

SPECIAL AREA FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

BANDILYO

(announcement)



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SPECIAL AREA FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

BANDILYO

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From the Regional Executive Director's Desk..

SAAD Program subscribes to the belief that strategic communications is a useful tool in the delivery of agricultural services to farmer-beneficiaries. The *Bandilyo* monthly newsletter, which incorporates success stories, news, feature articles, and editorials, conforms to Sec. William D. Dar's OneDA Reform Agenda that lists strategic communications as key strategy in cascading to the food producers and other stakeholders inspiring stories and appropriate technologies to motivate and guide them in their farming activities.

More power to SAAD and its communications advocacy!

DIR. ANGEL C. ENRIQUEZ, CESO III, JD.

Regional Executive Director

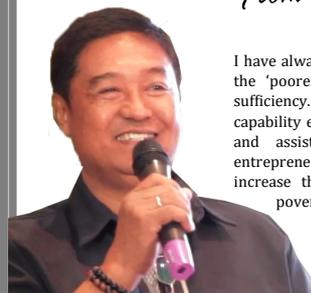


From the Regional Focal Person's Desk..

I have always emphasized that SAAD Program's twin goals are: helping the 'poorest of the poor' farmers and attaining food security and sufficiency. Towards this end, we empower them through conduct of capability enhancement activities, provision of livelihood opportunities, and assistance in marketing their products, and to become entrepreneurs. This way, they are able to improve their productivity and increase their income, thereby uplifting them from the morass of poverty.

LARRY U. SULTAN, JD.

Regional Focal Person/RTD for Operations



From the Assistant Regional Director's Desk..

Since we started SAAD Program in Region 8 in 2016, it has grown leaps and bounds in terms of coverage, number of farmer-beneficiaries, fishers, enterprises established, and the palpable effect it has generated among all stakeholders. Hence, it is important that these gains are disseminated to interested parties to inspire and inform them about what is happening at the ground level vis-à-vis program implementation. From the iconic, one-page *Peryodikit* to this magazine-type *Bandilyo* monthly newsletter, the program has certainly satiated the curiosity of patrons with its regular updates about farmers' development and progress in the countryside.

My salute to the indefatigable SAAD men and women who go out of their comfort zones, risking their lives and limbs, in the service of our impoverished farmers and fisherfolk.

ELVIRA C. TORRES, Ph.D.

ARD for Research and Regulations



The SAAD *Bandilyo* is the official monthly publication of the **Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program 8**, Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office (DA-RFO) 8, Kanhuraw Hill, Tacloban City.

Formerly published as the quarterly newsletter, *Peryodikit*, the one-page maiden issue came out in March 2017. In January 2018, it morphed into a monthly newsletter. Then again, in May 2018 until December 2019, it became a two-page spread with an occasional feature story about farmer-beneficiaries.

In January 2020, *Bandilyo* (*Waray* for Announcement) has been reformatted into a twelve-page monthly magazine-type publication intended for the reading pleasure of SAAD Program management and decision makers, personnel and staff of DA-RFO 8, stakeholders, partner agencies, and the farmers themselves.

This periodical is a work of nonfiction. All of the people, events, and details described in its pages are real; there are no composite characters, fake names, invented quotes, or imagined conversations. Articles may be reproduced, in full or in part, provided appropriate acknowledgment is given.

SAAD STAFF

underwent a battery of trainings in 2021

Michael F. Dabuet, Information Officer, RPMSO



Capability building activities enhance employees' skills and capabilities, mindsets, and behaviors. Building the capability of an individual/team increases their knowledge and skills and can actually help expand capacity. It translates directly into performance improvements on the individual, as well as at the organizational level.

Since SAAD Program started in 2016, hired personnel have undergone series of trainings to add on to what knowledge and skills they already have, or still lack. Each year, field personnel undergo trainings/seminars, according to what management perceives are the needs of the main actors, and when it deems that Provincial as well as Area Coordinators' understanding of implemented projects needs recalibration for effective flow of information from management to beneficiaries. The management also determines when the staff requires capability enhancement vis-à-vis technical knowhow for the operative delivery of information during mentoring and handholding.

