



# Hibla

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## **UMFMPC abaca production in Sarangani speaks of a success story**

The United Maligang Farmers Multi - Purpose Cooperative (UMFMPC) is an organization of abaca farmers based in Kiamba, Sarangani Province. Its farmers regularly produce and supply abaca raw fibers for Mindanao especially for the tinagak and sinamay weavers. Ricardo Añora, the manager of UMFMPC, shared the story behind the cooperative's success which landed the coop 5 awards namely, Best People's Organization (CBRMP, 2002-2005), Provincial Outstanding OTOP (2005-2009), Most Outstanding MSME (DTI R-XII, 2008), Best Implementing People's Organization, Sarangani Province (MRDP-CFAD, 2012) and Provincial OTOP Entrepreneur (2012).

The group started their operations with the assistance

of Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA) and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) as Kiamba Tinagak Producers Association (KITIPA) in August 2000 with only 15 members. In September 2003, the organization formed into a cooperative and was registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) as United Maligang Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative (UMFMPC). In 2016, the membership reached a total of 172 while its assets remarkably rose from P104,426 in 2003 to P3.638 million in 2016.

The cooperative was able to acquire a communal abaca farm of 30 hectares around Sarangani. It also provides stripping machine services and produces escuhido fibers which are used as raw materials for

tinagak and sinamay weaving projects. The cooperative also undertakes handicraft making activities and performs abaca fiber trading as well.

Among their regular main clients are J Weaves Trading of Cebu City with a monthly delivery of 300 kilograms of tinagak, bought at P400-450 per kilo, Ching Bee Trading Inc., a grading - baling establishment in Davao City, which requires a monthly volume of 6,000 kilograms of high quality abaca fibers, and ABS-CBN Executive Ms. Gina Lopez who purchases huge volume of sinamay cloth and sinamay flowers from them.

The continuous expansion of the cooperative was made possible by the assistance provided by the PhilFIDA, DTI,

*continued on page 2...*



## Zamboanga City Hosts 2nd Abaca Stakeholders' Forum

The City of Zamboanga hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> abaca stakeholders' forum organized by the Philippine Fiber Industry Development Authority (PhilFIDA) Region IX on 10 October 2016 at the Grand Astoria Hotel. The Forum was attended by

*UMFMPC Abaca Production...from page 1*

Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), LGUs of Sarangani, Mindanao Rural Development Program (MRDP), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), ABS-CBN Foundation, Inc., Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-National Greening Program and Land Bank of the Philippines.

After the huge success of the UMFMPC, the coop became a tourist and educational tour destination of various groups mainly farmers being assisted by NGOs, ABS-CBN Foundation, Inc., Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), and DTI among others.

The coop aims to further increase its production and operation with the approval of its project "Enhancement of Production, Processing, and Marketing of High Quality Abaca Fiber" by the Philippine Rural Development Program (PRDP) with a total funding of P 35.7 million. Through the project, the coop will establish a Tinagak Processing Center, Abaca Warehouses and Stripping Sheds and will acquire for its members hauling trucks, moisture meters, and machines for twining, decorticating, stripping, pressing, winding and brushing of fibers.



officials from the PhilFIDA, representatives from local government units (LGUs), partner agencies and various stakeholders of the industry. The event was headed by the City Agriculturist Dr. Diosdado Palacat and Jihann Edding, Chair of the Committee on Agriculture of the city.

The city officials vowed to fully support PhilFIDA on all developmental programs for abaca including the implementation of the Abaca Disease Management Project (ADMP) in the three (3) major abaca producing barangays in Zamboanga City.

PhilFIDA IX Director, Eduardo Holoyohoy, said that "ZAMPEN has huge lands that are suitable for growing abaca but due to lack of financial investment and interested farmers these lands were converted into growing of other crops."

"This is the reason why we are

now experiencing abaca fiber shortage. If the situation on low supply of fiber will continue maybe the processors may use alternative fiber just to cope up with the demand on products that were made from abaca fiber", Holoyohoy added.

Director Holoyohoy encouraged the participants to continue to invest in abaca farming and highlighted that there are various business opportunities that the abaca industry can provide to interested farmers and investors.

Important partners in the industry graced the event to talk about fiber quality requirement, market, buying price for good quality fibers, financing programs for abaca business, and partnership scheme with abaca farmers.

### PhilFIDA undertakes training of trainers on project development

A Training of Trainers on Project Development Batch 3 was conducted thru the initiative of the Technical Assistance Division of the PhilFIDA last 23-29 October 2016 at the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) in Tagaytay City. The training course was designed for some 35 technical personnel from the Regional and Central Office who work in project identification, design and management.

Ms. Maria Victoria L. Rivera, an expert in the field of project development and a professor from the University of Rizal (Tanay Campus) served as the Resource Speaker for the 5-day intensive training. The participants got familiarized with the Basic Principles of Project Design, learned the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) & the Most Significant Change (MSC) and were made to develop a project proposal for submission to foreign funding institutions.

Field immersion and project



Left and above photos: Products and fibers produced by the members of the United Maligang Farmers Multi - Purpose Cooperative (UMFMPC).

## Regulatory Division conducts training for field personnel

A training for PhilFIDA Regulatory Officers was held on 3-7 October 2017 in Star Hotel, Davao City. Around 37 personnel from all the regional PhilFIDA Regulatory Units attended the event. The training aimed to enhance the skills and knowledge of all new regulatory officers on fiber grading, classification, inspection and other fiber regulatory activities. The training is also expected to help the participants to familiarize themselves on how to effectively perform their job as regulators and to become competent and respectable regulatory officers. The goal of the PhilFIDA Regulatory Division is to sustain the consistency, uniformity and quality of abaca fibers produced in the country to ensure continued acceptance in the domestic and global market.

