

**SPECIAL AREA FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**BANDILYO**

*(announcement)*



**VOL. 10 (OCTOBER 2021)**

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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*

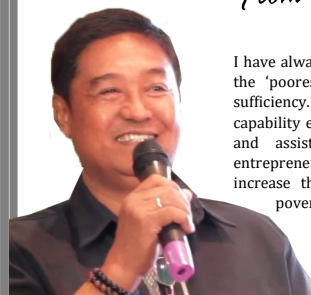


### *From the Regional Focal Person's Desk..*

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*



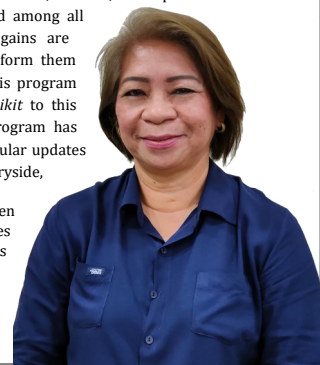
### *From the Assistant Regional Director's Desk..*

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.

# MOFA: The harbinger of good things to come

Jeric M. Afable, Area Coordinator II, PPMSO-Samar

**P**inabacdao is one of the poorest municipalities in the province of Samar and identified as the focus for food production and poverty alleviation by President Duterte's administration. Poverty incidence was 47% in 2012 and classified as 4<sup>th</sup> class municipality in terms of income classification. It has 24 barangays with a total population of 18,252 in 2012 (PSA).

Due to this scenario, the Department of Agriculture launched the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program in 2017, which aims to provide livelihood to subsistence farmers and provide food security, not only to families but also to the whole community.

Mambog is one of its largest barangays. Farming being the main livelihood of its residents, the Mambog Organic Farmers Association (MOFA) was organized way back in 2011 and registered with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). It is headed by its President, Tito Sablad, and has 25 farmer-members.

In October 2020, the association received a Swine Production Project from the program, through the effort of the Municipal Agriculture Office headed by Municipal Agriculturist Dante Gabatbat. The project is valued at Seven Hundred Eighty-Eight Thousand Four Hundred Thirteen Pesos (PhP788,413.00). Upon implementation of the project, association members attended a Seminar on Swine Production Management and Practices. The following are the itemized assistance received by MOFA:

Particulars	Unit	Quantity
Gilt	head	8
Grower feeds	bag	20
Gestating feeds	bag	80
Lactating feeds	bag	30
Booster feeds	kilogram	300
Antibiotics	bottle	5
Multivitamins (injectable)	bottle	5
Multivitamins (oral soluble)	bottle	5
Wound spray	bottle	10
Iron	bottle	5
Dewormer	pack	6
Fiber glass syringe	piece	2
Hypodermic needle	set	2
Oxytocin	vial	10

During the implementation of the project, the association formulated certain policies to attain its goals. One of these is for each of the 25 members to contribute PhP2,000.00 to build a piggery house. Members were also assigned specific tasks in maintaining hygiene and sanitation in the immediate environs. The project helped them acquire knowledge, especially on technical aspects on hog breeding and biosecurity measures to be strictly followed to prevent the incidence of diseases.

On the first parity of the 5 sows, 48 live pigs were produced. Out of the 48, they sold 25 piglets costing PhP3,000.00 each for a total income of PhP75,000.00, while the remaining pigs were retained for fattening to sustain the cost of feeds and other operational expenses. The swine project offers high quality piglets that can only be bought in the association. The income they earned will be shared as dividends at the end of the year. The association members were delighted, especially when the sows started farrowing. It is a symbol of hope for the growing swine industry in their locality. At the moment, the remaining 2 swine are on their gestation period.

The association plans to expand their piggery project by having its own meat shop, which will cater fresh and safe meat carcass to consumers. It likewise plans to purchase land in the name of MOFA. When the time comes that the association becomes liquid on its finances, there will be dispersal of piglets to the member so they would also benefit from the project. They also plan to improve the piggery house. Receiving this kind of intervention is such a blessing for the association even amidst the threat of ASF. The members foresee a bright future as they look forward to the realization of their goals.



