melon, onion, citrus fruits, such as the local orange dalandan and strawberry; and forage crops, such as madre de cacao and steria grass.

The old adage “necessity is the mother of invention” came to life in Toto and Neneng’s farm work. Neneng said, “No crops would grow here and we needed fertilizer. Toto learned how to use vermi compost for fertilizer from his father who was also a farmer.” They built a makeshift vermi compost bed made of bamboo on a space in their pigpen.

In 2010, the couple’s average monthly income was Php 2,800. It rose to Php 5,900 after three years. This year, their income has increased even more with the combined income from their piggery and citrus fruits.

Key to Success: Best Practices

All in the Family: The family that farms together stays together

Neneng wakes up early to prepare breakfast for her family. She then helps Toto in the farm. When the children were younger, she juggled between helping Toto in the farm and taking care of the children. Their eldest son finished a vocational course on security service and works as a security guard. The second, a daughter, was in her second year college pursuing a degree in education when she stopped to work and save money to finance her education. The third child finished third year high school and is now married with
children. The fourth and fifth children are both in eighth grade. The youngest is in third grade. The three youngest have specific chores and responsibilities in the family’s farm and business. They feed the vermi twice a week and the pigs daily, help in the garden, and clear the field of dry leaves. Toto takes pride in owning and tilling their land. He said their carabao has been truly helpful in the farm and their livestock have helped provide for their daily sustenance.

Teamwork and knowing their core competencies are the secret to Neneng and Toto’s successful marriage and farming partnership. They do their part in making their farm a success story. Toto shared, “My wife and I have no problem communicating with each other. We have very good communication and we recognize each other’s strengths. My wife attends the seminars while I do the farm work. After she shares what she has learned from the training, I do the practical application. After I apply the new ideas, I show her the work that has been done, so she can check if I have applied the technology accurately. We are able to work together in applying and implementing new technology that works in our farm. Thus, we are able to increase our income.”

Multi-Sectoral Alliance for Development (MUAD)

In 2010, Neneng started attending organic farming seminars sponsored by MUAD, an NGO composed of various social development organizations in Negros. Each time she came home and learned something, she shared her new learning with Toto and taught him new ways to improve their farming techniques. MUAD conducts monthly organic farming seminars in Salvador Bendicto. MUAD introduced sustainable agriculture technologies known as Livestock Integrated Farming Enterprise (LIFE) in cooperation with WE EFFECT, another NGO.

In such seminars, Neneng learned to use wastes, such as pig’s manure and rice stalks, for fertilizer. The vermi compost they produce is used for their farm and garden. They sell the extra compost at Php 200 per sack. Their garden is now planted with strawberries. The cool
San Benedicto climate allows this high priced continental fruit to thrive in their garden. They make jam from strawberries for family consumption and for sale.

**Benejiwan Integrated Social Forestry Farmers Association (BISFFA)**

Toto and Neneng have been members of BISFFA since 2011. BISFFA, founded in 1998, ensures all its members are holders of the CSC under the government’s Integrated Social Forestry Program. Two of its most supportive partners are MUAD and WE EFFECT that help members implement sustainable agriculture and agri-enterprise development. As of this writing, MUAD was developing a supply chain as another social enterprise in order to help farmers, such as Neneng and Toto, to market and sell their farm commodities.

**Women’s Saving and Investment Association (WSIA)**

Another partner organization is the Women’s Saving and Investment Association (WSIA), an organization of farmers’ wives with 25 members. MUAD helped WSIA members turn the saving and investment association into a business enterprise. WSIA’s first business project was manufacturing turmeric-papaya soap and ground coffee.

**Overcoming Challenges**

**Extreme Weather Conditions**

Salvador Benedicto has a cool climate. However, the area is sometimes beset with extreme weather conditions. The weather is quite unpredictable; it can be very dry with little rain or very stormy. Natural calamities, such as typhoons, often visit the place.

