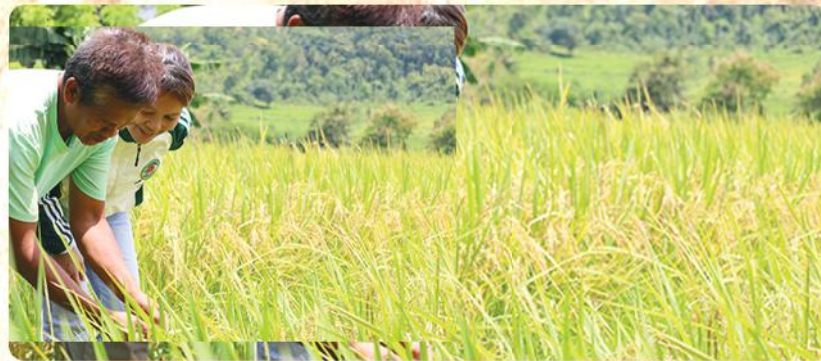




# KIKU NULAN

ISTORYA SANG KADALAG-AN SANG MANGUNGUMA KAUPOD ANG AMIA













A Coffee Table Book

# MINUGULAN

Istorya sang kadalag-an  
sang mangunguma kaupod ang AMIA

# About the Cover

The cover of this coffee table book, titled *Hinunulan*, draws inspiration from the seedling tray, a fundamental symbol in farmers' growth journey. The seedling tray represents the beginning of life in agriculture and embodies hope, nurturing, and resilience—qualities deeply ingrained in the hearts of farmers and the agricultural industry.

*Hinunulan* resonates with the essence of AMIA's mission. Just as the tray holds and nurtures seeds until they are ready for transplanting, the AMIA Program nurtures communities, providing the foundational support they need to thrive amidst the challenges posed by climate change. Since its inception in 2013, AMIA has championed climate resilience through comprehensive initiatives, empowering farmers and fisherfolk with adaptive capacities, tools, and resources.

This cover encapsulates the spirit of AMIA's work: a call to sustainable practices, community empowerment, and the relentless pursuit of a secure and resilient future for all who rely on the land and sea for their livelihoods. Through the *Hinunulan*, we honor the commitment to sowing seeds of hope and ensuring they flourish against all odds.

Cover design by: **Khryisma Dei Caldina**



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# Forewords

This coffee table book, titled *Hinunulan*, is more than an artistic choice, it is a reflection of the profound journey that underpins every farmer's story. In the same way that a seedling tray cradles seeds, offering protection and the promise of growth, the *Hinunulan* serves as a symbol of hope and resilience—the very pillars upon which the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) stands. This coffee table book invites us to understand that each story contained within these pages represents a seed nurtured by the unwavering spirit of farmers and the strong support provided by the AMIA Program.

Launched by the Department of Agriculture in 2013, AMIA has become an inspiration for climate resilience, fostering adaptive capacity in agriculture and fisheries. It integrates climate change considerations into agricultural strategies and provides innovative services, ensuring farmers and fisherfolk have the resources they need to confront climate risks. Through the AMIA Village Approach, these communities receive holistic support, from training and access to vital climate information. The program's alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals underscores its commitment to promoting food security, poverty reduction, and long-term community resilience.

This coffee table book serves as more than just a collection of stories—it is an evidence to the journey of transformation, showcasing the triumphs of farmers and their unyielding resolve. Through their narratives, we glimpse the successes achieved when knowledge, resources, and resilience come together. These stories stand as proof that with strategic support and a community-driven approach, sustainable development is not only possible but thriving in the hands of our farmers.

The accounts within these pages remind us that the path to prosperity is often built on small yet significant steps. Each farmer's success echoes the nurturing spirit symbolized by the *Hinunulan*, where every seed of effort, supported by AMIA, is cultivated into a flourishing harvest. These stories inspire us to recognize that behind every field, there is a story of courage, adaptation, and hope. May this book celebrate these achievements and serve as an enduring reminder that resilience and growth are achievable, one seed at a time.



# Message



As we open the pages of this coffee table book, titled *Hinunulan*, I am filled with both pride and gratitude. The seedling tray depicted on the cover is more than just a symbol; it is a powerful representation of the resilience, hope, and relentless spirit embodied by every farmer whose story is shared within these pages. It reminds us that from the smallest of beginnings, nurtured with care and dedication, the greatest growth can emerge.

The mission of the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) Program has always been clear- to empower our farmers and fisherfolk to face the ever-changing challenges posed by climate change. Through comprehensive training, access to essential resources, and the AMIA Village Approach, we have seen communities transform from vulnerability to resilience. This book encapsulates that journey and showcases how AMIA's commitment translates into tangible, life-changing successes.

This coffee table book is both a celebration and a tribute. It honors the farmers and their families who have worked tirelessly to adapt and thrive. It is a heartfelt acknowledgment of their sacrifices, dreams, and the boundless potential that lies within them. To everyone who has contributed to making these stories possible—our AMIA team, partners, and most especially, the farmers—thank you. Your dedication fuels our commitment to sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture.

May *Hinunulan* inspire us all to continue nurturing the seeds of change, ensuring that the spirit of resilience and hope grows strong in every field and every heart. Let us carry these stories forward as reminders that we are capable of creating a future that is as steadfast as the farmers we celebrate today.

With deep gratitude,

**Dennis R. Arpia**

Regional Executive Director

Department of Agriculture – Western Visayas



# Message

As we explore the pages of Hinunulan, we celebrate more than just stories; we honor the roots that sustain our journey toward sustainable agriculture. This coffee table book is a proof of transformation, showcasing the victories of farmers and their unwavering spirit. Through these narratives, we see what is possible when knowledge, resources, and resilience come together. Each story is living proof that with dedicated support and a unified community, sustainable development is achievable.

The Department of Agriculture Western Visayas' Research Division is deeply proud to play a role in these science-driven initiatives. Through the AMIA Program, we have witnessed the powerful impact of collaborative research, innovative practices, and the combined efforts of communities. This synergy has sparked a ripple effect, empowering farmers and fostering growth throughout our region.

To our farmers, your commitment to embracing new ideas and methods ensures that agriculture remains a pillar of strength and progress. We are grateful for your trust and partnership, allowing us to walk alongside you and contribute to your journey. Together, we cultivate agricultural commodities that shall be a legacy of resilience and hope.

With heartfelt appreciation,

**Zarlina B. Cuello**

Regional Technical Director for Research and Regulations  
Department of Agriculture – Western Visayas





# Message



Congratulations to all the dedicated AMIA Program implementers for your remarkable work and commitment. Your tireless efforts have transformed the vision of the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) into a reality that empowers communities and strengthens our region's resilience.

At the Department of Agriculture Western Visayas, our goal in implementing the AMIA Program has always been clear; first, to ensure that our farmers are equipped to face climate challenges while sustaining productivity and growth. Second, by integrating climate-smart practices and innovative solutions, we aim to create an agricultural landscape that is adaptive, forward-thinking, and inclusive.

This coffee table book, *Hinunulan*, is dedicated to all farmers who embody the essence of perseverance, hope, and transformation. It celebrates their stories and highlights their successes, reminding us that behind each achievement is a community's shared effort and unwavering resolve. The pages of this book reflect the growth of crops and the nurturing of dreams and livelihoods, supported by the commitment of our Field Operations Division and the wider DAWV family.

Let this book be a testament to our ongoing collaboration and a source of inspiration to continue working hand in hand. Together, we will build a future where agriculture is resilient, sustainable, and deeply rooted in the spirit of unity and progress.

With sincere appreciation,



**Ryan V. Rasgo**  
Chief, Field Operations Division  
Department of Agriculture – Western Visayas





# Message

The AMIA Program began its journey in Western Visayas in 2013, driven by a vision to strengthen climate resilience in agriculture and uplift the lives of farmers. I remember the initial steps we took with a mix of hope and uncertainty, knowing the road ahead would be challenging but necessary for our region's future. Despite our determination, we faced significant challenges- adapting to the rapid pace of climate change, gaining farmers' trust, and ensuring consistent support across communities.

However, it was the small and big wins that kept us inspired. Each milestone, whether a farmer successfully implementing a climate-resilient practice or an entire community benefiting from AMIA resources, fueled our determination. These victories were reminders of why we began this journey.

The establishment of AMIA Villages has been a cornerstone of our progress. These villages served as hubs of learning and innovation, bringing together farmers, experts, and resources. By creating spaces where climate-resilient technologies such as drought-resistant crop varieties, diversified farming systems, and adaptive water management practices could be applied and shared, the AMIA Villages strengthened the agricultural landscape of our region.

These technologies, combined with training and support, have transformed farming from a cycle of uncertainty into one of opportunity and growth. Farmers began to see themselves not just as workers of the land but as vital participants in shaping a sustainable future. The program fostered a sense of community, nurturing meaningful partnerships that encouraged economic growth and resilience.

This coffee table book, *Hinunulan*, is dedicated to every AMIA farmer, partner, and implementer who has contributed to this journey. It celebrates your stories, the challenges you overcame, and the hope that guided you. Thank you for your commitment and for being the heart of this program. Your collective efforts remind us that together, we can continue to cultivate a brighter, more resilient future for all.

With deepest gratitude,

**Carmelita Fantilanan**

Senior Agriculturist, Regional Focal Person for AMIA Program  
Department of Agriculture – Western Visayas









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# Faces of **AMIA**







# Farmers









# From Security Guard to Thriving Farmer

*The Inspiring Journey of Joebert Conejo*

Joebert Conejo, a 48-year-old farmer, exemplifies the strength of determination and family support. For 16 years, Joebert dedicated himself to working long, hard hours as a security guard, often sacrificing time with his loved ones. Eventually, he reached a turning point: he realized that his job, while stable, kept him away from his family more than he could bear. Determined to make a change, Joebert made the life-changing decision to leave his post and pursue farming on his family's inherited land. He also joined the Abante Banate AMIA Village Farmers Association, setting himself on a new path that would bring him closer to both his roots and his loved ones.

Trading in his uniform and night shifts for a new life in agriculture, Joebert embraced the challenges of his first days on the farm. His initial experiences were tough, but he persevered, driven by a vision of creating a livelihood that would sustain his family and allow him to be present in their lives. With encouragement and help from his wife, Rodiosa, and their two children, Joebert turned obstacles into stepping stones toward a flourishing farm.

Today, Joebert's farm generates a steady income of at least PHP 20,000 monthly. His journey from security guard to successful farmer has blossomed into more than just a career change; it's a passionate pursuit that has strengthened family bonds. On their land, Joebert and his family have created an "Instagrammable" haven, rich with vibrant flowers, fresh vegetables, and a variety of unique farming spaces. His diversified farm includes rabbit pens, native pig enclosures, a vermitea setup, rice paddies, tilapia ponds, and sections dedicated to hydroponics, aquaponics, and medicinal plants.

Beyond being a business, Joebert's farm serves as a hands-on classroom for his children, where he teaches them the essential skill of growing their own food—a vital lesson in times of rising inflation and food security concerns. His picturesque farm has become a local attraction, celebrated for its beauty and commitment to organic farming.


Joebert's children are learning valuable lessons in self-sufficiency and sustainability, inspired by their father's dedication. His farm also extends its resources to the wider community. Students from Northern Iloilo State University (NISU) frequently buy vermicast, rabbits, and lettuce from him for their research projects. Joebert warmly welcomes these students and takes pride in offering free demonstrations of his farming techniques, hoping to inspire the next generation toward sustainable agriculture.

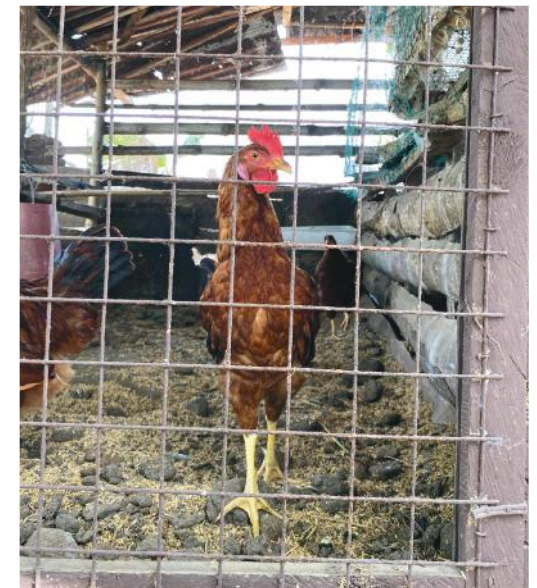






Despite the challenges posed by the El Niño phenomenon, Joebert's farm continues to thrive—a testament to the resilience of his family's hard work and to the skills he gained through the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) Program. His story serves as a powerful reminder that with passion, perseverance, and the support of loved ones, even the greatest challenges can be overcome, and extraordinary success can be achieved.

Joebert Conejo's journey is not just a tale of career transformation but a narrative of empowerment, resilience, and the profound impact of family unity on personal success. 





# Facing the future with confidence

*The Success Story of AMIA farmers Nonoy and Analin Prado*

Nonoy's journey into farming is a tale of deep-rooted passion and resilience, shaped by his early connection to agriculture and a series of trials that strengthened his resolve.