Eartag	Date of Insemination	Farrowing Date	No. of Farrowed Pigs	No. of Live Pigs	No. of Mortalities	No. of Pigs Sold	No. of Fattened Pigs	Price per Pig	Gross Income
16353	Jan. 6, 2021	Apr. 30, 2021	12	12	0	9	3	3,000.00	27,000.00
16355	Jan. 24, 2021	May 22, 2021	12	11	1	8	3	3,000.00	24,000.00
16354	Jan. 24, 2021	May 21, 2021	8	8	0	8	0	3,000.00	24,000.00
16341	Feb. 1, 2021	May 27, 2021	13	3	10	0	3	0	0
16352	Mar. 19, 2021	July 12, 2021	17	14	3	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>62</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>75,000.00</b>

# Women at Work

Ceira A. Uruga, Area Coordinator II, PPMO-Samar



**N**agka-urosa nga Kababayin-an san Danao I (NAKADA) with 22 active exclusively women members, was organized in 2014 yet, but was registered with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) only on December 29, 2016. The women's organization is based in Brgy. Danao I, Calbayog City.

Before NAKADA received the project from SAAD Program, it was previously supported by an NGO that is engaged in organic farming (vegetable production and broiler chicken). Because of its good management practices from previous projects, it was recommended as one of the beneficiaries of the Egg Layer Production Project for FY 2020. Upon validation, association president Henelyn Oben said, "We promise to take good care and manage it well when we are awarded the project."

With the results from the validation, the group qualified for the project. As its counterpart, the association established a housing facility for the layer chicken. It spent PhP21,593.00 for the construction, with the budget taken from the fund provided by the NGO.

In September 2020, the association received PhP942,600.00 worth of interventions for the Egg Layer Production Project. The package comprised of 384 heads egg layer, complemented with 170 bags layer feeds, 800 egg trays, 8 kg. antibiotics, 16 kg. multivitamins, and 1 egg weighing scale. The association underwent a capability building training, which includes aspects in financial, project, and organizational management. The technical training on layer chicken production was administered with the help of the Calbayog City Veterinary Office.

In managing the egg layer production, the members were divided into 7 groups. Every day, 3-4 members of different groups are assigned to feed the chicken, fetch water, and clean the poultry area.

NAKADA conducts regular monthly meetings to discuss financial statements and liquidation, settle issues, and draw plans for the month. After every meeting, the members engage in *pintakasi* (shared effort) to further develop their communal area.

The group opened a savings account intended for the association's future expansion. Monitoring of the project is constantly done jointly by members of the association, SAAD PPMO staff, and the City Veterinarian.

With combined hard work, enthusiasm, and determination, the association is pleased as the members have already benefited from its first profit.

The group discussed and decided they needed to save more to prepare for the replenishment of their layer chicken. With savings from their profit, it was able to expand the project by buying 2 egg machines, or a total of 96 heads RTL chicken, which cost them PhP76,000.00.

Table 1. NAKADA's Monthly Income from Layer Chicken Egg Production

Year	Month	Gross Income (PhP)	Operating Expenses (PhP)
2020	September	5,600.00	58,439.00
	October	46,297.49	270.00
	November	53,013.61	243.00
	December	56,298.26	21,817.00
2021	January	62,616.48	28,878.00
	February	55,590.22	32,214.00
	March	63,667.25	26,224.00
	April	58,904.98	20,044.00
	May	59,795.87	38,766.00
	June	56,338.00	17,322.00
	July	60,555.00	48,883.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>578,677.16</b>	<b>273,056.00</b>

From Table 1 above, the association had total sales of PhP578,677.16, with PhP273,056.00 operating expenses, as of July 2021. The latter was incurred in buying layer feeds, as the allocated feeds from the program was good for three months only. Other expenses include multivitamins, water and electricity utilities bills, fares, office supplies, and labor wages.