**Lack of government support**

The government does not provide aid to farmers during calamities. We don’t get any government support or compensation during
calamities. All we get from the calamity fund is one bag of fertilizer and nothing more.” Neneng complained, “

To adapt to the harsh and unpredictable weather condition, Neneng and Toto practise crop diversification. They cultivate a bigger garden on their property. They plant edible crops as survival strategy. Apart from their practical knowledge of the weather and organic farming techniques, the couple’s resourcefulness, self-sufficiency, and patience play a very important role towards the success and survival of their family farm and enterprise.

**Conclusion: Way Forward**

Neneng has been one of the best and the most exemplary members of BISFFA. She is an epitome of an empowered female farmer and business owner. Her husband’s respect and their more evolved way of relating and communicating with each other are proofs of her being an empowered woman. Neneng admits she has been inspired by BISFFA’s very active chairperson, Nanay Ninfa. Nanay Ninfa believes in Neneng’s capacity as a leader. As BISFFA’s treasurer, Neneng is known for her integrity, honesty and trustworthiness. She is a pro-active and responsible organizational leader committed to see her projects through. She puts to good use her socially orientation, concern for others, and kind and generous spirit in BISFFA’s bayanihan projects. She is financially responsible and manages her finances well. She pays her organization dues and fees promptly. She is actively involved in the social enterprise of Women’s Savings and Investment Association (WSIA). She is a practical business owner and farmer as well as a well-rounded spiritual person serving as a leader in her church.

Neneng and Toto wish to improve their organic farm and livestock business. They plan to build a real vermi compost house with two beds that would cost about Php 20,000 and could yield enough vermi composts for farm use and income generation.
### Profile

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<tr>
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<th>Arliza Canete</th>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>Rural</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Married</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Their eldest son finished a vocational course on Security Service and works as a security guard. The second is in second year college majoring in Education. She recently stopped studying to work and save money to finance her education. The third child finished third year high school but decided to get married and have children. The fourth and fifth children are both in grade eight. The youngest is in third grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Tenurial Security</td>
<td>The government under the Integrated Social Forestry Program awarded Toto and Neneng a tenurial instrument, Certificate of Stewardship Contract (CSC); 2.25 hectare land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product/s</td>
<td>Rice, corn, cassava, banana, jackfruit, squash, tomato, eggplant, string beans, bitter melon, onion, citrus fruit like the local orange “dalandan”, strawberry, and forage crops like “madre de cacao” and steria grass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Market Linkage</td>
<td>Direct selling</td>
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<td>Role/Position in Organization</td>
<td>Treasurer; Active female leader</td>
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Benjamin Quingking and Family
Barangay Tigbinan, Labo, Camarines Norte
Written by Yasmin Gatal-Hashimoto

The Family and their Farm

Benjamin “Tata Ben” C. Quingking is a native of Bicol region. He moved to Lopez in Quezon province some 50 years ago where he had lived for about 20 years tilling another man’s land. He married and started to have a family in Quezon. He and his wife raised their children and support their family’s needs by cultivating a land not their own. As his children were growing up, Tata Ben decided to transfer residence. In the 1990s, except for their eldest son, Tata Ben and his family moved to Tigbinan, Labo, Camarines Norte where he was able to fulfil his promise to have a land of their own. He bought the rights to a piece of land from a “professional squatter,” a term used to refer to those who own rights to government lands.
Tata Ben became a beneficiary of the Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) Program of the Philippine government in 06 April 1999. He acquired the rights to a ten-hectare land he considers as his playground. The land is planted with various forest and fruit trees and cash crops. He is a picture of an individual fully maximizing an opportunity opened up to him. Instead of getting overwhelmed at the magnitude of the work to be done, he only sees possibilities, prospects and good breaks. He takes each day as it comes, plodding through the work yet steadily making progress along the way.

Tata Ben and his wife are blessed with seven children--two daughters and five sons. They have instilled in their children the values of perseverance, cooperation, and hard work. Their children help in ploughing the fields after school and on weekends. They have learned the whole process of crop production--from planting to harvesting to selling their produce. His wife helps during harvest season and in other farm-related activities after she has finished doing household chores.