In 1995, at just 22, he found himself at the tiller of their family's land after his father's passing. Unlike others his age who sought life beyond the farm, Nonoy embraced agriculture with firm dedication, inspired by the vision of prosperity he saw in tilling the soil. His father, a diligent farmer himself, had passed down his knowledge, ensuring that Nonoy was prepared to carry on the legacy. Even at the tender age of seven, Nonoy had shown an eagerness to learn the details of farming, treating the agricultural lands as his playground and the chickens as his companions.

Nonoy's vow to farming deepened as he grew older, driven by a sense of duty and a personal mission to improve their land. He cultivated two hectares, growing high-value crops such as banana, coconut, papaya, and vegetables on 7,000 square meters, with the remaining land devoted to rice. However, Nonoy's path was far from smooth. He often faced the ultimate challenge for a farmer—investing large sums in cultivation, only to harvest far less than expected. Pests were a particular threat, and Nonoy recalls the painful experience of losing an entire rice crop in the early 2000s. Despite expecting over 100 cavans, he harvested a mere 28, a devastating loss given the P15,000 investment he had made.

"I remember we could only cry," he says. "We didn't know how to fight back against the pests."

These setbacks, however, didn't discourage Nonoy. With his wife Analin by his side, providing support and understanding, he gathered strength to start over. "Sipag lang at tiyaga," he remarks emotionally, emphasizing the importance of hard work and perseverance. Nonoy developed his own techniques to deal with challenges, such as irrigating water into his palay fields to fend off pests like maya costa and rats, relying on keen observation to understand their behavior.





Natural disasters also tested his resilience. Typhoons Frank and Yolanda left his community devastated, washing away all their crops. “Zero gid,” Nonoy recalls, describing how the floods uprooted everything. But through collective effort and government support, the community was able to stand up again. Determination and hard work, he says, were crucial in rebuilding their lives. “Sipag at determinasyon” became his guiding mantra.

For Nonoy, the support from the government, particularly through the Department of Agriculture’s AMIA program, has been a transformative force. The program helped his community in Banga understand their climate vulnerabilities, and equipped them with technologies to thrive despite the challenges brought by climate change. One intervention that left a lasting impression on Nonoy was the “Baboyang Walang Amoy” (Odorless Pig Farming). Though he had prior experience in pig farming, this new technology amazed him. Receiving two piglets, he raised them into full-grown sows, which later gave birth to nine piglets, earning him P60,000—an outcome that left him both grateful and motivated.

AMIA’s interventions extended beyond livestock. Nonoy was given five native chickens, which have now multiplied to over 300, including hens and chicks, and continue to grow. He has already sold 200 heads for P250 each, and on average, he sells 20 heads weekly, providing a steady income stream. The program also supplied him with gardening tools, which sparked the development of his vegetable areas. Nonoy attributes his success to the support of his wife, Analin, who is equally dedicated to the farm and actively participates in AMIA’s trainings and meetings on organic vegetable production. Together, they now grow vegetables suited to each season, supplying regular buyers like the Aklan State University (ASU) cafeteria and the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI)- opportunities that have also opened doors for other farmers in their AMIA village.

His wife’s recent training in meat processing also holds potential for additional income. Nonoy sees these new skills as vital to their continuous growth, both in farming and business.











Looking back at the early days of organizing the AMIA village, Nonoy never felt skeptical. To him, it was a helping hand extended to farmers like him, and he welcomed every piece of knowledge with open arms. Significant improvements soon followed. His income soared, allowing him to support his children's education—particularly those in college. With a clearer understanding of agricultural techniques, Nonoy's rice farming now earns him up to P50,000 per cropping, while vegetables bring in P20,000 during peak seasons. He proudly shared that a recent harvest of patchay fetched P100 per kilo, earning him P10,000. During the summer, they planted watermelons with a P20,000 investment and were thrilled to double their profit with a P40,000 harvest.

“Sa vegetable palang namin, kung kailangan ng pamasaha nga anak namin papunta sa eskwelahan, itong garden namin ang sumasagot,” his wife Analin proudly echoes, sitting beside him. Their firstborn has already graduated with a degree in Industrial Technology and is now actively helping Nonoy on the farm, financing capital and finding buyers for their products. Their second child, inspired by her father's dedication, is in her second year of agriculture studies at ASU, eager to continue his legacy. Meanwhile, their youngest, still in high school, dreams of creating innovative farming mechanization to improve their practices even further.

For Nonoy, exposing his children to farming is about more than just potential income; it's about life skills and the pride of being raised by farmer parents. “Ang mga naintroduce na kaalaman ng AMIA, talagang may tulong yan,” he says, appreciating the knowledge and resources provided through the program. He especially values AMIA's rollover scheme, which allows other farmers to benefit as well, and the 10-day weather forecast tool, which helps them plan their planting cycles with precision. “Timing is key,” he adds, noting how this knowledge has empowered them to adapt their farming practices to the seasons, whether it's rainy or dry.

During the recent El Niño, Nonoy and his family grew string beans, selling 50 kilos despite the harsh conditions. They also produce compost from pig manure and rice straw, promoting sustainable farming practices. Analin proudly adds that they even use social media to market their produce, and have found success through Facebook, where many buyers are eager to support their farm.

Through continuous learning and exposure to sustainable farming practices, Nonoy and Analin have built a system where crops are planted with specific harvest timelines—weekly, monthly, and quarterly. They've also become adept at record-keeping, ensuring the sustainability of their farm.

The AMIA program has improved their livelihood and empowered them with the knowledge and tools to face the future with confidence. 







# The Journey of Thriving Fields

*The success story of San Lorenzo AMIA Village Farmers in establishing AMIA Market*

In the core of Guimaras Province, where the sun rises gently over fields once struggling, a transformation is underway. It's a story of resilience, learning, and the sweet taste of success that farmer Lerisa Cabales, 53, and her fellow farmers in Brgy. M. Chavez and Brgy. Igawayan San Lorenzo are savoring every Thursday at the AMIA Market.

The Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) is one of the Department of Agriculture's flagship programs aiming to build farming and fishing communities, livelihoods, and enterprises resilient to economic and climate shocks.

Not long ago, these lands knew only the toil of monocropping, where rice was the solitary hope for many. But hope wasn't always enough. Poverty lingered like a shadow, and the burden of expensive fertilizers weighed heavily on their shoulders. The rhythm of life was dictated by unpredictable rain, with drought and pests as unwelcome guests.

Then came a ray of hope in the form of the AMIA Program. Guided by phase-by-phase implementation, the community of farmer Lerisa underwent community organizing, planning, and climate resilience and adaptation (CRA) testing. CRA technologies were practiced towards significant productivity.

Lerisa and her peers banded together, forming the San Lorenzo AMIA Village Farmers Association. In 2022, they took a leap into organic farming, guided by newfound knowledge and support. Starting with just 8 believers, they soon grew to 15, cultivating a 200-square meter communal garden bursting with eggplants, cucumbers, tomatoes, and more.

Julia Cabaling, 57, a veteran farmer of 30 years, discovered the magic of earthworms through AMIA. These humble creatures became





her allies in producing vermicast, a natural fertilizer that replaced the need for costly chemicals. The soil, once depleted, now thrived with life, thanks to the wisdom gained from the program.

But their journey didn't stop at farming. They dreamt of a market, a place where their harvests could find eager hands and tables. With determination, they approached the Department of Agriculture and the Municipal Agriculture Office, and their vision took flight. AMIA Market was born, with its inaugural day on October 19, 2023.

Every Thursday, as the sun peeks over the horizon, AMIA Market comes alive. The aroma of fresh produce fills the air, drawing in not just locals but also LGU employees eager for a taste of something real. From 8 am to 12 noon, it's a flurry of activity as buyers flock to secure the best of the day's bounty.

On that first day, the pioneering 8 vegetable growers earned a staggering 3,106 pesos in just 2 hours. It was a moment of triumph, a validation of their hard work and dedication; and it didn't stop there. Thursdays became synonymous with success, with average earnings ranging from 1,500 to 3,000 pesos per market day. More members joined the association, eager to be part of this growing success story.

The support from the local government was instrumental in their journey. Sangguniang Bayan Member and Farmers Champion in Agriculture, Honorable Jimmy Gallego, recognized the potential of the AMIA villages. The municipality, already known as the food basket of the province, allocated a 5 Million budget to support the National Organic Agriculture program. Furthermore, Vice Mayor Constantino Cordero expressed that the local council of San Lorenzo is prioritizing resolutions and ordinances that will lead the locality to be the leading organic agriculture-producing municipality. It was a vote of confidence in Lerisa, Julia, and their fellow farmers.

But the support didn't end there. The Municipal Agriculture Office initiated a soft loan program, offering a 10,000 pesos grant to qualified borrowers. Lerisa, Julia, and their comrades in M. Chavez and Igawayan seized this opportunity, adding to their startup capital for their flourishing organic vegetable farming.





So, as the rooster crows and the first light of dawn dances across the fields, Lerisa, Julia and their fellow farmers stand tall. They are no longer just farmers; they are stewards of the land, champions of sustainability, and pioneers of change. The AMIA Market isn't just a place to sell vegetables; it's a symbol of hope, a testament to what a community can achieve when they come together with a shared vision.

In San Lorenzo, where the land meets the sea and dreams take root, the success story of San Lorenzo AMIA Village Farmers Association continues to unfold. It's a story of empowerment, of embracing new ways, and of reaping the rewards of hard work. And as long as the sun rises over their fields, AMIA Village vegetable farmers will be there, nurturing not just crops but a brighter future for generations to come. **H**











## Guardians of Food Security

*An Inspiring Story of Creating AMIA Market in Batan, Aklan*

In the municipality of Batan in the Province of Aklan, where fishing is a way of life and vegetable farming once seemed like a distant dream, a remarkable change took root. The story of the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) is not just about numbers and figures, it's a tale of resilience, empowerment, and the transformative power of knowledge.

The AMIA program, a flagship initiative of the Department of Agriculture, aims to build farming and fishing communities resilient to economic and climate shocks. When it arrived in Batan in 2021, it brought with it a mission to change lives. With unorganized farmers and no fixed source of income for its residents, the community faced

immense challenges. The area was predominantly for fishing, but when bad weather struck, fishing became impossible; families suffered from famine. Additionally, the heavy reliance on monocropping, especially rice farming, left the community with exhausted and unfertile lands. Moreso, communities are vulnerable to landslides and flooding.

The Climate Risk Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA) underscored Batan's vulnerability to climate change. It was then that AMIA introduced transformative technologies such as Baboyang walang amoy (odorless pig farming), organic vegetable production, sustainable rice production, and 10-day weather forecasts. These innovations were not just abstract ideas, they were tangible tools for transformation.





Farmer Angeline Selorio, once a hopeful worker in Manila's bustling business centers, she returned to Batan during the pandemic. She experienced a lack of food, if there was any available, it was expensive and not affordable for struggling families. Devastation struck when heavy floods wiped out their palay harvest. It was then that Angeline realized the urgent need for an alternative income source. As a mother and farmer leader, she promised to embody the spirit of guarding the food security in her community. The moment she decided to embrace the AMIA program on Organic Vegetable Farming and Vermicasting, it was not a lottery win like luck; she faced numerous challenges. The first few farming trials were failures, despite being blamed by some, Angeline persisted. The day of abundance came and their 200-meter communal garden flourished. Loading tons of vegetables onto her single motorcycle, she braved risks to sell their produce in the market. Angeline's dedication ensured that her community had access to nutritious produce even in the most challenging times.



More farmer leaders joined Angeline's vision, Vivian Flaviano, and Tranquilono Orario. Vivian dreamed of an alternative livelihood not just for herself but for her entire community in Brgy. Ambulong. Tranquilono, a former seafarer turned full-time farmer, also saw the potential for change. Starting with rice farming, they learned about vermicasting and organic fertilizer production through AMIA. Together with other farmers, they embarked on the journey of organic vegetable production, becoming guardians of food security in their own right.

The scarcity of vegetables in Batan and the dominance of traders dictating prices fueled their determination. Before forming an association, these farmers struggled to sell their produce. However, after the AMIA interventions and with the support of the Local Government Unit, a new opportunity arose. The creation of KADIWA pop-up stores in front of the Batan Municipal Hall marked a turning point. On March 2023, their combined efforts earned them 15,000 pesos initially, sparking newfound hope. These farmers were not just growing vegetables they were safeguarding the food of their community.



The success of the AMIA market encouraged more innovation. Farmers like Angeline, Vivian, and Tranquilono pushed for more opportunities. They lobbied the Municipal Agriculture Office for regular selling days, leading to the establishment of a makeshift tent market. Every 15th and 30th day of the month, the farmers gathered with fresh produce. By noon, all their vegetables were sold out, bringing in an average monthly income of 8,000 to 15,000 pesos. This success has been consistent for almost 12 months.

Their dream extends to having a permanent place for selling, a hauling truck, and more days to connect with buyers. As for Angeline, she continues to encourage her neighbors to join AMIA's various training programs. For her, the balance between demand and supply of vegetables is crucial for Batan's prosperity.