One of the important practices done by NAKADA is the recording of its daily production, sales, and expenses for transparency purposes. As of mid-August 2021, the association's monthly gross income has already reached PhP53,000.00. Currently, it has PhP100,000.00 savings that would guarantee another purchase of new layer chicken for replenishment.

For now, the association continues to plant organic vegetables, using chicken dung as fertilizer. It also markets dressed chicken for additional income. Its future plans include: to acquire a service vehicle for the transport and delivery of its products; increase the layer chicken population for the association to become a major supplier of eggs and chicken products in Calbayog City; and lastly, establish a demo farm/school to share their best practices to fellow farmers and farmers' associations in the area.

These simple housewives are happy and beyond thankful to the government through SAAD Program that they were given this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to improve their economic status, which also helped their community prosper. They hope that the program can help other associations as well.



# Against all odds

Jocelyn G. Torres, Area Coordinator II, PPMO-Samar

One of the goals of the Department of Agriculture is to provide assistance where livestock farmers could thrive in society with steady income and enhanced capacity through skills building and trainings that allow them to manage their project grants more effectively. Hence, far-flung areas in Samar with ever-dynamic farming-related associations and less opportunities in livelihood are the target beneficiaries of the Department of Agriculture under the SAAD core agenda.

Ormocanay Small Water Impounding Farmers Association (OSWIFA) was organized and registered at DOLE on July 13, 2015 with the help of the Municipal Agriculture Office of Sta. Rita, Samar. It originally started with more than 60 rice farmer-residents of Sitio Ormocanay, Sta. Rita, Samar.

Due to limited opportunities in the agriculture sector, OSWIFA's number of members decreased, having resorted to becoming laborers in the construction industry and as *habal-habal* (motorcycle) drivers. The leadership had also been a longstanding call for moral obligation as no one liked to assume the position as the association's focal person. Because of this leadership crisis, the defining moment happened where an extraordinary leader emerged. A man named Rodrigo Sabenorio in his early 60s was brave enough to take on the chairmanship of OSWIFA in the hope of creating opportunity and livelihood for the community.

In late 2019, SAAD PPMO-Samar conducted an assessment and evaluation of the association, which subsequently found it to be qualified as program beneficiary. Despite the threat of global pandemic, OSWIFA members remained motivated. They were trained to manage a small-scale poultry enterprise. This includes poultry health management, entrepreneurial development, and capability building to ensure an engaged workforce among its members.

On June 11, 2021, the association received Php2,200,000.00 worth of interventions for the Egg Layer Production and Vegetable Enterprise Project. The package consists of 960 heads ready-to-lay chicken or 20 egg machines, 345 bags layer feeds, egg trays, egg weighing scale, and drugs and biologics. Since then, they were able to produce eggs daily. As weeks went by, 22 mortalities were recorded due to rectal prolapse and suspected avian malaria, which affected the egg production. The association then sought advice from technical persons and veterinary doctors of DA-RFO 8.

In August 2021 during the monitoring and production data gathering, it was observed that daily average production reached more than 87%, or 810 pc. eggs, equivalent to 27 egg trays. They are sold within the community and nearby villages through peddling, but they also have a bulk buyer for 100 trays per week coming from Brgy. San Pedro, Sta. Rita, Samar. Eggs produced by OSWIFA were also sold at the DA-organized *Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita* test market in Robinsons North, Tacloban City

Vegetables are also one of the major food crops produced by Sitio Ormocanay. Hence, OSWIFA was granted a power tiller with multicultivator, farm tools, vegetable seeds, and organic fertilizer. At present, the association has already started on its land preparation.