All their children were able to finish high school. Their ages are between 22 and 44 years old now. When they moved to Bicol, most decided to get married and have a family of their own. The youngest is currently studying engineering in Manila. He is the first and only one in the family to reach college. The couple supports their son's education. They hope their son would be able to complete his studies and become an engineer.

Tata Ben's ten-hectare land, received under the CBFM Area Program, is planted with a variety of forest and fruit trees as well as a number of cash crops. Forest trees include narra, mahogany, acacia mangium, gmelina, and other indigenous trees. Fruit trees include coconut, cacao, santol, rambutan, and star apple.

He shared that their income from coconut trees last year was about Php5,000 while income from forest trees was about Php20,000. He
was also able to make full use of his forest trees when he donated some of his gmelina trees for the construction of BTUFA’s bahaypulungan.

Tata Ben has an existing plot planted with citronella. He initially attempted to venture into the sale of such plant popular for its insect-repelling qualities. He discontinued the enterprise, as the market price was quite low. At Php1.00 per kilogram, his net income was only Php0.25 per kilogram. He allowed another partner organization to harvest and collect the leaves from his citronella farm which they sold to another organization for further processing. Now that the current market price has gone up to Php5.00 per kilogram, he plans to engage again in selling citronella. His average production in a year is about 30,000 kilograms.

Other recent additions to his forestland are sugarcane and abaca. The abaca, which requires about 50 percent shade, allows him to optimize the spaces between the trees. Abaca needs shade to produce good quality threads. Tata Ben started establishing his mini–pineapple plantation late last year. As of this writing, he was looking forward to harvesting the fruits in four months’ time. He has yet to plant palay but he expects to have about a hectare set aside for this purpose. The area for rice production is already available but he has not reached that part of the land he is working on. He hopes to be able to design a terraces-like planting area for his palay in the future.

Within the forestland are five freshwater fishponds Tata Ben developed to further maximize land utilization. The fishponds are located at the foot of the mountain and are adjacent to each other. Both the tilapia and carp fetch Php100 per kilogram but the fishes are mostly for personal consumption.
Engaging with Partners

Barangay Tigbinan Upland Farmers Association (BTUFA)

Tata Ben is an active member of his community. He is involved in various associations and local government bodies. He is currently the vice chairperson of BTUFA, a member-organization of Tao-Kalikasan Foundation of the Philippines, Inc. (TKFPI), of which Tata Ben is an incorporator and board member. TKFPI is federation of five locally based community organizations or cooperatives working to provide economic opportunities for upland and lowland farmers, small-scale entrepreneurs, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, and women and youth.

Tao-Kalikasan Foundation of the Philippines, Inc. (TKFPI)

TKFPI, organized in 1992, was awarded with a Community Based Forest Management Agreement (CBFMA) to manage and protect the 2,137.75 hectares of Labo-Capalonga Forest Reserve, a timberland straddling the six barangays of Labo and Capalonga in Camarines Norte. It passed on 118 hectares to BTUFA for the association’s livelihood and agro-forestry initiatives. BTUFA, originally known as Sitio Pinagbuklod Multi-Purpose Cooperative (SPMPC), was formed at the same time as TKFPI but it was reorganized this year and renamed as such. It has plans to engage in income-generating activities. Plans include gabi production and candle-making. At the time of writing, the organization was still looking for an area members could collectively use and work on. Tata Ben said, “Hindi pwedeng tatamad-tamad.”

Tigbinan Farmers Association (TFA)

Tata Ben was involved in organizing the Tigbinan Farmers Association (TFA) in order to enable farmers to participate in the pineapple project of the DA. Under the project, the DA provided some 10,000 pineapple suckers and farm inputs and a loan of Php100,000
to serve as financial support for additional farm inputs. Farmers’ labor served as counterpart. Of the group’s thirty members, ten have already started. Of these ten members, three have established their plantation inside the CBFM area. The first batch is expected to pass on the same project inputs (pineapple suckers, farm inputs and loan amount) to the next batch until the remaining twenty members have participated in the project.