Hence, earlier on in program implementation, PCs/ACs were oriented about Quantum Geographical Information System (Q-GIS) and Geotagging, field validation, Values Formation and Financial Literacy, etc. Later on, they graduated into specialized technical trainings, such as Livestock and Poultry Production, Vegetable Production Management, and High Value Crops Production, which they effectively cascaded to the farmers. The myriad trainings level off and standardize the existing capacities of field implementors. Also, learnings acquired from the resource persons become part of the stock knowledge of training participants, which would be useful to them even beyond project life.

In 2021, the trainings participated in by SAAD staff/personnel were as follows:

- Training on Soil Sampling and Soil Fundamental Analysis Protocol held at Nanay Delia's Farm, San Miguel, Leyte on March 23-24; 30-31, 2021
- FY 2022 BEDS Workshop, Hotel Alejandro, Tacloban City, August 24-26, 2021
- Training on Business and Marketing Plan Making, Haiyan

Peak Hotel and Resort, Tanauan, Leyte, September 6-10; 13-17, 2021

- Training on Packaging Stories and Video Documentation, Nanay Delia's Farm, San Miguel, Leyte, September 21-23; 28-30, 2021
- Training on Major Pests and Diseases in Crops and Animals: Identification and Control Measures, MGrand Royale Hotel and Resort, Catbalogan City; Hotel Tierra Milagrosa, Palo, Leyte, October 5-7; 12-14, 2021
- Biosecurity Training, MGrand Royale Hotel and Resort, Catbalogan City; Ocean Pearl Cove Resort, Tabango, Leyte, November 23-24; 25-26, 2021

It may be noted that there was a lull of capacity enhancement activities between April and August 2022. During this period, PCs/ACs were, in turn, preoccupied with conducting trainings/workshops to farmers' associations to equip them with skills in the respective projects they were engaged in.

It was observed that the field personnel were able to use their specialized skills in the delivery of services to their respective clients. Moreover, they gained added confidence while imparting what they learned to the farmers. The trained, hardworking SAAD staff as development practitioners have become the face of the program and provider of agriculture service in communities that fall far beyond the radar of government.



Achieving Results

Michael F. Dabuet, Information Officer, RPMSO



SAAD Program is driven by an overarching goal of alleviating poverty among farmers in Eastern Visayas from 46.7% in 2009 to 22.7% in 2022. This is closely aligned with the overall priority thrust of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's administration, which is lifting people out of poverty.

This goal guides the work of program management and its provincial support offices in contributing to increasing sustainable production, eliminating rural poverty, enabling more inclusive and efficient food and agricultural systems, and vicariously, eradication of hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity. Cross-sectoral in nature, it ensures a coordinated action, and greater synergy and alignment across the program and its partnerships with local governments and key stakeholders.

The program supports its farmer-beneficiary associations to increase and improve productivity and provides its services to coordinate actions that are environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable. It is currently in the process of mainstreaming strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation in its diverse projects.

It employs an integrated approach to rural development that aims to improve rural incomes and livelihoods through interventions to strengthen and diversify the rural economy at large, including capacity development for strengthened rural organizations, improved social protection systems, pro-poor approaches to access to technologies and knowledge, and better conditions to decent farm and off-farm employment (especially for women and youth). Lastly, it builds on experience to provide technical and operational services to help farmers effectively prevent and cope with threats and disasters that impact on agriculture, food security, and nutrition.

Prior to the African Swine Fever (ASF) intrusion in Region 8, field officers have already coached farmer associations on enhanced emergency preparedness, thus mitigating the effect of the animal disease has never been that hard for the SAAD technical staff. Disease surveillance and monitoring has long been in place, since the time when Chronic Respiratory disease, Newcastle disease,

and Fowl Pox infestation were experienced in SAAD project areas. All these were contained before they could cause extensive damage because it was given early focus by concerned staff.

Latest poverty statistics released by the Philippine Statistics Authority revealed that Northern Samar province recorded a drop in poverty incidence among population from 36.6% in 2018 to 31% in 2021. Decreases in poverty incidence were also noted in Eastern Samar from 52.0% to 43.1%, and Samar from 39.9% to 37.0% during the same periods. However, Leyte and Southern Leyte saw slight increases with the former registering 35.7% poverty incidence among population in 2015 and 36.8% in 2021; while the latter showed increase from 29.4% to 31.7% during the same periods.