With months of toil, hopes, and thrusts, Mr. Sabenorio took the stirring wheel in leading OSWIFA, even with its declining membership as a result of the previously inactive leadership. With hardwork and dedication, it successfully managed to hit its goals following persistent project implementation, proving once and for all that opportunities granted by the Department of Agriculture have not been rendered in vain. The satisfactory performance of the association under the leadership of its elder members has emboldened members to take on an extra mile in order to sustain and increase its productivity. Thus, future plans of the association include the procurement of additional 500 heads ready-to-lay chicken before the 2021 calendar shift, which means it also

plans to prepare and expedite the housing expansion and improvement of the physical setup of these facilities, including the procurement of additional septic tanks and improvement of water system and irrigation.

OSWIFA's future plans ring a bell to the project implementor's ears, but they also require close attention, hardwork, and camaraderie amongst its members. With the leadership of Mr. Sabenorio, however, the association's future looks bright together with the 21 current members, where three are senior citizens. Mr. Sabenorio and two of his comrades put a trustworthy trademark for their organization as they spearhead and oversee the implementations of different projects entrusted in their care for the overall welfare of their community with an excellent point to note. Witnessing how these extraordinary leaders work hard in unity and camaraderie goes to show that no one's too young nor too old to take on the call of leadership, like Mr. Sabenorio and his two other companions. Other associations catered to by the Department of Agriculture should follow their footsteps as it would be the greatest delight of field officers/documentors to ink their stories and publish them among the agency's successful stories.



# PANCRASIO E. CASCAS: In farming age is just a number

Jocelyn A. Cabañas, Provincial Coordinator, PPMO-Southern Leyte



**W**ho says in being old one becomes weak and dull? Change the mindset of this fine, elderly man, 72-year-old Pancrasio E. Cascas, also known as Tatay Lolong. At an early age, he started helping his father till their land. Being a member of the United Farmers Association of Pangi (UFAP) in Libagon, Southern Leyte, he agreed to utilize the parcel of his inherited land for UFAP's project with DA-SAAD Program. If the area where the hogstiel will be built is the only factor so the association can avail of the Swine Fattening Project, it did not make him think twice to sign the usufruct agreement allowing UFAP to use the land. For him, it is just but proper to maximize the offer of the government than losing the opportunity.

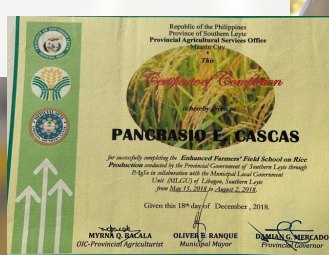
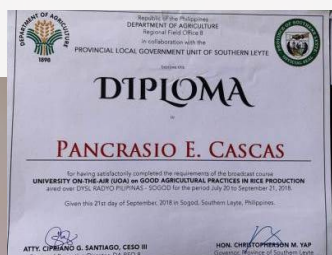
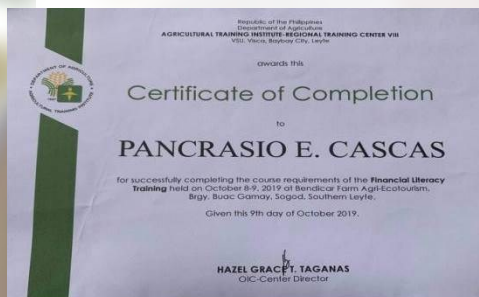
A widower, Tatay Lolong has only one son, an engineer who is currently working in Manila. His son advised him to rest and retire from farming as the former can already provide for his Tatay's daily needs; but Tatay Lolong is a hardworking man, he didn't rely completely on his son's offer. According to him, as long as he is still healthy and able, he will never get tired of working on his small area.

Tatay Lolong is not an ordinary farmer. He loves to enhance his knowledge and expand this technical knowhow in terms of agricultural advancement. He attended several trainings sponsored by TESDA and ATI. To name a few: Competency Assessment, Financial Management Training, Jackfruit Production and Duck Raising Training. He also participated in

a Training on Bangus Production sponsored by LGU Libagon, and the Swine Fattening Training conducted by SAAD PPMO-Southern Leyte in 2018.