Through the AMIA program, once-struggling farmers have found new purpose and income. Angeline, Vivian, and Tranquilono's stories are not just individual triumphs; they are tales of collective resilience. As they continue to plant, harvest, and innovate, the success of AMIA Villages stands as an inspiration of hope for agricultural communities everywhere. They are not just farmers; they are guardians of food security, ensuring that their community thrives even in the face of challenges. **H**





# Forever Young: Planting and Reaping Sustainability through the Years

## *Aging Like a Fine Wine in Agriculture*

Senior citizens are individuals with the ages 60 years old and above and they are usually labeled as physically weak and deteriorating due to aging. Most of these people would choose to relax and keep distance from the stressful life and enjoy living.

Indeed, age is just a number as the stereotype is being broken by two young at heart farmers who continue to thrive in the field of Agriculture in Banga, Aklan. Ms. Rowena Ristar at 67 years old keeps on tilling the land and reaps the cream of the crops in form of high value commodities which include rice, corn, cassava and vegetables. Ma'am Rowena also engages in native chicken raising. She recalled her younger years where she grew up with farming. "Bata pa lang ako, pagsasaka na ang kinalakihan kong trabaho." Farming has been her parents' legacy passed down to her. Along with such legacy, Abaka weaving also used to be one of their livelihoods as a family. But due to demands of life and poor eyesight, Ma'am Rowena chose to cultivate the land and invest in agriculture.

With the knowledge in traditional farming practices, she kept on managing the land but she admitted that she has shortcomings in managing their farm. The "bahala system" (come what may) prevailed in her practice. "Noong una, kahit ano lang ang tinatanim ko, kapag tinanim ng iba, magtatanim din ako". Through the system, Ma'am Rowena was able to harvest crops for their consumption. However, it sometimes crosses her mind, until when will this system sustain them?

Until 2019 came and brought a turning point to their life as Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) Village reached Banga, Aklan. At first, Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) initiated trainings and seminars and Ma'am Rowena did not hesitate to join as the PRDP provided helpful insights about climate-resilient agriculture and eventually the AMIA took over on the latter.

AMIA served as the avenue of agricultural empowerment for the farmers as it shared practical practices for efficient farming in the face of varying climate as it boosts sustainability and productivity through science-based knowledge and application in different areas in the country. Babuyang walang Amoy, Communal Gardens and Native Chicken Raising are some of the projects conducted by AMIA in specific AMIA Villages to ensure not only food security and sustainability but also to improve the livelihood of the people in the communities.

"Hindi ko alam ang tungkol sa AMIA noong una, pero sa patuloy kong pagdalo sa mga seminars, natuto ako ng iba't ibang mga teknolohiya tungkol sa Agriculture. Ma'am Rowena willingly accepted the given inputs regardless of the traditional practices she used to practice in long years. Her applied inputs slowly resulted to small yet meaningful progress to her farm. But her journey was not that smooth as the height of Corona Virus Infectious Disease (COVID-19) pandemic inflicted the world in 2020 and Ma'am Rowena's family was not exempted.

Regardless of her thriving farm and livestock livelihood, marketing is quite a struggle for Ma'am Rowena due to the limited mobility during the pandemic. But Ma'am Rowena continued in practicing her AMIA-acquired inputs especially the technologies about concoction preparation and feeds preparation. She also shared that the "bahala na" system was replaced by systematic and integrated farming which led her to higher yield and income. She rents the land at Php 5,000.00 annually to her cousin and she was blessed that she can pay the rent and her family enjoys the bounty of agriculture.

Aside from the abundance of agriculture, farming has been the sunshine of Ma'am Rowena's soul as her daily routine keeps her physically active and engaged as she takes care of her farm and livestock, daily. The sweat sustains her physical being and the growing plants serve







as therapy and relaxation every time she is confronted by life problems. “Malaki ang naitulong ng agrikultura sa amin at nararamdaman kong hindi ako tumatanda dahil hanggang ngayon, malakas pa rin ako. With this, she would like to share her blessings with her fellow senior citizens and with the people in their community and she plans to have a communal garden to promote organic farming and healthy living for everyone.

Through it all, she extends her gratitude to Department of Agriculture for initiating this type of programs which empowers farmers and gives chance even to senior citizens to thrive even in old age.

In the other hand, Mrs. Susanita Morales at 69 years old is still into the practice of agriculture. Her parents greatly influence her in actively joining livelihood associations way back during their Pina Cloth weaving days. But, due to financial mismanagement, the association went bankrupt and the members went with different ways. This brought Ma’am Susanita in the cradle of agriculture. She started working in the farm in a young age, aiding her parents and the passion never faltered until she reached this far.

“Mahirap ang buhay noon, pero dahil sa pagsasaka nakakakain kami ng tatlong beses sa isang araw.” She recalled how her parents managed their farming livelihood and provided the needs of their family. With the knowledge in traditional farming practices, her parents kept on enriching the land until it was time for Ma’am Susanita to take over along with their livestock.

It was 2019 when she heard about AMIA. More than just curiosity, she wanted to step out and influence the younger generations especially her grandchildren to become active in the community and engage also in agriculture. “Palagi kong sinasabi sa mga apo ko na mag-aral sila ng Mabuti pero huwag ding kalimutang aralin ang lupa at agrikultura dahil dapat marunong silang magtanim ng makakain nila at huwag lang basta umasa sa pagbibili.







Ma'am Susanita was empowered with AMIA technologies which include Fertilizer Application, Organic Farming and System of Rice Intensification (SRI). She was able to apply these inputs, one step at a time regardless of the resistance from her husband especially in organic farming. “Madyo nahirapan akong ipaunawa sa aking asawa ang magandang dulot ng organic farming dahil nasanay kami sa synthetic na paraan”. But as the time went by, her husband slowly accepted the value of organic farming upon seeing the improvements it brought in their family.

Their whole family works hand in hand in keeping agriculture alive in their land. Though El Nino may have been challenged their livelihood and they eventually stopped planting during the drought, they still continued as they are given opportunity. Ma'am Susanita still struggles in encouraging her grandchildren to be immersed in agriculture, their family is still thriving under her care and guidance.

More than the agricultural produce, farming produces long life vibes in the life of Ma'am Susanita as she is a hands-on farmer regardless of her age. The fresh air and sunshine early in the morning, gives her vigor and keeps her growing and thriving just like her farm in the AMIA Village in Banga, Aklan.

Ma'am Susanita still enjoys farming. Yet, she emphasized that the farmers are not getting younger and still continues in extending her encouragement not only to her grandchildren but to other youth to engage in farming. “Kahit may trabaho na kayo, mas mainam pa rin na alam niyo kung paano magtanim para sa inyong mga sarili at sa inyong pamilya”.

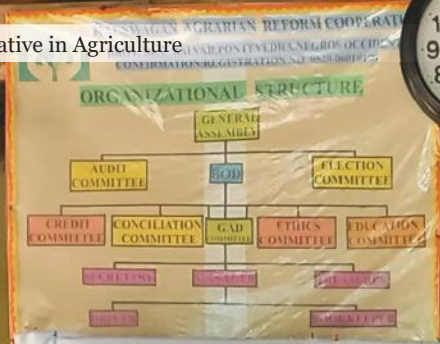
The lives of Rowena Ristar and Susanita Morales serve as a living testimony of how agriculture can sustain lives and families. Through the effort and dedication of farmers along with the initiative of DA through AMIA, sustainability has been possible to the community of Banga, Aklan where one of the AMIA Villages is situated. Indeed, these land cultivators are not getting younger, yet their heart will remain young as they will continue farming and setting an example to the younger generations to engage in agriculture, for they believe that a good land cultivation will produce good food and sustainability, through the years.<sup>11</sup>













# Batan AMIA village perseveres amidst climate threats

It is all for one, one for all! A success story of two barangays bound in unity in one association and how they persevere amidst climate threats in their village.

We, Filipinos, place a strong value on unity because we believe that no man is an island. We have this strong belief that is part of our culture that, together, we are stronger. All for one, one for all means every individual acts for the benefit of the group, and the group should act for the benefit of every individual, but the question is: will they still thrive in unity even if their kinship is shaken? In an all for one, one for all situation, does united we stand really work when climate challenges their native land?

In the coastal municipality of Batan, Aklan, farmers live in Brgy. Palay and Ambolong used to mainly plant rice separately on their lands. They only farmed on their own; one reason for this is that farmers were far away from each other, and they didn't know what crops the other farmers were planting on their own farms. There were associations established before to unite farmers, but mainly for rice only, prompting division and disunion among farmers.

The Department of Agriculture Western Visayas Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (DA-WV AMIA) provided training in Batan, Aklan, and this is where farmers from the 2 barangays started to gather together and partake in the training. DA-AMIA conducted training for them, highlighting the use of AMIA technologies like how to use fertilizers through vermicomposting, how to plant their crops using the right methods like using a weather board in farming, providing information on constructing and managing a natural pig farming system like Babuyang Walang Amoy, and demonstrating how rainwater harvesters work in watering crop.





With their dedication and passion for farming, the farmers in Brgy. Palay and Ambolong come together to create a union, infusing 2 barangays in 1 association. On June 22, 2021, after they graduated from their training in DA-AMIA, the Batan AMIA Village Farmers Association (BAVFA) was formed. They were genuinely eager to learn, and that's what pushed them to organize an association.

BAVFA started first by making Bokashi, a fermented organic matter, but because of its meticulous and inconvenient process, they shifted to adapting Babuyang Walang Amoy technology. The DA-AMIA provided the association with 28 heads, all for breeding purposes, with 2 heads per beneficiary. The Babuyang Walang Amoy was a fresh start for them, but the outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) caused a big impact on their livelihood when out of the 28 pigs that died, only 1 survived, but later on, it was sold because it could not reproduce anymore.

To cut the Gordian knot, BAVFA members decided to move on and started another AMIA technology to adapt in their village; hence, organic vegetable production was carried out. DA-AMIA allocates garden tools and input support like spades, spading forks, pails, seeds, fertilizer, and concoctions. They planted corn, chili, eggplant, string beans, cucumber, bitter melon, white radish, spinach, and other bahay kubo varieties of low-land vegetables that they applied with organic fertilizer. Every Wednesday, they have KADIWA, wherein they bring the vegetables that they harvested and sell their produce.

"Dating housewife lang pero ngayon negosyante na ng dahil sa pagtatanim," said BAVFA Secretary Angelyn B. Selorio.

What's good about BAVFA is that each of their members makes sure that they plant different varieties of vegetables to avoid competition, and they have their own techniques on how they could earn money. With the profit they earn in KADIWA, they also share 10% of their income with the association, and this is where they get their funds. They also help each other market their products, and through this, they have learned how to communicate with people when selling their crops.

The BAVFA's organic vegetable production was climbing a steep hill; it was hard for them to do it manually as they don't have modern



technologies. "Magtanim ay 'di biro, maghapon nakayuko," they can really relate to this song because it was tiring and this requires hard work and perseverance. With the help of DA-AMIA's 20 units of rainwater harvesters and the complete accessories that they provide to BAVFA, it made their work easier. Before, they had to fetch water, but now they have a rainwater harvester to water their vegetables. Their lives have really changed because of this, and their income has also improved and even doubled.

El Niño came and struck a devastating blow to their crops, leaving their association in a state of despair. They experienced drought, which made organic vegetable production difficult, and some of their plants also died because of the dry spell. They assess the climate threats of El Niño with a silver lining as they open a new opportunity for their association to recover from their losses. They cleaned their farming area during the strike of El Niño, stored animal manure, and focused on vermicomposting and concoctions.

In vermicomposting, the harvesting time is a bit long, about 3–4 months if done manually. They have 2 facilities: 1 with 8 vermi beds (1x3) with a storage room, and 1 with 2 vermi beds (2x4). They harvest 1 sack that weighs 330 kilos, which they sell for 10 pesos per kilo. There's really a big difference in their lives now compared to before, and they really enjoy farming now because of the association while selling their products at the same time.

Every Friday, they work in their communal garden. For most of the members, this was their first time engaging in an association. Before, they had a total of 30 members, but now they have 36, although only





20 are active. The participation of some of the members has become a problem, and to address this issue, the President of BAVFA, Jonalyn O. Onayan, has taken action against members who are not active by making them pay 20 pesos for every session they don't attend.

One of the biggest achievements that the members of BAVFA are proud of is that they never lose their momentum in participating in their association. Some of them have already left because they chose another path and moved to another province, but they still retain the technologies and tools that AMIA provided them.

One of the key lessons they learned is that there were many associations before that were established in Batan, but they are one of those associations that has continued to operate for more than 2 years. They continued to apply the knowledge they gained and now know how to handle and monitor their farming well. BAVFA's goal is for their association to be truly successful and to continue to persevere amidst how many threats the climate will throw at them.

The DA-AMIA has so many plans for BAVFA; they want them to be Civil Society Organization (CSO) accredited so that they can get continuous support from the DA. DA-AMIA, being dedicated to building climate-resilient agri-fishery communities, livelihoods, and enterprises, wants BAVFA to be a climate-resilient village.