Lupon ng Barangay

Tata Ben is part of a ten-member lupon, tasked to handle disputes and other forms of conflict in the barangay. The lupon serves as the barangay justice system. “Kami ang taga ayos ng problema ng mga ka-barangay (We take charge of settling disputes in the barangay).” He is also in the board of the Katigbi Neighbourhood Association, another organization operating in the community.

Overcoming Challenges

Insurgency Problem

The Bicol region used to be a hotbed in the Philippine government’s war against the New People’s Army (NPA), the military arm of the National Democratic Front (NDF), and Tata Ben was caught right in the middle. Tata Ben had to fend off opposing forces as each tried to gain his loyalty in his first five years in Tigbinan. A peace-loving man, he always told them they were all welcome in his home and if there was anything he could share with them, he would. He always tried to maintain his neutrality and made sure his actions would not be misconstrued as being partial to one side. He was able to deal with the two fighting factions separately and perhaps it was just his good fortune they never came to his place at the same time.

Natural Calamities

Tata Ben’s travails with the insurgency problem were nothing compared to what he underwent sometime in the mid-1990s when Typhoon Rosing severely struck the region, one of the hardest hit areas. At the height of the super typhoon, he had to evacuate his
family through the river on a makeshift raft pulled by his carabao. As they were negotiating the river, the raft broke loose. Two of his children almost got carried away by the strong current. After that incident, he became relentless in his request for the construction of a bridge in the area to spare others of the trauma he experienced when he almost lost his two children.

Conclusion: Way Forward

Despite his family circumstances, Tata Ben has continued to persist in his efforts, slowly but steadily making progress in clearing and preparing his forestland and making it productive. And despite being alone now for his children are adults and gone to fulfill their dreams, he knows his efforts would not go to waste, as his son in Lopez has already devoted himself to farming; he manages the farm in Lopez, the rights to which he inherited from his father. He comes to Tigbinan regularly to visit and to check on how his father is getting by.

Tata Ben perfectly understands children grow up and pursue their dreams. He is grateful because he knows he did his job as a father. He raised his family well. He was able to send his children to school through their farm.

When asked about the type of assistance he needed at the moment, he replied receiving the rights to the 10-hectare land is already more than enough for him. He appreciates being a nominee for the International Year of Family Farming award, as it inspires him to continue doing what he has been doing. It has far greater value than any financial assistance. He knows he still has a long way to go as far as his land is concerned but such moral support encourages him to pursue his aspirations, confident he is on the right track. For now, he looks forward to the time when electricity would finally reach his place.
### Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Benjamin C. Quingking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality/City/District/Country</td>
<td>Barangay Tigbinan, Labo, Camarines Norte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban/Rural</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Tata Ben has seven children. Most of them, aged between 22 and 44 years old now. His youngest is currently studying Engineering in Manila.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Tenurial Security (type and date of land ownership)</td>
<td>As one of the beneficiaries of the Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) Program of the Philippine government in 6 April 1999, he acquired the rights to a 10-hectare piece of land in Tigbinan, Labo, Camarines Norte.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce</td>
<td>Forest trees like narra, mahogany, acacia mangium, gmelina and other indigenous trees. He also has coconut, cacao, santol, rambutan, star apple and citronella. And then just recently, sugarcane and abaca.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Linkage</td>
<td>Direct selling; selling through intermediaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working with the government</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture (DA) and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization/Affiliation</td>
<td>Barangay Tigbinan Upland Farmers Association (BTUFA), Tao-Kalikasan Foundation of the Philippines, Inc. (TKFPI), and Katigbi Neighbourhood Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role/Position in Organization</td>
<td>Vice chairman of the Barangay Tigbinan Upland Farmers Association, Member of the Board of TKFPI, and member of Katigbi Neighbourhood Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Marilyn and Edgar Competente and Family
Guinaban, Ocampo, Camarines Sur
Written by Jacqueline Yllana and Gigi Bartulaba

The Family and their Farm
Marilyn decided to go into dairy cow farming after an exposure tour to a dairy farm in Quezon Province in 2007. She applied for a loan through the Animal Loan Dispersal Program of Land O’Lakes under her membership to Guinaban Multi-Purpose Cooperative (GMPC) in collaboration with the Bicol Federation of Dairy Cooperatives (BFDC). Fortunately, her loan was approved. She received three heads of pregnant cows enough to start dairy cow farming.