One striking value that stood out in him is when he said during an interview, "Never depend on others, we are only responsible for our own selves. It is one's choice to be lazy and complacent, but it is not the obligation of others to feed you because of your laziness." Indeed, his produce can already support his requirements, but still he wanted his small farm production of coconuts, nipa, cassava, bananas, and farm animals to flourish for his own satisfaction.

Indeed, farming is not only for the young and strong. It is for everyone who has the passion to till the land with love and dedication. For Tatay Lolong, age doesn't really matter since for him, farming has been a way of life since childhood. As long as one is happy in sharing his/her inherent talents and resources, this attitude will always come easy.



# SUFA, after dormancy

Edson G. Penasbo, Area Coordinator II, PPMO-Northern Samar



for opportunities to flow in as agencies have been eyeing the group for additional support and assistance after seeing their accomplishments.

As of press time, monitoring by PPMO-N. Samar in coordination with the Municipal Agriculture Office of Mapanas continues. After being dormant for some time, SUFA has once again emerged revitalized as it works harmoniously to achieve its goal of reaping a fruitful harvest in the near future.

**S**iljagon Upland Farmers Association (SUFA) is based in Brgy. Siljagon, an upstream barangay in Mapanas, which is a 5<sup>th</sup> class municipality in the province of Northern Samar. The association is not new, but in previous years due to the inactivity of the officers and members, it remained dormant. In 2020, it was revived with the assistance of a non-government organization, the Leyte Center for Development (LCDE), Inc., under its INCREASE Program, and was registered with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) bearing Certificate No. RO8-12-20-WA-NSFO-123.

SUFA then increased its membership from 26 to more than a hundred clustered farmer-members, consisting of females, single-member households, Siljagon Women Lead in Emergencies, LGBTQ+, and the youth. The members became enthusiastic in looking for partners from government agencies and NGOs that could provide them with livelihood support to help uplift their sordid economic condition.

In 2021, SAAD Program, in coordination with the Municipal Agriculture Office of Mapanas, recommended SUFA as recipient of the *Kalamansi* Production and Marketing Project. PPMO-Northern Samar validated the association, which was deemed qualified based on the supplemental guidelines.

The package of interventions includes 1,000 pc. *kalamansi* planting materials (marcotted), 30 bags organic fertilizer, 49 kg. foliar fertilizer, and 4 rolls garden hose. Aside from the inputs, a 3-day Training on Community Needs Assessment and Capability Building and 2-day technical training on *Kalamansi* Production and Marketing were also conducted to enhance the association's capability and to gain technical knowhow in managing the project.

As counterpart of the association, a communal area was identified and a usufruct was forged between SUFA and the landowner. Use of the land was maximized by integrating some crops, like vegetables, peanut, corn, and herbal plants. They also constructed facilities, such as the office *bahay* of the association, compost area, etc. The group's high motivation could be seen through their outputs. Moreover, the project implementation became an avenue



## MARAGUNDONG FA, a mainstay of Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita at PCA

Reno A. Castil, Administrative Aide III, RPMSO



The Maragundong Farmers Association, a relatively stable group of food producers based in Brgy. Maragundong, Dagami, Leyte, which is a beneficiary of Egg Layer and Vegetable Production Projects of the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program, has found a secure and dependable niche in the Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita test market at the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) 8 Compound, Candahug, Palo, Leyte.

The market was organized by PCA 8 to serve as venue for start-up and progressive farmers' groups to promote and sell their diverse products, while, at the same time, providing the surrounding barangays a regular, steady supply of fresh, affordable commodities for their daily food consumption. Since its inception during the Farmers and Fisherfolk Month Celebration in May 2021, the 3-day Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita has been systematically ran and sustained by the host agency.

From September 29–October 29, 2021, the Maragundong FA displayed every week a variety of vegetables, such as squash, *siling labuyo* (hot pepper), cucumber, okra, *ampalaya* (bitter gourd), eggplant, string beans, ginger, etc. It also sold *camote* (sweet potato), *calamansi*, bananas (*cardava*, *bangaran*, and *sab-a* varieties), and *pakbet* (a hodgepodge of different

vegetables). The biggest income-earner, however, was the eggs (fresh and salted). Overall sales of the association totaled PhP23,533.05.