The journey of BAVFA from going the extra mile to move mountains shows how strong the power that unity holds. The pilgrimages were full of rough roads and towering boulders, but with unwavering perseverance and a deep sense of unity, they were able to withstand all the obstacles in their way. Their story is a testament to the fact that when people unite for a common cause, they don't just cultivate fields; they plant a future where anything is possible.■





# Humble realizations and hopeful beginnings

*Alvin Barrios' life-changing point of view*

Alvin Barrios, a former Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) as an electrical foreman, was diligently working the deserts of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar one day, as a thought crossed his mind. He noticed that even in the midst of these desert cities, fruits and vegetables are available at a decent price. He thought about home, comparing the high-cost vegetables coming from Benguet. This sparked an idea to grow these crops locally. The decision led to him going back home to the Philippines, in Aklan Province, purchasing a land in Tayhawan, Lezo. As he settled, this was the beginning of his farming ventures, which would eventually transform into one of the thriving organic farms he has today.

Starting with little knowledge, Barrios experimented with various methods to enrich the soil, using chicken dung, carbonized rice hulls, and cultivation techniques that eventually led to recognition by the Department of Agriculture Western Visayas (DA-WV). Over time, Barrios' farm expanded, using his family's owned land, becoming an enterprise that remained organic as the land was previously used as a grazing ground for cattle.

For the past seven years, the farm has been a source of high-value crops, particularly lettuce, supplying markets in Kalibo, Numancia, and even Boracay when surplus allows. The farm's organic approach is a personal choice for Barrios, who believes in the benefits of organic produce both as a consumer and as a producer. This commitment to organic farming was further solidified when Alvin Barrios, as a core member of the Aklan Provincial Organic Producers' Association (APOPA) under the leadership of President Godenyl Isidenia, participated in the certification process that marked a significant milestone in their journey.

The Barrios Fruits and Vegetables Integrated Farm is a model of sustainability, utilizing on-site resources to create fertilizer and growth hormones. The farm's primary fertilizers include vermicompost and regular compost, supplemented with plant-based concoctions that





enhance growth. This self-sufficiency has not gone unnoticed; the farm has earned recognition from the province and local government units (LGUs), which frequently invite Barrios to showcase his expertise as well as feature the beauty of Numancia to visitors.

The farm's success also led to Barrios' active involvement in various agricultural councils, such as the Provincial Agriculture and Fisheries Council (PAFC), where he served as chairman of the Municipal Agriculture and Fisheries Council (MAFC) for Lezo since 2017. This role allowed him to expand including a position in the Numancia Organic Producers' Association as well the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) council. Through AMIA, Alvin Barrios has gained valuable insights into climate change resilience, further enriching their approach to farming.

In its movement to comply for the requirements, interventions through AMIA included communal vermicomposting, a crucial resource for organic farming. The vermicompost produced not only for Barrios' needs, but also supports other members of the association in meeting the same organic farming requirements. Despite the challenges such as maintenance of worm population during the hot weather, the farm has managed to recover and continue production. DA-WV provided communal vegetable crop tools, such as hoses, shovels, screens, drums and molasses, which have significantly aided in the farms' cultivation efforts.

Aside from all the farming, Barrios sustained his businesses such as his meat shops and restaurants with the produce he harvested. His businesses were tried when the recent pandemic and African Swine Flu (ASF) reached the point of foreclosure. Struck with a heavy weight in his heart, Barrios found his solace and recovery in continuing his farming duties. Despite these challenges, the farm not only survived, but thrived through the LGU's and DA-WV's assistance. Interventions and equipment provisions have been instrumental in its growth.

Barrios Fruits and Vegetables Integrated Farm, which spans 5,460 square meters, has become a beacon of success, not only for its owner but for the entire community. Accredited by the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) and certified organic by the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) and the Department of Agriculture –

Western Visayas last year, the farm has established itself as a leader in organic farming in the region. Despite past losses, the farm now operates with two farmers, slowly recovering and rebuilding. While challenges remain, such as the need for additional machinery, the farm is optimistic about future support that will further enhance its operations.

The involvement in AMIA marked a turning point in the farm's progress, with access to seminars and training that improved farming practices. Innovations such as a misting mechanism using railings and water pots were implemented to simplify the watering process for vegetables. The farm also dreams of expanding its reach, working towards becoming a cooperative-scale operation.

Alvin Barrios' closing advice to all of us: gather and inspire more young farmers to improve farming responses in modern and sufficient ways. Motivating agencies to open farming programs will keep the youth active and engaged, contributing to the country's growth into a better future. The Barrios Fruits and Vegetables Integrated Farm stands as a powerful example of how perseverance, community support, and sustainable practices can lead to remarkable success in agriculture. **H**





# The Inspiring Story of Annabelle Torbizar and the AMIA Program

Annabelle Torbizar, a 42-year-old mother from Barangay Buntol, Sibalom, Antique, stands as a evidence to resilience, empowerment, and the transformative power of the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) Program. Her journey from a housewife dependent on her husband's earnings to a community leader and agricultural innovator highlights how sustainable interventions can uplift lives and communities.

She grew up in a farming family, with early exposure to rice farming. However, marriage and motherhood placed her in a traditional role, focused on raising her children while her husband worked in construction in Manila. For years, she relied solely on his income, tending to a small vegetable garden only for her family's consumption.

In 2019, everything changed when Annabelle became a beneficiary of AMIA's Babuyang Walang Amoy initiative. This groundbreaking technology addressed a common challenge in her barangay, where a local ordinance had restricted hog raising due to the unpleasant smell. The odorless pig farming technology not only eliminated the stench but also provided a sustainable income stream.

Adopting the AMIA program wasn't without hurdles. Typhoon Paeng devastated their locality, flooding Annabelle's piggery and washing away her vegetable garden. Her losses amounted to over P200,000. Despite the destruction, Annabelle showed extraordinary determination. She miraculously relocated her pigs to safety, though her crops couldn't be saved.

"I thought everything was being taken away from me," Annabelle recalled. But her hope was reignited by the support and training provided by AMIA, enabling her to start again. This experience taught her the importance of resilience and preparedness, especially in disaster-prone areas like Sibalom.











The Babuyang Walang Amoy technology became a foundation of Annabelle's success. The use of rice hulls for pig waste management not only reduced water consumption but also generated organic fertilizer for her garden. Annabelle's entire family became involved, from building additional pig housing to caring for pregnant sows and piglets.

This venture not only strengthened their bond but also improved their financial stability. Annabelle and her husband decided to save their profits in a bank account for their children's future. By 2020, she had earned over P200,000 from fattening piglets.

Annabelle emphasized how this technology allowed her to spend quality time with her children, something she vowed to prioritize after hearing about a tragic incident involving a child whose parents were too preoccupied with work to notice her struggles. "A mother's duty goes beyond providing. It's about being present," she said with conviction.

When the African Swine Fever (ASF) threatened the hog industry, Annabelle took proactive measures to protect her livelihood. She implemented strict biosecurity protocols, which proved successful. Her vigilance and the association's collective strategy to sell piglets and save profits until ASF was under control ensured her farm's survival.

Annabelle's leadership extended beyond her household. As President of the AMIA Village and barangay secretary, she advocated for local agricultural policies, including ordinances requiring backyard gardens. The AMIA program's additional interventions—such as a 5-in-1 rice mill, a rainwater harvester, and native chicken production—further boosted the barangay's agricultural productivity.

Through her efforts, Annabelle transformed from a plain housewife into a pillar of strength for her community. "When a father provides for his family, he's a great father. But when a mother does the same, it's exceptional," she proudly stated.







Annabelle's journey is a shining example of how sustainable agricultural programs can empower individuals and communities. Her success story reflects not just economic gains but also personal growth, family cohesion, and community development. Today, Annabelle stands tall as a role model, proving that with resilience, determination, and the right support, women can drive meaningful change.

Her renovated kitchen is a visible symbol of her achievements, but the true fulfillment lies in knowing she has built a better future for her children while contributing to the dynamic livestock industry in Sibalom. Annabelle's story is a celebration of hope, hard work, and the transformative impact of the AMIA program.**H**



# Rommel Millano and the transformation of Brgy. Mainit Farmers' Association through the AMIA Program

For years, the Brgy. Mainit Farmers' Association of Cuartero, Capiz, struggled to find its voice in the agricultural sector. Despite its formation in 2017, the association received no government interventions and remained unnoticed by agencies that could have supported its growth. This lack of recognition left its 190 members feeling overlooked and undervalued.

“Napakahirap kapag wala kang suporta,” laments Rommel Millano, the association's president. The farmers, whose livelihoods depended on rice, corn, high-value crops, sugarcane, and coconut cultivation, had to rely on manual labor and rain-fed fields. Requests for machinery, irrigation, and resources were either lost during transitions in leadership or declined due to stringent qualifications.

But everything changed when the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) Program stepped in. For the first time, the association felt seen, valued, and empowered.

The AMIA Program marked a significant moment in the association's journey. Through its interventions, the association was given tools and opportunities they had long yearned for. The Native Chicken Production program distributed 255 chickens among members, alongside training sessions that introduced modern, profit-oriented breeding techniques. The Goat Production, the forthcoming intervention that promises to diversify and stabilize income streams. In addition to these, the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) provided a rotary composter and shredder, equipping the farmers with vital resources for sustainable farming.





“Ngayon lang namin naramdaman ang halaga namin bilang mga magsasaka,” Rommel shares, expressing the collective gratitude of the association. For a group that had long been thirsty for intervention, the AMIA Program not only quenched that thirst but also ignited hope and confidence.

The association’s challenges were steep. Before receiving interventions, their operations were entirely manual, leading to delayed planting and harvesting schedules. The lack of irrigation systems forced them to rely solely on rainfall. Despite these struggles, Rommel and the members persevered, finding ways to rent harvesters from nearby areas to keep their fields productive.

Rommel recalls the disappointment of being declined validation for a harvester in 2019. Yet, he used that moment as fuel to push for better documentation and accreditation. When he became president, he vowed to bridge the gap between the association and the government agencies, ensuring that members would finally receive the support they deserved.







The interventions from AMIA brought not just resources but also a renewed sense of purpose and belonging. For the first time, members of Brgy. Mainit Farmers' Association underwent training and workshops, learning to maximize the potential of their livelihoods.

The native chicken production program, in particular, brought remarkable results. Members managed to maintain a communal production site while supplying chickens to CAPSU Dumarao. For farmers who previously viewed chicken breeding as merely a survival activity, this was a transformative experience.

Rommel's leadership has been central to this transformation. As a former seafarer who embraced farming in his late twenties, he understands the value of hard work and persistence. Guided by his father's lessons in gardening and his personal journey into farming, Rommel leads with fairness, accountability, and an unwavering commitment to his community.

He remains focused on ensuring every member is treated equally and that policies are upheld. "Kapag may mali, inaayos namin, kasi gusto naming lahat ay pantay-pantay," he explains.

Rommel envisions even greater things for the association. He is determined to secure more machinery, irrigation systems, and additional interventions to improve their farming practices further. He also hopes to develop their fishponds and ensure they meet the requirements for insurance and certifications.

The AMIA Program brought resources and a sense of validation to Brgy. Mainit Farmers' Association. From feeling invisible to being acknowledged and supported, the farmers now see themselves as key players in the nation's food security.

"Ang mga magsasaka ang bida," Rommel emphasizes, reminding everyone of the vital role farmers play in feeding the nation. Through his leadership and the support of AMIA, Brgy. Mainit Farmers' Association is no longer thirsting for recognition—they are thriving, ready to face the future with renewed strength and hope. **■**







# A success story of unity and progress of AMIA Villages in Dao, Capiz

In Dao, Capiz, resilience and innovation define the 147 farmer partners of AMIA program. Established in 2022 across two barangays—Duyoc and Lacaron—this villages exemplifies the power of collective effort and strategic government support. With interventions worth over ₱2.7 million, including cutting-edge practices like the System of Rice Intensification (SRI), AMIA farmers have transformed their livelihoods and strengthened their resilience against climate and economic challenges.

Before the arrival of the AMIA program, the farmers of Dao had already organized themselves into groups, recognizing the importance of collaboration. With the support of the Department of Agriculture (DA), these groups federated to streamline access to government interventions such as seedlings, training, and machinery. “The intervention could easily be given priority when channeled through associations,” said Lorna, an active member.

In 2023, the federation registered with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and constructed the AMIA Multi-Purpose Center. This center serves as a hub for producing organic fertilizers and other sustainable farming inputs, solidifying their commitment to environmentally friendly practices.

One of the most notable achievements is the establishment of seven SRI demo farms covering two hectares. SRI, a climate-resilient rice production method, involves planting young seedlings individually at wider intervals, maintaining moist (not flooded) soil, and ensuring better root and canopy growth. This method not only reduces water use but also significantly increases yields. Studies reveal yield increases of 50% to 100%, aligning with Duyoc and Lacaron AMIA Village goal of achieving food security while adapting to climate challenges.