In a span of five years, the three cows had given birth to 11 heads (8 males and 3 females). Marilyn sold the male cows. In 2012, with her active involvement in the cooperative and her commitment to dairy farming, Marilyn was entrusted another cow which came from Guinaban, Ocampo, Camarines Sur.
another dairy farmer who failed to take care of the said cow. In 2013, Marilyn was able to repay her animal loan with three female cattle.

Marilyn and her husband, Edgar, have four sons and three daughters. Edmar, the eldest, is 17 years old; Edgar Jr. is 15; Mark Justine is 13; Myn is 11; Hannah is 8; Emel is 5, and Ma. Kim, the youngest, turns 4 in December. Marilyn is a preschool teacher. Also she teaches children of parents who cannot afford to send their children to regular schools.

Edgar, on the other hand, is a certified artificial insemination technician. He works as seasonal sugarcane farmer and full-time dairy farmer. He used to be an overseas Filipino worker (OFW) in Bermuda. He came home after three months due to the financial crisis in the US. He, however, plans to work overseas again and apply as an immigrant in New Zealand. He says New Zealand offers more job opportunities for dairy farmers. Marilyn and Edgar have been saving up for the Php 100,000 placement fee. They are hoping to use the money Edgar would remit from New Zealand to further improve their dairy farm.

Meantime, while waiting for his papers, Edgar could maximize his skills as artificial insemination technician in their dairy farm. Also, he could do research on best practices in dairy cow farming, especially now that they have observed their female cows tend to produce male offspring.

The family's income in dairy cow farming helps sustain their daily needs, especially the children's school expenses. They are able to earn daily and have accumulated savings with the cooperative for emergency purposes. The income from the dairy cow farm allows them to eat sumptuous meals every day unlike before they had the dairy farm. The family was able to daily collect about five litres of fresh milk delivered directly to the cooperative and generate a monthly net income of Php 3,000.
At present, they have six heads of dairy cows but only three are currently at the milking stage. From Php 3,000 a month, they now earn approximately Php 12,000 a month. Marilyn plans to write another letter of request for “loan” for 5-10 additional heads of cattle to increase their income, even as she prefers not to rely on loans for capital anymore.

**Key to Success: Best Practices**

**All in the Family: Nurturing peace, prosperity, and happiness**

Marilyn is already awake at four in the morning to prepare breakfast and the children’s packed lunches for school. At daybreak, Edgar goes out to herd the cows to the upper pasture area to graze for the rest of the day. The rest of the children share the morning’s tasks of feeding or milking the cows and doing household chores. To augment the feeding supply, the children “cut and carry” grasses for cow’s food before leaving for and after getting back from school.

While the children are in school, Marilyn and Edgar take turns working in the field, tilling the soil, cutting thick grasses, and ensuring that the cows drink an adequate amount of water in between their part-time jobs. Dairy farming has become part and parcel of the family’s daily life. Edgar says, “The first time the cows have given birth, we have come to realize that they are very, very important to us, because they are our source of livelihood; they are definitely part of our lives now.”

In the evenings, they help the children in their homework and make time for family interaction. Over the years, this daily routine has nurtured the peace, prosperity, and happiness this simple family considers precious and priceless.
Guinaban Multi-purpose Cooperative (GMPC)

The GMPC is the principal reason why Marilyn became a dairy farm champion. In 2007, she was chosen to be a recipient of three heads of pregnant dairy cows under the Animal Loan Dispersal Program of Land O’Lakes of GMPC and BFDC.