While it may be true that many factors have contributed to these improvements, it cannot be denied that SAAD Program, together with other national government programs, like PAMANA PRDP, etc., helped in the overall development of uplifting rural farmers and fisherfolk from the morass of poverty. With this, it can be said that the program is right on track in achieving the above-stated goal by end of project duration.

As the program inches closer to its final year, it never ceases to explore new ways of working for some positive effect. Flexibility in the assignation of projects and resources to meet demand is foremost, especially that it is working towards FA clustering and consolidation, agri-entrepreneurship, and finding new markets for raw and processed products. Improved communications at all levels leading to more focused purpose is another important ingredient in achieving results. This is aligned with OneDA Reform Agenda where the 18th key strategy –Strategic Communications– cuts across all pillars. It shows the importance of greater integration of technical knowledge generated by the Department of Agriculture with operational activities in the field. Finally, it will expand partnerships with private sector, civil society, and other non-state actors to effect a more inclusive engagement with partners for food security, sufficiency, and stability.

Staring poverty in the Face

Michael F. Dabuet, Information Officer, RPMSO



When a province is selected as beneficiary of the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program, it is presumed that many families belonging to the 'poorest of the poor' live there. It is for this reason that when the program started in 2016, the three Samar provinces automatically qualified for assistance through livelihood interventions and agricultural projects because poverty incidence in these areas was at an all-time high.

In fact, Northern Samar was flagged as among the country's bottom poor eight (8) provinces in 2015, alongside provinces belonging to Regions IX, X, XII, and ARMM, per Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) figures. Eastern Samar and Samar were not very much far behind, in terms of high poverty incidence among families and among the population.

In 2018, the program saw it fit to include the provinces of Leyte and Southern Leyte as recipients of agricultural aid, as most farmers living here are likewise small, marginalized, and living in hard-to-reach areas that do not usually receive or are least favored in terms of assistance from government programs/agencies.

Poverty is a multifaceted problem that the government has been trying to address since time immemorial. The inevitability of global warming, COVID19 health crisis, rising prices of agricultural inputs, scarcity of farm labor, lack of farm equipment/machinery, volatile commodity prices, lack of access to credit facilities, usurious moneylenders, natural calamities, and other challenges oftentimes exacerbate the already depressed situation in rural areas. This translates to minimal production and consequent low income.

SAAD Program was established in the five provinces of Eastern Visayas to give opportunities to the most vulnerable sector of the community – farmers and fisherfolk, to unpoor the poor and serve as vehicle for mainstreaming them to the broad society.

The projects implemented were varied, yet site-specific. To ensure their success, farmers underwent a rigorous 11-step process before they were granted projects that were viable and doable. They were equipped with capability building activities, such as trainings and workshops, to ensure that appropriate technologies aid in their continuous development.

The projects, which were envisioned to develop into sustainable enterprises, created significant impact in the lives of beneficiaries. Though not all were 100% successful, somehow there are those who manifested notable change in their socioeconomic status.

Initially, majority of the projects implemented were given to individual poor farmers. The projects were on rice, corn, HVC, ube, peanut, ginger, cassava, goat, swine, native chicken, and egg layer production. Farm machineries were also provided to associations. Many did not succeed because the farmers who were then living on subsistence level used up their harvest. It became apparent during project impact monitoring that only few recipients had been successful as far as sustainability is concerned.

Due to valuable lessons learned, project implementation in 2020–21 was recalibrated. Conduct of Focus Group Discussions and project assessment became imperative. Integrated projects became the order of the time.

The predominant project that showed much potential during the period was egg layer production, while swine production showed the greatest impact in 2018. Visible changes in farmers' condition range from purchase of a rented lot/motorcycle, house construction/ improvement, sari-sari store establishment, and funding support for their children's education.

Though the program was able to support thousands of individual farmers, it still needs to continue its implementation to reach out to more remote areas where majority of farmers need assistance. Moreover, majority of the associations with big ticket projects are now on the phase of expanding their projects and developing them into a bigger enterprises, most especially those engaged in egg layer and swine production.