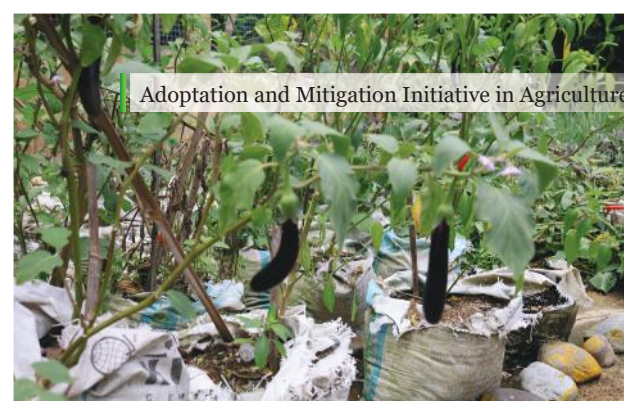
Despite the challenges posed by African Swine Fever (ASF), AMIA farmers have adapted remarkable sound adjustments for the Babuyang Walang Amoy project; through strict biosecurity measures, the group maintained 20 pigs, served 10 households, and generated ₱135,000 in income from 14 heads sold. In the native pig and chicken production projects, farmers embraced diversification, selling piglets and establishing a communal poultry house with a 264-egg incubator. Organic feed development further enhanced sustainability. In the vermicomposting and organic vegetables project with eight fully operational vermi bins, farmers produce compost for their organic farms, ensuring food for their families while protecting soil health.

The village also installed an automated weather station, enabling farmers to make informed decisions based on real-time climate data. Policies and guidelines were developed to prevent future losses, showcasing their ability to turn lessons into action.

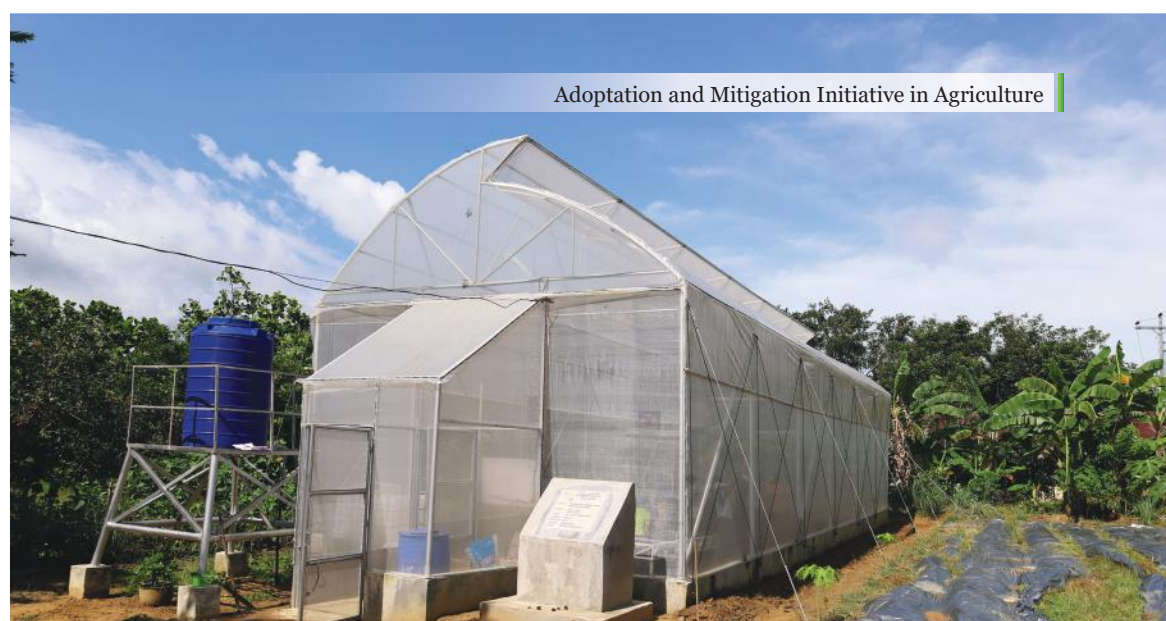
AMIA Village in Dao demonstrates how organized farmer associations can unlock greater opportunities. Their collective efforts, guided by the AMIA interventions and climate-resilient practices like SRI, have improved livelihoods and established a model for sustainable rural development. **N**



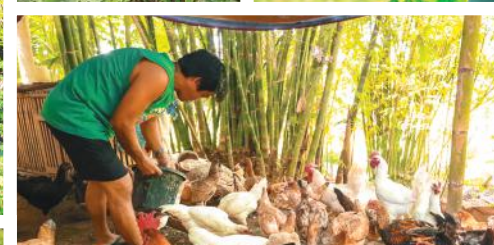


















# DOWN TO EARTH: A seed of hope from vermiculture

Dawn was soon to break in Numancia, Aklan; the streets were still dark and the chirping of the crickets can still be overheard from the bedrooms. A rooster stretched his neck, before letting out a loud crow that echoed across the neighborhood. But while the residents still continued peacefully with their slumber, a 72-year-old farmer had just finished his last sip from his cup of hot morning coffee. Energized from the caffeine, he is finally ready to tackle another laborious day in the fields as the sun slowly creeps into the horizon.

Memories on farming for Teñoroso Bautista Alonzo, or “Lote” as people would like to call him, dated way back to his childhood where it was through the farming efforts of his parents that he was able to finish his education. Sometime later, it was 1975 and Lote came to a big decision to follow the footsteps of his mother and father and became a farmer as well. He enjoyed his work, but as time passed by, it became challenging for him to maintain his fields and produce. He could still recall the difference of the climate conditions in the current year from the 1970s and 80s.

According to Lote, during the 70s and 80s, farmers had already planted their crops during June, and that the weather was always on time. Currently, however, the weather has become more and more abnormal as he managed to recount the fact that during the last week of May they experienced rain. But last year, from the month of July to August, they did not experience any rain at all. This posed a huge problem for Lote because with the unpredictable climate, it became difficult for him to find the perfect time to plant crops in his field.

In September 2022, Lote went on and became a member of the Numancia AMIA Village Farmers’ Association. This was a huge turning point for Lote as everything became easier for the old farmer to tend his crops, one such example was the training he received from AMIA about climate change that made him both fully aware and prepared for the possible things that may occur due to the changing weather.







In addition, some of the interventions brought by the AMIA that aided Lote in farming was the SRI, or the System of Rice Intensification, which they have happily adopted during the last cropping as it may maximize their production. Another intervention made by AMIA for Lote was the Babuyan waay amoy, which would have helped him in his livestock, but unfortunately the infamous ASF or African Swine Fever occurred which led to a devastating loss of his two pigs that were supposedly pregnant. The deaths led Lote to be distressed due to the fact that he had high hopes that his livestock could have been a chance to increase their income, thus helping them in purchasing their needs as well as other expenses.

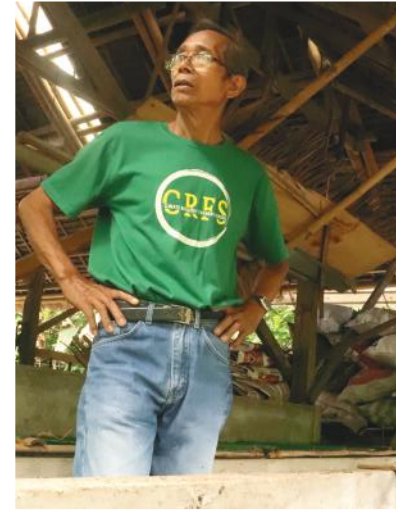
Despite the shortcomings that old Lote had experienced, he still remains determined with his work, as did his father and mother during his years as a young boy. Sometime later, in the year 2010, the Bureau of Soil and Water Management provided him with vermi beds- a business was soon to pursue. Before, he used to sell casting and compost- it was a success for Lote because what was used to be only 3 vermi beds, finally became 14. This progress led Lote to take a bigger step and began selling worms as well.



For Lote, his success was made possible through the support of AMIA because they were able to incorporate what they were taught in training to the technologies they received from the program, making it easier for him and his fellow farmers to maximize their produce and income. In addition, he also recalled that during the peak of the well-known COVID-19 pandemic, they were completely unaware of what they were supposed to do, but thanks to the AMIA program, they were able to get back on their feet; and he meant it not just for him, but also to his fellow farmers.

He recalled how the knowledge he gained from the previous training and seminars organized by the program had not only aided him in teaching and supervising the workers, but also molded them into successful individuals in the future. He also mentioned how some were able to utilize the skills they earned even as professionals ! It was also a chance for some to earn money while they assist him in his labor, and though for Lote it became a challenge as labor fees had increased these past few years, it was still a way for the people to earn a few pesos and food at their dining tables. **H**





It was hope for livelihood, he emphasized towards the program given to him by AMIA. And it was not only a glimmer of hope to old Lote, but also to all farmers as he urged them to utilize the practice of vermicomposting on their produce. The natural and organic way of growing their agricultural produce was far better than that of using synthetic ones. And though it may start off as a difficult task, patience should be a core value that must remain to be upheld by every individual who practices farming. Progress of one's earning may yet be unseen during the first cropping, but as time continues, it shall be visible even from the naked eye. Success doesn't appear overnight- it grows, like a wheat planted in its perfect season- blooming slowly to its perfection.###(text by: JESEmao)



# Mark Narandan's Flourishing Path: From a Simple Life to a Thriving Chicken Enterprise Through AMIA

Fifty-two-year-old Mark Narandan of Bubog, Numancia in Aklan was leading a quiet, simple life as a freelance trainer while tending to his small farm. A certified TESDA trainer in Organic Agricultural Production NC II, Mark had adapted to a fluctuating income, accepting training jobs whenever available and keeping his schedule open to manage his farm and livestock. Although he valued the flexibility, financial instability was a recurring challenge, with long gaps between income opportunities.

His journey took a transformative turn when he joined the Department of Agriculture's Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) Program, where he also took on the role of president for their local farmer's association. The Numancia AMIA Village Farmer's Association, made up of three local groups—the Laguinbanwa West Farmers Association, Bubog Farmers Association, and Aliputos Rice and Corn Farmers Association—

comprises 58 members. This leadership role not only added structure to his routine but ignited his dedication to AMIA's mission and vision, pushing him to invest significant time into planning and documentation to help the association achieve its goals.

Through AMIA, Mark was introduced to a range of new farming practices and technologies. One of the most impactful tools was the Climate Information System (CIS), which helped him anticipate

weather changes and safeguard his livestock accordingly. With AMIA's guidance, he began implementing free-range techniques with his chickens, allowing them more space to roam within defined perimeters. Starting with only 10 chickens, he used careful breeding to grow his flock to an estimated 300 chickens. He also learned to make customized, cost-effective feeds from foliage like trichanthera and napier, supplementing with







only a small portion of commercial feed—a strategy that slashed costs without compromising sustainability.

AMIA training equipped Mark with valuable skills in business planning and record-keeping, which became essential in managing his farm and the association more effectively. With these tools, his farm's productivity increased, enabling him to establish regular sales channels with local restaurants and online markets. This stable income marked a dramatic shift from his previously inconsistent earnings, giving him the financial stability he once lacked. His success has also brought new hope to his family, especially his wife, a former OFW, who has been a steadfast supporter throughout his farming journey. With a shared goal, Mark and his association aim to become one of Boracay's primary suppliers of live chickens.

Mark's success has also reshaped his perspective on government programs. Once feeling disconnected, he now sees the government as a committed partner, offering support and resources that empower farmers to thrive. His local government unit (LGU) has provided instrumental support, allowing him to balance his farm duties with his responsibilities in the association.

Mark's journey with AMIA has been profoundly transformative, illustrating that with the right resources, guidance, and community support, even small-scale farmers can attain substantial improvements in their lives and positively impact their communities. **H**









# The progress of Bingawan farmers from meager harvests to sustainable growth

Nestled in the municipality of Bingawan, Iloilo, are four barangays that have become the heart of agricultural transformation, thanks to the Department of Agriculture's Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) program. Before 2018, farmers in these areas struggled with unsustainable practices, deteriorating soil quality, and dwindling harvests of palay and corn. Government agricultural interventions were rare, leaving the farmers to rely on traditional methods.

The story began to change when the AMIA program partnered with the local government of Bingawan to organize farmers into an association and provide sustainable farming interventions. What started with eight active members has now grown to 57, a testament to the program's impact on the community.

Through the AMIA program, farmers in Bingawan received seeds, livelihood starter kits, native chickens, swine, and training in organic vegetable gardening. For President Mary, who leads the farmers' association, these interventions were a turning point. She attributes their success to the association's effective organization and management, emphasizing the importance of unity in realizing agriculture's potential.

"Before, only a select few farmers were trained. Now, almost everyone benefits," Mary shared. "The inclusivity of AMIA has made us feel like an important sector in the community."

The trainings have reshaped the farmers' mindsets. The Babuyang Walang Amoy technology, in particular, has shown them the viability of sustainable hog production without the hassle of traditional methods. Farmers embraced the roll-over scheme enthusiastically, proving that collaborative and innovative approaches can yield great results.

While the farmers' journey has not been without challenges, including changing the mindset of those resistant to new methods, the association has tackled these issues with determination. Dialogues and regular meetings, held every last Sunday of the month, have become venues for project updates, feedback, and experience sharing.

Mary believes communication is key. "The 'to-see-is-to-believe' mentality was a challenge, but showing tangible results, like the success of organic farming and native chicken production, convinced many farmers to join us."

One of the most remarkable stories is the native chicken production initiative. Starting with just five chickens, many farmers have expanded their flocks to over 100, generating income through market sales while also providing food for their families. Similarly, the adoption of organic farming has gained traction, as farmers recognize its benefits amid rising fertilizer costs and growing health concerns over synthetic inputs.