On October 28, 2021, the Abango Small Coconut Farmers Association (ASC FA) of Barugo, Leyte, a beneficiary of the SAAD Program Egg Layer Production Project, likewise started trading its fresh eggs, and earned PhP2,570.00 within 2 days.

It is noteworthy to mention that these farmers associations have taken the initiative to market their products, even with minimal supervision. SAAD Program has slowly weaned them from constant one-on-one mentoring to enable them to stand on their own feet and make critical decisions, in their slow ascent to being independent agripreneurs.





## BAOFA: Rising Agri Enterprise in the East

Marlyn D. Gordora, Area Coordinator II, PPMSO-Eastern Samar



When the Integrated *Kalamansi* and Layer Egg Production Project was implemented in 2020 by the Brgy. Alang-alang Organic Farmers Association (BAOFA) in Quinapondan, Eastern Samar, only 15 farmers were given the project. It was a package consisting of 960 heads ready-to-lay layer chicken with egg layer machine set, 430 bags layer feeds good for 6 months, drugs and biologics for the layer egg production project. For the *kalamansi* production, the package included 250 marcotted *kalamansi* seedlings, 5 pruning shears, 5 shovels, 5 sharp bolos, 5 pcs. pick mattock, 1 garden hose, 5 kg. foliar fertilizer, and 1 unit 60 kg.-capacity weighing scale.

In a very short time, the association was able to expand its project.

In December 2020, using sales from the layer egg production, it procured 4 heads Hyphor piglet to pursue its plan to engage in swine production. In February 2021, it procured additional 200 heads ready-to-lay layer chicken, not only to increase its income, but also to meet the growing demand for eggs in that southern part of the province.

With the initiative of the group bolstered by the support of the local government of Quinapondan, through the Office of the Municipal Agricultural Services, the association continued to engage in organic farming to this day. They have also planted rootcrops and vegetables, while using the chicken dung waste from their layer egg production as fertilizer for their farm crops.

Since these projects were implemented, the association earned an accumulated income of PhP1,238,423 from this integrated farm enterprise. The members received a total of PhP560,295 from the dividends declared by the association. Moreover, the group also bought a 1.133-ha. lot amounting to PhP300,000 from its savings.

Slowly but surely, BAOFA members have learned to deal with difficulties of their poor existence.

It is widely known that most Filipino farmers and fisherfolk are suffering from chronic poverty. This has been very palpable since time immemorial. Thus, the government designed programs to help the marginalized sector of society who are most affected, but are instrumental in putting food on our table.

In 2016, the turning point for BAOFA members actually started when the Department of Agriculture launched the Special Area for Agricultural Development (SAAD) Program. This encouraged 20 farmer-residents of Brgy. Alang-alang, Quinapondan, Eastern Samar, to form a group. In 2019, this group was registered as Brgy. Alang-alang Organic Farmers Association (BAOFA) with the Department of Labor and Employment. The Office of the Municipal Agricultural Services later recommended it to become recipient of the SAAD Program. However, before SAAD came into the picture in 2018, the association was already engaged in organic farming with assistance from the provincial and municipal local governments.

Step by step, with unity and commitment of every member, BAOFA is slowly reaching its goal to improve the lives of the farmers. According to association president, Mr. Wilfredo Quilbio, the project was really a great help to them. It does not only give them additional income, but also a training ground in learning new technologies, which they can apply in their individual farming activities.



## The SAMAKABA Success Story

Nilo Gumatay, Jr., Area Coordinator II, PPMSO- Northern Samar



**N**orthern Samar has 24 municipalities and was identified as one of the poorest provinces in the country in 2015, with 59.9% poverty incidence (PSA, 2020). In 2018, there was a remarkable decline in poverty incidence to 34.0%, or 25.9 % lower than in 2015. Lope de Vega is identified as a 4<sup>th</sup> class municipality. The main source of income in the locality is farming (coconut, upland rice, corn, and vegetables).