The PSA's report on the 1st Semester 2018 Poverty Incidence among Families, by Province: First Semesters of 2015 and 2018 contained promising results. Comparative statistical data showed that poverty incidence in 2015 vis-à-vis 2018 in the four SAAD-covered provinces in Region 8 dramatically decreased, thus: from 53.8 in 2015, it decreased to 30.0 in 2018 in Northern Samar; in Samar, from 43.9 in 2015 it decreased to 32.2 in 2018; from 38.4 in 2015, it went down to 29.4 in 2018 in Leyte; and in Southern Leyte, the decrease was from 31.7 in 2015 to 22.8 in 2018. It was only in Eastern Samar that the poverty incidence remained about the same – from 42.9 in 2015 to 43.0 in 2018. In 2018, Northern Samar was delisted from the bottom ten (10) poorest provinces in the country.

Support for the farmer-beneficiaries will continue for as long as SAAD Program is still in existence, and even beyond. Until such time they are sufficiently empowered, management will not leave them hanging on a thread. Through honest idealism, solid underpinning, and dedication, SAAD personnel in close coordination with concerned LGUs vow to uplift the lives of farmers as their larger contribution to countryside development.



Distribution of farm inputs and machineries

Michael F. Dabuet, Information Officer, RPMSO



On August 10, 2021, a benevolent mood unfolded in Dolores, Eastern Samar when six (6) barangay farmers' associations received farm inputs and machineries worth Php3,828,659.00 from the Department of Agriculture-Special Area for Agriculture Development (SAAD) Program. This program was initiated to improve farmers' income and give emphasis on producing food amid the health crisis.

The distribution was facilitated by Eastern Samar SAAD Provincial Coordinator Antonio B. Luceres, Jr. and his team, in coordination with the Office of the Municipal Agricultural Services-LGU Dolores, headed by Municipal Agriculturist Din Ralph Almazan. Also present were Hon. Mayor Shonny Niño Carpeso, Provincial Agriculturist Virgilio P. Capon, APCO Grace Palconit, and Dr. Joy Balagapo of the Provincial Veterinary Office.

The program was also graced by the representative from the Office of the Governor, Vice Gov. Maricar Sison-Gotesan, Hon. Capito, Hon. Quelitano, and Hon. Suyot.

#SIRAKOMAS
#OMASDOLORES



CARAPDAPAN SAAD Poultry Farmers Association

Michael F. Dabuet, Information Officer, RPMSO



In the small, rustic town of Arteche, Eastern Samar can be found one of the more progressive farmer's associations in the province named Carapdapan SAAD Poultry Farmers' Association. Currently, the group has 20 active members. It was recently visited by BM Virginia Requillo Zacate, BM Atty. Byron Suyot, Mr. Bryan Arago (representative of Gov. Ben Evardone), Provincial Veterinarian Dr. Norma Ylanan, former SAAD Provincial Coordinator for Eastern Samar Dhon Benitez Luceres, and personnel of the provincial government. The lightning visit aimed to assess the project status of farmers' associations that benefited from government projects, particularly the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program of the Department of Agriculture.

Ms. Emma D. Segundo, the association's active president, was taken by surprise at the unannounced visit of the government officials whose purpose was to determine the needs of the farmers, especially at this time of the protracted pandemic, and where they could put in their resources to best help them.

The farmers' association started in 2018 when sixteen (16) original members pooled their resources and were each individually provided by SAAD Program 6 heads layer chicken, 2 sacks feeds, vitamins, and 50 m. polynet for fencing. In 2019, the program granted to the association an Egg Layer Production Project package consisting of 1,536 layer chicken, 246 sacks feeds, vitamins, and polynet. The inputs were then distributed equally to the members for raising in their backyards.

On February 28, 2020, the association was officially registered at DOLE, Borongan City as Carapdapan SAAD Poultry Farmers Association, with 32 members. Another 150 sacks layer feeds were subsequently given to the members as augmentation support. In October 2020, ten (10) sows were delivered for the Swine Production Project.

In reports rendered by the association, it earned an income of PhP298,260.00 from the Egg Layer Production Project, and incurred expenses reaching PhP253,800.00 from January–August 2021. On

egg sizing, cash earned for the same period was PhP13,932.00: the association's share was PhP6,425.00, while expenses totaled PhP6,492.00. For the swine production, the 10 sows produced a total of 86 piglets, of which there were 18 mortalities, and 49 were sold, garnering total sales of PhP171,800.00.