The Babuyang Walang Amoy initiative has had a profound socio-economic impact, offering farmers an alternative and sustainable way to improve their livelihoods. These projects have instilled a sense of pride and responsibility among farmers, shifting their reliance on dole-outs to a thirst for knowledge and collaboration.

The farmers of Bingawan have evolved into a community driven by a shared vision of sustainable agriculture. They are now exploring opportunities to federate their association, opening doors to larger government support and partnerships. Their newfound appreciation for sustainable practices and collaboration has laid a solid foundation for long-term growth.







As Mary puts it, “The AMIA program didn’t just give us resources; it gave us the tools and knowledge to transform our lives. Now, we dream bigger, work harder, and collaborate more. Together, we’re creating a brighter future for Bingawan.”

Through the AMIA program, Bingawan’s farmers have proven that with the right support, organization, and mindset, communities can rise to the challenge, embrace innovation, and thrive in the face of adversity.

### A LONE FARMER WITH A MAN’S STRENGTH

In the town of Bingawan, Iloilo, there is a story of 56-year-old Rowy Posmilos, a woman farmer for over five years became a cultivator of crops but also a cultivator of hope, empowerment, and progress in her community.

Living alone since her child started her own family, Rowy epitomizes strength and independence. With early exposure to farming through her father, she mastered almost every aspect of farm work, from planting to fertilizer application. Her father’s influence, coupled with her indomitable will, shaped her into the farmer she is today—a woman who works with the determination and endurance of a man.

Rowy’s journey took a significant turn when she became part of the AMIA Farmers Association. As president of the women’s group in the AMIA Village, she led efforts to embrace agricultural innovations introduced by the Department of Agriculture (DA) through the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) program.

Through training sessions on organic farming, bokashi making, vermicomposting, and crop diversification, Rowy found herself at the forefront of sustainable farming practices. She applied these teachings to her own farm, turning challenges into opportunities. Gardening became her primary source of income, supplemented by the new ventures she learned, including mushroom production.





Rowy treasures every training opportunity she's been given. Her record book filled with the names of AMIA staff and neatly kept certificates speaks volumes about her gratitude and dedication. She fondly recalls her travels, training sessions, and even hotel stays during these events—experiences she cherishes as a farmer who now feels truly valued and empowered.

When the AMIA program provided their community with projects like Babuyang Walang Amoy, native chicken production, and vegetable farming, Rowy stood out as a tireless advocate. She negotiated a usufruct contract with her father for the construction of the Mushroom Processing Center, a project that now benefits their entire community.

Like many farmers, Rowy has faced her share of hardships—floods, typhoons, and even failed crop investments. Yet, her unwavering optimism has seen her through these trials. Recently, during the El Niño phenomenon, while others lamented the extreme heat, Rowy capitalized on her climate-resilient training to generate PHP 6,000 from her garden produce alone.

For Rowy, who lives on her own, her earnings from rice, vegetables, and other agricultural products are more than enough. She finds fulfillment not just in her income but also in her ability to make a difference in her community.

As the leader of an association with mostly senior citizen members, Rowy recognizes the need for the younger generation to carry the torch of sustainable agriculture. She envisions a future where young people—like her nephews and other relatives—join their agricultural endeavors to ensure the continuation of farming and the sustainability of AMIA projects. While she continues her commitment to plant seeds of inspiration, ensuring that the fruits of her labor endure for generations to come, she dreams of passing on the leadership baton to young farmers.<sup>H</sup>





I want everything for my members, whether it's resources or interventions, no matter the cost, ***so they can achieve resilience and sustainable livelihoods.***

I dedicate time to check on each one, ensuring they get the support they need and continue to apply the technologies they've been taught.



# MARCELINO PONTAOY

**PRESIDENT, SANYOG SAN RAFAEL AMIA VILLAGE FARMERS' ASSOCIATION**



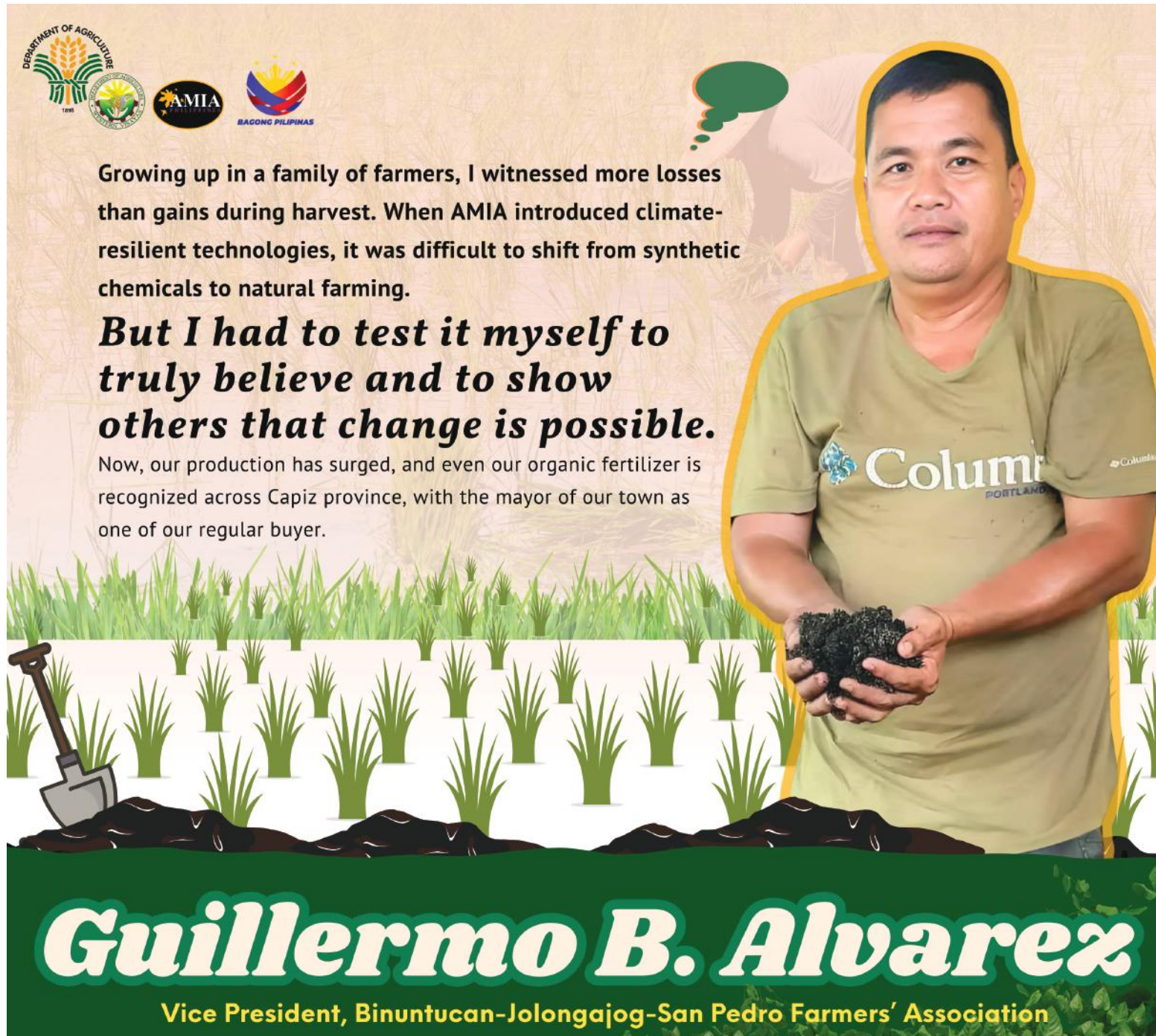
Marcelino Pontaoy, the president of Sanyog San Rafael AMIA Village Farmer's Association in San Rafael, Iloilo, has been a driving force behind the group's progress. Under his leadership, the association secured vital resources, including a shredder and small-scale composting facility, through a grant from the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM). These tools have supported their focus on sustainable farming practices helping the association grow stronger in their tailing of climate-resilient agriculture (CRA).

The association has successfully implemented CRA interventions such as organic vegetable gardening and native chicken production. By using vermicast and chicken dung as soil media and applying organic sprays like OHN and FPJ, they maintain productive crops. In native chicken farming, despite losses caused by the New Castle Disease (NCD), they continue their operations by using a rollover scheme that keeps their farming projects sustainable.

He has also introduced innovative strategies like biosecurity measures, using coconut husk smoke to protect livestock. Feed supplements such as molasses with banana stalk and trichantera have helped sustain their animals. Even when African Swine Fever (ASF) hit their boar population hard, he guided the association in replacing lost stock and pushing forward with new solutions. These efforts have allowed them to maintain resilience and income stability through difficult periods.

Beyond his farming initiatives, he remains deeply committed to his members, frequently visiting farms to ensure they apply CRA technologies and support their individual needs. He has also taken on the challenge of revising business plans for CSO accreditation. Despite their many challenges, droughts, heavy rains, and accreditation hurdles, his strong leadership and innovative thinking continue to toss the association towards resilience and sustainable livelihoods. **H**





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AMIA

BAGONG PILIPINAS

Growing up in a family of farmers, I witnessed more losses than gains during harvest. When AMIA introduced climate-resilient technologies, it was difficult to shift from synthetic chemicals to natural farming.

***But I had to test it myself to truly believe and to show others that change is possible.***

Now, our production has surged, and even our organic fertilizer is recognized across Capiz province, with the mayor of our town as one of our regular buyer.

**Guillermo B. Alvarez**  
Vice President, Binuntucan-Jolongajog-San Pedro Farmers' Association



Guillermo “Nong Jimmy” Alvarez of Pontevedra, Capiz, has become a pillar of climate-resilient agriculture, earning him the 2024 Best Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) Program award. His journey from traditional farming to adopting sustainable practices highlights his unwavering commitment to innovation and community leadership. By integrating natural feeds like kangkong, laon, and trichantera into native pig and chicken production, he proved that environmentally-friendly methods could thrive, even when faced with challenges like African Swine Fever (ASF). His ability to adapt, shifting to duck production when ASF struck, demonstrates his resilience and forward-thinking approach.

A key to his success has been focused on Bokashi production, a type of organic fertilizer he uses for rice and sugar cane cultivation. His research trials, in collaboration with Capiz New Agri, have expanded beyond traditional crops to papaya, watermelon, and squash, ensuring his farm remains a hub of sustainable innovation. Through his personal trials of climate-resilient technologies, he has influenced local farmers to follow suit, showing that sustainable practices can lead to increased productivity. His contributions go beyond his own farm. He donates native chickens to local associations annually and opens his farm as a training center and facility site for AMIA projects. His impact stretches across partnerships and linkages that strengthen the AMIA village. He collaborates with organizations like the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to equip farmers with tools and knowledge such as financial literacy training and composting technology. Approached by the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) his farm serves as a learning site where farmers can learn firsthand about climate resilient practices. Their bokashi fertilizer has gained a reputation across Pontevedra and neighboring towns.

As a leader in the AMIA program he is an example of how one farmer's commitment can impact an entire community. By using his influence to fast-track benefits and opportunities for local farmers, he ensures that climate resilient agriculture is not just a practice but a way of life. **H**







# Climate change is just one challenge

the bigger task is guiding my fellow farmers toward climate resilience by moving away from synthetic chemicals, all while addressing their needs and staying true to our vision of uplifting lives.

# MARK M. NARANDAN

PRESIDENT, NAVFA



Mark M Narandan, the dedicated leader of the Numancia AMIA Village Farmers Association (NAVFA), knows too too well the struggle of leading a group of 60 farmers. In spite of their numbers only half are consistently active in meetings and communal work. The challenges he faces go beyond battling the effect of climate change on agriculture. He's working to shift the mindset of farmers who have been long relied on synthetic inputs guiding them toward more sustainable practices and technologies.

He himself almost gave up on this technologies early on. But his purpose grew stronger when they crafted their 5- year development plan, realizing the crucial role these intertwined climate-resilient technologies could play in transforming their association. Instead of dwelling on what they lacked, he focused on the strong foundation they had built together during their moments of collective success. This mindset led to personal milestones, his wife, who had once worked abroad as a caregiver is now back home for good contributing to the association through the Participatory Guarantee System for Organic Certification (PGS-OCB).

One of the technologies that has brought success to NAVFA is the feed formulation using locally sourced forages, A sustainable solution to rising feed costs. He became a resource person, sharing his knowledge with newly established AMIA villages in Cuartero, Capiz , and Toboso and Valladolid in Negros Occidental. He began by offering free training to his own members, enabling them to make a profit during the swords in commercial feed prices. The association also started producing vermicast and organic concoctions which helped them mitigate the impact of prolonged El Nino.

March 31 , 2024, marked a major achievement for NAVFA they opened their first market at the Organic Trading Post (OTP) . The challenges he once faced are now paying off, as he sees his members reuniting with a shared vision. NAVFA is not only thriving but is also set to serve as a “Big Brother” among the 20 AMIA villages across the region. As registered entity with PhilGEPS, they are now part of government procurement , consolidating products of the rest of AMIA Villages in Western Visayas.