GMPC is a primary cooperative registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) on 26 March 2000. It is committed to promoting sustainable living of its members through the provision of social enterprise, such as Agricultural Loan Program for farmers. Also, the coop has adopted the Barangay Food Terminal (BFT) to provide basic needs for its members and the community. Its services are as rice retailing, selling of fresh vegetables and other commodities at a lower price, and school service for children of its members. It has agricultural structures such as solar drier, warehouse, and other agricultural equipment to improve the processing of agricultural products. GMPC is an active advocate for feeding programs for malnourished children, faith development of their members, and environmental awareness for the protection of Mt. Isarog.

Overcoming Challenges

Limited grazing areas

The harvest of raw milk of five litres per day is low compared to the normal average milk produce of 8-10 litres per day per head. The normal ratio is one hectare for three heads of cows. The family is limited to a pasture area of only half a hectare for their six cows. Marilyn came up with the strategy of supplementing the feed supply by mobilizing the rest of the family to “cut and carry” forage grass whenever they are able to.

Low price of raw milk

Raw milk used to fetch Php21 per litre at the BFDC. As an active and only woman board member of the BFDC, Marilyn was able to pass a resolution to increase the price of raw milk to Php25 per litre to help dairy farmers gain more income.
Natural Calamities

Super Typhoon Yolanda hit the country in November 2013. Their municipality was severely damaged. Most of the family’s crops, including sugarcane, abaca, and coconut trees, were destroyed. The roof of their house and cow shelter got ripped off. The government and other concerned organizations distributed relief goods but no financial support. So many affected families were desperate to have a share of the five percent calamity fund allocated to their barangay. Marilyn’s family wasn’t prioritized as a beneficiary, because their house was not “totally damaged” – some portions of roof and walls remained intact.

The couple worked even harder in order to bounce back in no time. With the help of the children, they replanted, rebuilt, and rehabilitated whatever was left to salvage from the typhoon’s destruction. Marilyn had to resort to borrowing again to rehabilitate their dairy farm while Edgar did the repairs on their house and the cow shelter. The children put in extra hours each day to help in replanting crops and in looking for forage in peripheral areas for cows’ feed.

The Php2,800 allowance Marilyn has been receiving every two months as member of the 4Ps (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program or Conditional Cash Transfer) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, plus her income as a day care teacher, and Edgar’s income as a certified artificial insemination technician have greatly helped the family to recover from the destruction the super typhoon wrought.

Conclusion: Way Forward

Marilyn has actively participated in amending BFDC by-laws and supported programs beneficial to dairy farmers. One of her current advocacies is encouraging fellow women farmers to get into dairy farming and be empowered. She is grateful her membership to the coop has opened opportunities for her to avail of services, such as
capacity building trainings that enhance her potentials, thus improve her family’s income.

She has demonstrated leadership both in the home and in the community. With a strict daily routine, proper time management, and living out the value of hard work and resilience, she has been able to build a solid foundation for her and her family. Marilyn Abio Competente is an able wife and partner, loving mother of seven, a skilled dairy farmer, an excellent day care teacher, and active community leader weaving dreams to completion. Such is her story to tell.

**Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Marilyn Abio Competente</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>Municipality/City/District/Country</td>
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<td>Rural</td>
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<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Married</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Edmar, 17; Edgar, 15; Mark Justine, 13; Myn, 11; Hannah, 8; Emel, 5; Ma. Kim, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Tenurial Security</td>
<td>They own their land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce</td>
<td>Dairy cow, fresh milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Linkage</td>
<td>Products delivered and distributed to cooperatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working with the Government</td>
<td>A beneficiary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development’s 4Ps (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program) program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization/Affiliation</td>
<td>Bicol Federation of Dairy Cooperatives (BFDC), Guinaban Multi-Purpose Cooperative (GMPC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role/Position in Organization</td>
<td>Board member</td>
</tr>
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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 (CenDHRRRA), 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.

Asiadhrra
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