During their brief dialogue, *Nanay* Emma assured the visitors that they would manage well the projects undertaken by the association. It has undergone change of leadership four times since its inception due to internal problems, but the present set of officers has somehow gotten into the groove of setting their business in order. They were able to solicit suggestions for the improvement of project management and, in turn, the officials provided advice and token assistance to them.

The meeting between the farmers and government functionaries proved fruitful as it opened up opportunities for the association to gain access to services offered by the concerned government agencies.

[#AtonProbinsyaTAWOitonUNA](#)



Balud Farmers Producers Association

Monsour S. Rosello, IT Development Officer, PPMSO-Samar



The Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program interventions continue to flow from the Department of Agriculture to its target beneficiaries.

The Balud Farmers Producers Association of Sta. Margarita, Samar is one of the many associations that benefited from the program this year. The association received 972 heads Ready-To-Lay (RTL) Chickens, feeds, and biologics. It also availed of a Vegetable Production Project, wherein squash, ampalaya, sweet pepper, eggplant, and pole sitaw seeds were provided, together with small farm tools and equipment.

Since then, the association has started earning PhP10,000.00 every week from the production of layer eggs. This production is enough to supply the needs of Brgy. Balud and surrounding barangays, and the families of the members.

On May 17-19, 2021, SAAD PPMSO-Samar conducted Community Needs Assessment and Capability Building Training to association members to ensure that they are ready to take good care and maintain the project. The participants showed full interest during the training with their eagerness to learn new knowledge and ideas.

Based on the testimony of FA President Lolita Caamud, she said: *"Malaki ang maitutulong nito sa aming pamilya lalo na ngayon sa panahon ng pandemya. Walang hangganan ang aming pasasalamat sa DA SAAD Program sa proyekto na ibinigay nila sa amin. Malaki ang mababago sa buhay namin dahil nandiyan ang SAAD na tumulong sa amin para umangat ang aming buhay na hindi nalang palaging mahirap."* (This is a big help to our families, especially at this time of the pandemic. We are forever grateful to DA SAAD Program for the project they gave us. A huge improvement to our lives is in store because of this help coming from SAAD, to help alleviate us from poverty.)



Community Needs Assessment and Capability-Building Training

A Convergence of Trust and Cooperation

Trisha D. Fami, Area Coordinator II, PPMSO-Southern Leyte



This auspicious farmers' association is a beneficiary of the 2020 Swine Production Project in the bucolic village of Juangon, Malitbog, Southern Leyte. Historically, it was composed of three (3) groups: women, fisherfolk, and agricultural workers. Since the barangay should have only one registered association, the 25 prospective recipients decided to pool together and register under one association named, *Asosasyon ng Kalalakhian at Kababaihan Samahan ng Juangon* (AKKSJ).

The project funded by SAAD Program has a total cost of PhP852,485.00. It aims to reduce poverty and inequity by generating employment among farmers and rural poor households resulting in sustainable livelihoods and economic stability in the area.

While the procurement process of the swine project was still going on, the newly-formed association conducted weekly meetings and started building the group's counterpart, which is swine communal housing. It also secured the necessary permits and provisions for utilities—water and electricity, which are deemed essentials in the swine housing operation.

Because of the members' good camaraderie and teamwork, the building was fully constructed in time for the delivery of gilts and necessary supplies. It helped that members have already developed bonds of fidelity, having practically grown up together in the same place. Along with the swine housing was also built a storage room for feeds and biologics. Every member was tasked to feed the animals and scheduled to conduct "*bayanihan*" (community shared effort), so as to maintain cleanliness of the immediate surroundings, while ensuring the health and wellbeing of the gilts. As of press time, the gilts are now at their mating stage. In due time, they will be gestating.

According to the AKKSJ President Jeaniver Calino, "*Indeed, there's nothing impossible in achieving the association's dream if all members*

share a common goal and vision that this project entrusted to them will be sustained by working together leading towards prosperity." The association members look forward to a brighter future for their families and Brgy. Juangon, which they plan to become a major supplier of hog meat and processed products in Malitbog.