His journey shows that true leadership lies in perseverance, collaboration, and a focus on what can be achieved together.**H**







# AMIA Village Organic Farmers' Association



In the town of Pontevedra, Negros Occidental, the AMIA Village Organic Farmers Association (AVOFA) has become a shining example of climate resilient Agriculture and sustainable farming practices. The Association, which comprises two former associations and three cooperatives Association of San Isidro Frmers (ASIF), San Isidros Small Water Impounding System Association (SISWISA), General Malvar Agrarian Reform Cooperative (GMARC)- has grown into a growing village dedicated to organic farming. Registered with DOLE on March 20 three, 2022, the association has expanded from 75 members to 81 in 2024, with a strong mix of men and women working together toward a common goal.

AMIA village adoption of climate resilient agriculture (CRA) technologies, which have empowered the farmers to produce native pigs, native chickens, and organic vegetables. Their integrated farming approach, which includes soil ameliorants and feed formulation, ensures sustainable farming and greater productivity. Weird facilities such as the AMIA Training Center, a Solar Power Irrigation System (SPIS), a vermicomposting facility, a village-type feed mill, and a poultry house, the association provides its members with the tools and knowledge they need to thrive in the face of climate changes.

The association's success is also reflected in its linkages and partnership with various institutions, including DA-PRDP, DAR, BPI La Granja, BJMP's and the Dep Ed among others. These collaborations have not only bolstered their capacity to scale up production but also help them establish a presence in important trade events like the Organic Trading Post , Organic Trade Fairs, and Panaad Festival. The AMIA village is now regarded as a key benchmark for organic farming technologies and yes a valuable learning site for educational tours and IP Farmers Learning Exchanges.

Best practices in the village include the mass production of organic concoctions, feed production planting drought-tolerant crab an integrating crops, poultry, and livestock production. The community follows the Bayanigan spirit in its communal garden and at the AMIA center. Their efforts have also led to the outscaling of Native pig and Chicken Production to neighboring barangays making the AMIA village a model herb resilience and sustainability in the region.



“We have embraced climate resilient practices through organic farming, integrated livestock production, and sustainable technologies. AVOFA is now a progressing model of resilience, equipped to face the challenges of climate change while ensuring the livelihood and well-being of our farmers and community”.**N**





“ This program has taught me that resilience isn't just about facing climate challenges in agriculture

**it's also about managing time, handling differences, and staying firm amid adversity.**

We're not there yet, but with persistence and unity, we'll get there, we'll come resilient and sustained.

**RIZZA I. MANSAYON**  
AMIA MUNICIPAL FOCAL, NUMANCIA, AKLAN

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AMIA  
AGRICULTURE MITIGATION INITIATIVE

BAGONG PILIPINAS





Despite her busy schedule, even on Saturdays and Sundays, she dedicates herself to going to the field, attending regular and emergency meetings with farmers. As the High-Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP) coordinator, she shoulders significant responsibilities, ensuring nothing is compromised. To maintain order and consistent support for AMIA Village farmers, she appointed guaranteeing that someone is always available to listen to the farmers' needs and goals.

Her relentless dedication has opened doors for more linkages, accessing interventions, services, and technical assistance beyond the AMIA Program. She collaborates with both provincial and local government unit (LGU), securing the resources the farmers need. Her hand work paid off when, on March 31, the Numancia AMIA Village Farmers Association (NAVFA) began selling their surplus produce at the Organic Trading Post (OTP). For all the challenges of the EL Niño season, they demonstrated resilience by embracing modern farming technology while sticking to organic practice.

A major milestone was reached when the association became PhilGEPS-registered, enabling them to participate in government procurement and sell their produce not only in Numancia but across Region 6. Furthermore, NAVFA now serves as the “Big Brother” to 20 other AMIA Villages, consolidating produce from these communities to sell to potential buyers. Currently, the association is working on securing their Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) certification, which will help them become officially recognized as a legitimate producer of certified organic products. Through her tireless efforts, she has helped the farmers achieve incredible success, fostering a spirit of resilience and collaboration yhay will carry them into the future. **N**







As a focal and farmer myself, I feel deeply connected to this program.

**While we equip farmers to be resilient, we envision expanding their market**

beyond the local level to neighboring towns, across Negros Island, and even nationwide.

**Marvelous Salvaloja**

AMIA Municipal Focal, Sagay City Negros Occidental







As the AMIA Municipal Focal, being an initiator, pursuer, and unwaveringly determined is essential, especially when the farmer associations you handle need your guidance whether in season or out. This was the case of Marvelous, who knew from the start that managing the Farmer Association (FA) would not be as simple as she imagined. Starting from scratch, the FA needed an idea that aligned with their vision, something they couldn't achieve without a strong enabler. Marvelous stepped into that role, even presiding over meetings in place of the FA president when necessary.

She used her leadership to guide farmers, particularly in adopting integrated farming practices, introducing drought-tolerant crops, and promoting the use of open-pollinated varieties each planting season. She also encouraged the use of natural feeds for both hybrid and native piglets. Marvelous took the lead in helping the association realize their potential, working to boost their production and increase their profits. She connected farmers to trade fairs, exhibits, and the “Kadiwa ng Pangulo” program, eventually securing them a regular market at their Organic Trading Post (OTP).

Due to her prompt action on what the farmers aimed to achieve, within just a year, multiple livelihoods were established in the AMIA Village in Sagay City, where farmers now fully depend on them daily. She also actively sought funding source to ensure all necessary farm inputs were provided. As a result, the farmers are not only mitigating the effects of climate change but are also thriving with increased resilience in all aspect. **H**







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BAGONG PILIPINAS

“My strength lies in  
**empowering farmers  
to stand resilient,**  
even when I'm no longer  
here or the project ends.”

**SHERYL G. TANALEON**  
AMIA MUNICIPAL FOCAL, SAN LORENZO, GUIMARAS



Sheryl successfully facilitated the official establishment of the AMIA Market Day, securing the approval of Municipal Resolution No. 176, series of 2023, on September 6, 2023, which declaring every Thursday as AMIA Market Day for the Municipality of San Lorenzo, Guimaras. Before achieving this, she ensured the commitment and cooperation of the 78 farmer members to stabilize production. Although she initially doubted whether the farmers would share her vision, given the newly formed association, she decided to take the risk. She put aside her skepticism, particularly since she was younger than those she was helping to empower. Now, the farmers have found a stable source of income with reduced farm inputs by growing organically, and they have secured regular buyers and a reliable market where they are gradually building their own trademark.

Climate Information Services. She updates the weather boards at the municipal hall and three AMIA barangays every Monday and Wednesday. During the severe El Niño, these updates helped farmers earn P74,761 by mitigating drought effects. Seeing its impact, the Municipal Agriculturist proposed 12 more weather boards for all barangays, including Dr. Catalino G. Nava Farmer School, where agriculture student study.<sup>11</sup>









The Local Government Unit (LGU) of Pontevedra, Negros Occidental, has emerged as an important ally of the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) Program, contributing to the development and resilience of AMIA Village in its two barangays, the General Malvar and San Isidro. Through its unwavering support, they provided structure, including land for constructing an AMIA Training Center, land for constructing multipurpose processing facility, feed mill, vermi-composting facility, and a demonstration site dedicated to organic vegetable production. These initiatives strengthen the foundation for climate-resilient farming, encouraging our farmers to embrace sustainable agriculture methods. Mayor Jose Maria A. Alonso, a proponent of these developments, said, “We believe that empowering our farmers with the resources and training they need is essential in safeguarding the future of agriculture in our community.”

One of the hallmarks of Pontevedra’s support is its backing of the Season-Long Farmer Field School, a hands-on training program on organic vegetable and rice production. The LGU has taken the lead in promoting organic practices by providing transportation allowances for farmers attending training session and meetings. Additionally, the LGU supplies fuel for the AMIA Mobile, ensuring mobility for the association to reach various locations for meetings, festivals, fairs, and exhibits. This holistic approach allows the AMIA program to reach a larger number of farmers while making essential training accessible, fostering a community that prioritizes organic, eco-friendly agriculture. In recognition of the importance of long-term support, the Pontevedra LGU has committed to allocating funds for AMIA Village activities as a regular part of its Annual Investment Plan, earmarking P150,000.00 annually. This budget ensures the continuity of various AMIA initiatives and reinforces the LGUs dedication to agricultural development.

Additionally, Pontevedra has provided a P900,000.00 counterpart fund for establishing a shed for a feed mill, which plays a crucial role in local livestock and poultry farming. “This investment is our way of giving back to our farmers who are the backbone of our municipality,” Silvino Estrellanes, AMIA Municipal Focal added, emphasizing the LGU’s mission to uplift the local agricultural sector.

Furthering its commitment, the Pontevedra LGU also supports community gardening, seed dispersal, and continuous educational programs for farmer organizations. These programs not only equip farmers with essential knowledge but also instill a culture of sustainable practices within the community. By enhancing local capabilities through education and providing resources, the LGU ensures that farmers remain resilient amidst climate challenges. As a result, Pontevedra stands as a model of local governance that champions the cause of climate-resilient agriculture, helping share a sustainable future for both its farmers and the broader community. **H**





# The resilience of May Reyes and the journey of success with AMIA

This is the inspiring journey of May Reyes, a 51-year-old farmer leader from Banga, Aklan, whose unwavering dedication and resilient spirit have made her a beacon of hope in her farming community. Known for her warm smile and generous heart, May has spent her life not only cultivating her land but also serving fellow farmers through the AMIA program, bringing positive change and resilience to those around her.

May's early exposure to agriculture began with her parents, who owned a small farmland. Growing up, she spent her elementary days in the fields, learning the essentials of seedling preparation and rice farming alongside her father and mother. While her parents instilled in her the value of hard work, it was her mother who inspired her passion for community service, as she volunteered actively to support local farmers.

Despite her family's financial struggles, which limited her siblings' educational opportunities, May was determined to continue her studies. With her mother's encouragement and her father's influence, she persevered to obtain scholarships and eventually enrolled in an agriculture program, setting aside her dream of accountancy. Although life took her down a different path, agriculture became the foundation of her life's mission.

In 1998, May married, but life was far from stable. As her husband moved from one job to another, they led a transient life, never establishing a permanent home. The challenges deepened when, in 2002, her father passed away, and in 2020, her mother followed. Despite her own grief, May felt a profound responsibility to honor her parents' legacy by managing the family farm that her siblings had entrusted to her. This was her turning point—a decision to transform her family's land into something that would benefit not only herself but her community.

May's journey with the AMIA program began in 2019, and it was here that her leadership truly blossomed. Although she had already gained experience as a local farmer technician, AMIA's training opened new doors. The program introduced her to climate-resilient agricultural practices and the vital role of communal gardens, which proved life-saving during the pandemic. As food shortages loomed, the vegetables grown in their AMIA-initiated communal garden became a lifeline, sustaining the community and reinforcing May's belief in the power of unity and shared effort.

In 2021, May's dedication was further recognized when she participated in a comprehensive training program at Aklan State University, a privilege she actively encouraged her fellow farmers to join. Through the AMIA program, she learned new technologies for climate adaptation, sustainable farming, and poultry management, all of which she would bring back to her community.

May's leadership style is consultative and inclusive, embodying the spirit of "bayanihan," a Filipino value that champions communal unity. She became the chairperson of her local farmers' association, a position she embraced wholeheartedly. Her mission was clear: to bring farmers together, implement climate-resilient farming practices, and foster a supportive network where everyone could thrive.





Under her leadership, the association achieved several milestones:

- **Bayanihan Communal Garden:** Their communal garden not only provided food but also became a model of community resilience and collaboration.
- **Trade Fair Participation:** May led her association to participate in the local trade fair, giving them an avenue to showcase their produce and connect with a broader market.
- **Poultry Project:** Starting with just 50 chickens, the association's poultry project has since expanded to over 200, providing a sustainable source of income through AMIA's rollover scheme. Farmers learned to make their own poultry feed, cutting costs and creating a self-reliant system.