Vegetable production is one of the income generating activities, especially for those located in hilly and mountainous barangays. With excess agricultural lands that can't be used for rice production, some farmers converted them to vegetable production. Such is the scenario in Brgy. Bonifacio in the municipality of Lope de Vega where the Samahan ng Kababaihan sa Barangay (SAMAKABA) is located.

SAMAKABA was organized in 2006 and registered with the Department of Labor and Employment on November 30, 2006, bearing registration number RO800-06-11-RWA-NS-013. In 2006, its pioneering membership was composed of 26 individuals who organized themselves to improve their standard of living. Presently, SAMAKABA is composed of 46 active members.

When SAAD Program was established in Northern Samar in 2017, SAMAKABA was identified as a beneficiary of the Enhanced Vegetable Production Project. The communal area of the association was used for vegetable production. Association members individually received farm inputs, such as vegetable seeds, organic fertilizers, complete fertilizers, plastic jugs (20 li), plastic drums (200 li), plastic crates, farm tools (rake, bolo, pick mattock, sprinkler), record notebook, and knapsack sprayer to be used in the day-to-day farm operations. Shown in the table below are the production data and sales generated by the association during the 2017 project implementation:

Vegetable	Production (kg)	Sales (Php)
Pole beans	36	2,720.00
Ampalaya	90	3,680.00
Eggplant	116	3,920.00
Squash	5	125.00
Okra	11	365.00
Pechay	61	1,210.00
Cucumber	24	1,190.00
Bell pepper	8	520.00
Tomatoes	3	90.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>13,820.00</b>

On December 28, 2018, Typhoon Usman hit the province of Northern Samar and Lope de Vega was severely devastated due to flooding. It brought a lot of damage to SAMAKABA as its communal area and crops planted were inundated for two days, resulting in crop damage and losses; but it didn't stop the determination of the members to replant to cope with the damage brought by the storm.

The association garnered the Regional Gawad Saka Award in 2019 given by the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office 8 through the Provincial Agriculture Office of Northern Samar, and with the help of the Municipal Local Government of Lope De Vega and Municipal Agriculture Office. The association received PhP75, 000.00 cash prize. The prize was used in constructing its processing facility for turmeric. With the processing facility, SAMAKABA is now producing powdered turmeric tea, which is available at the local market and in the association's office.

Aside from turmeric tea, the association also put up a mini-Agrivet store that sells feeds for swine and poultry as part of its expansion and other income generating activities. Until the present, the processing facility and Agrivet store are still operating, helping the members improve their socio-economic status. The association's mini-Agrivet store and turmeric tea had already generated gross sales of PhP174,477.00 and PhP92,513.00, respectively, from January to August 2021.

SAMAKABA is one of the beneficiary associations of the Vegetable Production and Marketing Project under FY 2021 SAAD Program, having a total project cost of PhP356,844.00. It received vegetable seeds and other farm inputs, such as polynet, UV film, fine net, seedling tray, plastic mulch, garden hose, tie wire, and nylon. Other support provided came in the form of a Community Needs Assessment and Capability Building, and Technical Training to further enhance the capability, skills, and technical knowledge of each member to ensure that efficient management is practiced and also for its sustainability.

Despite being a flood-prone municipality due to its mountainous and low-lying areas and people are engaged in coconut and upland rice production, the members managed and continued to do their best to make it among the top associations of SAAD, persevering in vegetable production and striving to be successful.

# SUCCESS STORY

The association saw the high demand for vegetables, not only in Lope de Vega, but in the entire province. In view of this, the association planned to expand the area it is cultivating to increase its volume of production in vegetable and turmeric. With increase in production, the association can cater more to the demand for vegetables and turmeric in the local market, and even in nearby municipalities. Another advocacy of the association is to become a certified organic vegetable producer and sell more organic products.



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