Mr. Romeo Bordeos, Jr., Chief of the Regulatory Division, stressed the importance of the training in preparing the new employees to carry out their big



L-R photos: Demonstration Tour at the GBEs; & Mr. Romeo Bordeos, Jr., Chief of the Regulatory Division-PhilFIDA.



responsibility as industry regulators. "This training is consistent with the vision of the office – to strengthen organizational and human resource capabilities," he added. He also emphasized that after the training the participants will be in the forefront in addressing the problem of deteriorating quality of fibers continuously being produced in the country.

A series of lectures focused on the discussion of the qualities of a good regulatory officer, procedure in registration and licensing of stakeholders, procedure in the issuance of permit to transport fibers (PTF), regulatory standard forms, techniques in inspection of

fibers, identification of spurious fibers and the official standard grades of abaca, buntal, raffia, piña, salago, maguey, coir and banana fibers.

Also, the officers of the Task Force on Quality spearheaded a workshop on the identification, classification and grading of different fibers – abaca, coir, banana, buntal, salago.

A demonstration tour at some of the top grading and baling establishments (GBEs) was also conducted after the workshop. The participants were able to visit warehouses of the ALINDECO, TAG Fibers and Davao Rope Factory in Davao City. 🌱

## PhilFIDA introduces new procedure on abaca propagation using seeds

An orientation on abaca seeds propagation was organized by the Technical Assistance Division on 7-8 December 2016 in Cagayan de Oro City. It was conducted to introduce and expose PhilFIDA regional directors and technical personnel on the new procedure on abaca production through the use of seeds including the care and maintenance of abaca nursery for seed-derived seedlings.

Mr. Joie Caesar Gaid of Del Monte Philippines, Inc. and owner of an abaca nursery in Manolo

Fortich in Bukinon served as the resource person for the orientation on abaca seeds production. His lecture focused on the step by step procedure of producing abaca planting materials through the use of seeds which involve the preparation of fruits, sowing of fruits, preparation of bags and beds, planting of seedlings into bags, and care and maintenance of nursery.

The participants were also brought to Mr. Gaid's nursery in Bukidnon to observe the actual

activities in the production of the seed-derived planting materials.

The use of seeds in the production of abaca plantlets is targeted to help solve the problem of lack of planting materials intended for the development and rehabilitation of abaca areas nationwide. 🌱



## TAD conducts training on applied geotagging technology and soil fertility analysis

A training on Applied Geo Tagging Technology and Soil Fertility Analysis was conducted by the Technical Assistance Division (TAD) for central office and regional PICTU and Technical Assistance personnel. This was held at the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) in Tagaytay City on 28 November to 02 December 2016. It was organized to equip PhilFIDA staff with the necessary skills in conducting geo tagging and soil fertility analysis in order to come up with a data base of areas suitable for fibercrops. This endeavor was in support to the directive of the Department of Agriculture (DA) to produce a crop suitability map for interested farmers nationwide and to accurately identify the location of DA projects and agricultural areas throughout the country.

Experts from the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) Ms. Beatriz Magno and Mr. Oscar Costelo served as resource persons in the lecture on soil testing and on the protocol and procedure in conducting soil fertility analysis.

During the fieldwork, the



Participants getting soil samples for analysis during a field work in Rosario, Batangas.

participants observed and practiced gathering of soils using soil augers wherein ten (10) soil samples were collected from different designated sites from an abaca farm in Rosario, Batangas. The group were also taught how to use a soil testing kit (STK) on the soils gathered. The PhilFIDA was given by BSWM five (5) sets of STK to be distributed to PhilFIDA offices in the Luzon area at no cost.

On the other hand, IT personnel from DA--RFU IV provided lectures on the introduction and steps on how to use geo tagging application on android cellphones and geo tagging devices. The IT team was headed by Ms. Maricar Arbilo and Jordan Israel Cabanding.

The participants were taught using various applications for the extraction and uploading of geo tagged photos and tracks and for uploading and editing photo tags.

For initial testing of gadgets and applications, the participants experienced how to do satellite fix and project tagging with photo tags around the DAP compound. As an actual run-through, the group was brought to the field to geotag the areas around the abaca and sisal farms in Rosario, Batangas.

The PhilFIDA's geotagging project aims to exactly locate points/places where the agency provided intervention and extension services in the country. By accurately identifying implemented activities in different provinces, the agency can help prevent duplication of projects and wastage of government funds. Geotagging will be used as an important tool to revalidate existing and identify potential abaca areas in the country that will eventually serve as basis for abaca expansion and rehabilitation targets in the coming years.

Production areas of other crops like salago, sisal, cotton and pineapple will also be part of the agency's geotagging activities. Further, by 2018, the focus of geotagging efforts will be on the validation of the reported 180,000 hectares of existing abaca areas nationwide. 🌱

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Front Picture: Abaca seeds collected from a farm in Bukidnon. The propagation of seed-derived abaca plantlets is targeted to serve as additional source of planting materials for abaca farms nationwide.

### PhilFIDA undertakes...from page 2



Ms. Marivic Rivera (center) with PhilFIDA regional and central office personnel during the Project Development Training.

visitation were undertaken at the Batas Multipurpose Cooperative in Batas, Silang, Cavite and Brgy Llavac Abaca Farmers Association in Siniloan, Laguna to give the

participants actual field experience needed for the practice of needs assessment, project planning, formulation and design through interviews of groups engaged in fiber production and processing. 🌱