Facing Poverty, Bringing Prosperity

Francisco T. Luta, Jr., Provincial Coordinator, PPMO-Northern Samar



Poverty incidence among population in the province of Northern Samar significantly improved in year 2015 and 2018. From 59.9 percent in 2015, it dipped to 34.0 percent, or a remarkable decline of 25.9% (PSA, 2020). Also, poverty incidence among families showed a notable decrease from 51.5 percent in 2015 to 27.4 percent in 2018. In other words, one out of every four families had improved their economic status.

As cited in the NEDA 8 report on 2018 Full-Year Poverty Statistics of Eastern Visayas, poverty reduction could also be partly attributed to the implementation of labor-enhancing and income-enriching agricultural interventions through social preparation and livelihood interventions of SAAD Program, and could be credited to the sustained implementation, improved labor market conditions, and other institutional reforms.

The projects implemented in the province provided a significant impact in the lives of beneficiaries. Though not all projects were 100 percent successful, somehow there are beneficiaries who manifested notable change in their socioeconomic status throughout the SAAD implementation.

In partnership with the Provincial/Municipal Local Government Units and other stake-holders, the flow of project implementation became less bumpy. Stakeholders play a vital role by providing assistance in coordination and monitoring throughout the process.

SAAD provided livelihood to farmers focused on the production of crops and livestock. Projects implemented were on rice, corn, vegetable, poultry, goat, and swine production. They comprised a package of interventions, including farm inputs and social preparation activities to ensure their sustainability and empower farmers through specialized capacity enhancement trainings. The latter really helped the farmers sharpen their skills and improved their practices on different crops and livestock production.

Among the challenges personnel encountered during implementation were reforming the mindset of farmers and their commitment to the projects; accessibility of associations to markets due to lack of farm-to-market roads; and, most critical is, the

communication aspect considering that most of the areas and beneficiaries covered still have neither signal nor communication network. Communication is very essential in coordination and monitoring because it enhances the effectivity and efficiency of services provided to recipients. These challenges were however addressed through proper management and planning of activities.

With the opportunities and means relatively met, a few of the associations began expanding from production to enterprising business. In addition to SAAD implemented projects, Agri-vets were established. As the perceived lack of agricultural supply providers in the area was felt with the growing demand for feeds, the gap served as an opportunity for the associations to engage in mini-Agrivet enterprises. They serve as supplier of agricultural products, such as feeds and veterinary medicines in swine and poultry production, and act as income generating project of the association that not only benefit the association, but the community as well.

Generally, farmers' project management in the province is a work-in-progress. It still needs further guidance and supervision. Although the pacing is a bit slow, with continuous support and cooperation these farmers will ultimately become capable in managing their affairs.

Before SAAD Program terminates in 2022, PPMO-Northern Samar hopes to see individual and association beneficiaries as more capable of sustaining and improving their livelihood ventures. By continuously equipping them with required skills and knowledge and a prepared mindset for their transition to enterprise, this is not a remote possibility.

SUCCESS STORY

The program not only provided livelihood to farmer-beneficiaries, but also empowered them by providing technical knowledge. It radically changed their mindset that the word, *saad*, can really be fulfilled and not remain as mere promise. It changed their attitude and character towards the project into more responsive and extra diligent farmers by putting their newfound learning and knowledge into action.

The province has been a recipient of 29 livelihood projects from SAAD Program amounting to ₱174,354,379.00 from 2016 to 2021, which benefited 7,211 individuals and 209 group beneficiaries with a total group membership of 4,749. These beneficiaries participated in a 135 trainings provided, with inputs under the Rice, Corn, Vegetable, Swine, and Poultry Production Projects. Within the span of five years, PPMO-Northern Samar has enabled two associations to set up established enterprises. These are: Libas Rural Improvement Club, based in Brgy, Libas, Lavezares, which was provided with a Swine Production Project in 2017 valued at PhP1,563,520.00; and Samahan ng Kababaihan sa Barangay (SAMAKABA), located in Brgy. Bonifacio, Lope de Vega, assisted with a Vegetable Production Project costing PhP391,650.27. Both associations organized a mini-agrivet in their respective localities that serves as their income generating project, which in turn help increase their capital and equity.



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