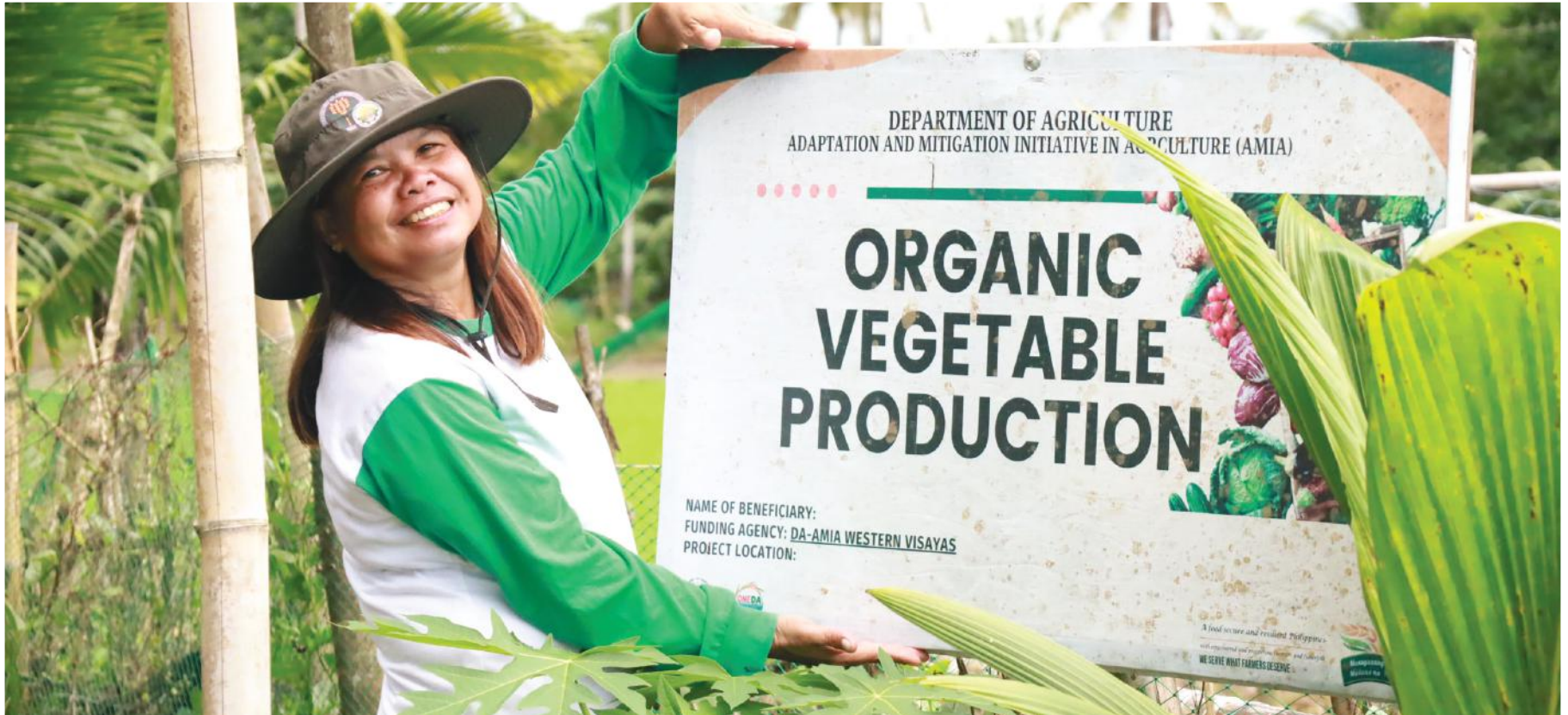
Through AMIA, May also secured support for an egg incubator machine to sustain and grow their poultry initiative. This technology will help the association scale up, allowing each member to benefit from higher productivity and greater financial stability.

May's success would not have been possible without her family's support. Her husband and children have stood by her, understanding the value of her mission and the joy she finds in farming and serving her community. They work together on the farm, fully invested in the growth of their family's legacy and the empowerment of their community.

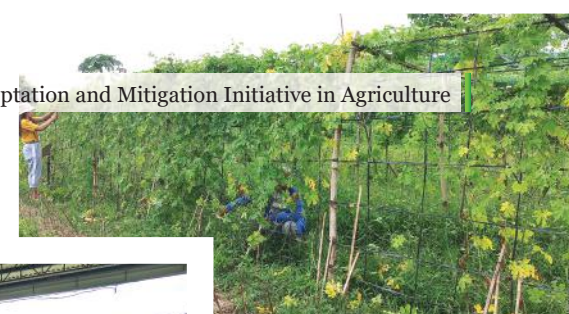
May Reyes's story is one of resilience, community, and the transformative power of agriculture. Her journey shows that success isn't just measured in yields or profits; it's found in the relationships she's built, the skills she's shared, and the lives she's touched. Her story inspires every farmer, young or old, to see the potential of agriculture not only as a livelihood but as a vehicle for community transformation.

May's life is a testament to what can be achieved when a farmer leads with a compassionate heart, a clear vision, and the support of a program like AMIA. For May, farming isn't just work; it's a calling, and through it, she has found purpose, strength, and a sense of fulfillment that she joyfully shares with others. **H**











# AMIA taught her that life must go on



In the barangay of Laguinbanua, West. Numancia, Aklan, Mrs. Shirley Dilinog a 55 years old, Shirley's journey from a private employee to a leading figure in local agriculture is a testament to her commitment and hard work. In 2010, Shirley was navigating a fulfilling career as a private employee. However, when her mother passed away, she chose to pivot her life in a new direction. This pivotal moment led her to make a transformative decision in 2013: she purchased a piece of land and began cultivating it for rice farming. This decision marked the beginning of her journey into agriculture.

By 2014, Shirley's passion for farming had grown, and she took on a new role as the local farmer technician for Numancia. This role allowed her to further contribute to her community by providing valuable agricultural insights and support. Her dedication to this position remains unwavering, reflecting her deep commitment to improving local farming practices.

In 2015, Shirley expanded her agricultural endeavors by starting a diverse farm that includes poultry—such as chickens, ducks, turkeys, and geese—as well as a piggery. Her farm also features a small vegetable garden and a modest fish pond, embodying the principles of integrated farming. This approach not only maximizes productivity but also ensures sustainable and balanced farming practices.

Before joining AMIA, Shirley led a relatively quiet life, focusing on her rice farm and small-scale agricultural activities. However, becoming a part of AMIA marked the beginning of a more dynamic phase in her life. As a member of AMIA, Shirley found herself juggling responsibilities across multiple associations. The interaction with other people through AMIA allowed Shirley to exchange knowledge and ideas about farming, significantly enhancing her agricultural practices. The exposure to new techniques and the shared experiences of fellow farmers enriched her understanding and approach to farming.



One of the most impactful interventions from AMIA was the provision of livestock support, which included Baboyang Walang Amoy—23 piglets and three sows. This support was intended to boost her piggery operations. Unfortunately, the arrival of African Swine Fever (ASF) devastated her piggery, leaving her with only two pigs. Despite this setback, Shirley’s optimism and resilience shone through. Reflecting on the experience, she stated, “It’s okay because life must go on. While we are here on earth, there is hope that AMIA will provide us with further interventions.”, AMIA also provided Shirley with 10 native chickens—five for her and five for her sister. This contribution complemented her diversified farming approach and further supported her agricultural efforts. Furthermore, the introduction of the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) brought significant improvements to her rice farming practices, enhancing productivity and sustainability.

Ma’am Shirley “In AMIA they have a lot of trainings where you can gain learnings because the learning process was continuing or infinite knowledge. Even though I’m tired I will make way to attend the training because I can share to everybody that I have learn in the reason I’m also teaching FFS (Farmer Field School).”

One of the key lesson, Ma’am Shirley learned is that AMIA give importance on improving the livelihood of every “we are grateful to ma’am Riza because she is the one who encourage us to adopt those interventions that AMIA give us and we gain knowledge more about SRI”, told Ma’am Shirley. Her unwavering dedication and commitment she managed to increase the population of native chicken into 60-80 heads. They are starting to sell the native chicken that AMIA provide to them in the ranger of 270 peso per kilo of live chicken then in 2 kilos it prices 540 in this price they can already have a big profit.

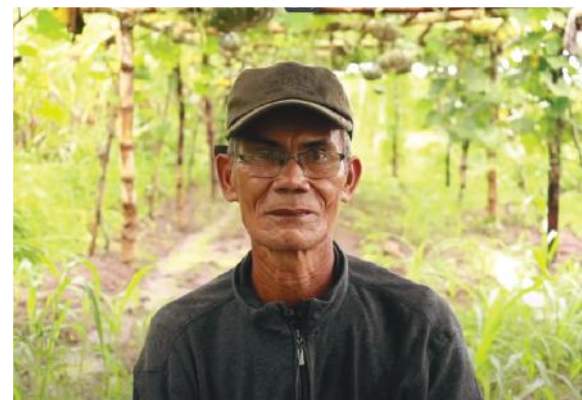
AMIA’s unwavering support extended beyond the initial provision of livestock. Recognizing the devastating impact of ASF, AMIA stepped in with insurance to cover their losses, demonstrating their commitment to their members even in times of crisis. This act of solidarity provided Shirley and her fellow farmers with a crucial safety net, allowing them to continue their agricultural pursuits without being overwhelmed by the losses they faced.

Despite this setback, Shirley’s resilience and optimism remained strong. Reflecting on the support she received, she expressed her gratitude: “DA and AMIA have full support to them because even in small needs they did not fail in supporting the farmers. They also motivate all the farmers to be responsible and very hands-on in their work. I want to thank DA and AMIA for all the interventions they provide to farmers in our village. DA and AMIA are a blessing to every farmer.”

Shirley’s story is a powerful reminder that with the right support and dedication, one can overcome significant challenges. Her experience underscores the importance of community support, family, and perseverance. Through her involvement with AMIA and the lessons learned from their programs, Shirley has exemplified how hard work, passion, and support can lead to remarkable achievements, even in the face of adversity. **H**









# Championing Climate Resilience in Sagay City, Negros Occidental

Jose Constantino, a dedicated farmer from Barangay Rizal, Sagay City, Negros Occidental, is redefining farming through climate-resilient and organic practices. As the chairman of the Menakalaw Farmers Beneficiaries Association (MEFABA) his journey represents the transformative impact of the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) Program. This initiative, spearheaded by the Department of Agriculture, aims to build resilient agricultural communities capable of thriving amid climate and economic challenges.

Jose's association previously relied on conventional farming methods, including chemical fertilizers and pesticides. However, through AMIA's capacity-building and climate adaptation strategies, he discovered the potential of organic farming. Inspired by participatory climate risk assessments and resilient agriculture technologies introduced by AMIA, Jose has become an advocate for sustainable farming. His commitment is evident in his adoption of organic solutions and practices that enrich the soil while reducing environmental harm.

One of Jose's notable achievements is integrating sustainable chicken production technology. Utilizing rice hulls in chicken housing, he mitigates unpleasant odors, reduces waste, and enhances the organic composition of his land. This method exemplifies the AMIA program's emphasis on integrating sustainable practices across various aspects of agricultural operations.

Jose's leadership has also inspired his community to explore the economic and environmental benefits of organic farming. By aligning traditional knowledge with modern climate-smart approaches, he has enabled farmers to reduce costs, boost yields, and preserve natural resources.

Jose envisions a farming community where organic practices are the norm, not the exception. He believes that reducing reliance on chemicals can lead to healthier ecosystems and more robust production cycles. His efforts highlight the AMIA Program's mission to institutionalize climate-resilient agriculture, ensuring sustainable livelihoods for farmers in the face of climate variability. **H**





# From Angry Wife to Happy Farmer

## The story of Jennifer Mamon with the AMIA program

Jennifer Mamon, a 36-year-old housewife from Ilongbukid, San Rafael, Iloilo, used to be an angry wife. With the weight of financial struggles and the pain of seeing her children suffer, Jennifer often found herself lashing out at her family. Her story, however, is one of resilience, love, and the extraordinary power of transformation brought by farming and the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) program.

Jennifer and her husband, who began farming at 16, were rice farmers. Their earnings barely covered daily expenses, leaving no room for emergencies. When their children fell sick one after another, the family's small savings were wiped out, and Jennifer's frustrations grew. Her pain reached its peak when she lost one of her five children, leaving her with three boys and one girl to raise and educate.

Desperate to provide more for her family, Jennifer looked back to her childhood. She remembered her mother teaching her how to grow ampalaya (bitter melon) and how its harvest once gave her daily allowance. Inspired by these memories, Jennifer decided to build a vegetable garden. She also ventured into raising native chickens and pigs, determined to give her children a better life.

Jennifer's farming journey wasn't without challenges. Pests threatened her vegetables, diseases like African Swine Fever (ASF) loomed over her pigs, and sustaining animal feed was a constant concern. Yet, Jennifer was determined to succeed. Her breakthrough came when her mother-in-law introduced her to the AMIA program.

Through AMIA seminars, Jennifer learned science-based techniques to protect and sustain her farm. For instance, she fortified





her biosafety measures, fed her sow with papaya, kangkong, and kamote, and maintained corn feeds for her chickens. Her efforts paid off. While ASF devastated neighboring farms, Jennifer's sow survived, gave birth twice, and brought her significant income.

The income from her farm transformed Jennifer's family life. She proudly shared how her sow's earnings allowed them to buy a motorcycle, which eased their daily commute. When her eldest child needed a bicycle and the second child needed a cellphone for online classes, Jennifer provided them without hesitation. Her farm's income also helped repair their once-dilapidated balcony, a dream she never thought possible.

Gone were the days when her children were ridiculed for lacking school supplies or proper nutrition. The family's quality of life improved, and Jennifer's anger was replaced with joy and hope. Even her children joined in the farming efforts, feeding the chickens and maintaining the garden, making them active contributors to their family's success.

Jennifer credits the AMIA program for lifting her family out of poverty and for inspiring her to dream bigger. Her involvement with farmers' groups and other organizations connected her to a supportive community; through shared experiences and knowledge, Jennifer learned that perseverance and collaboration could overcome even the toughest challenges.

In 2023, Jennifer and her group received a greenhouse through the AMIA program. The excitement of this new opportunity brought the group closer together, and Jennifer is eager to see their products prosper.

Today, Jennifer smiles as she looks at her blooming vegetables, healthy livestock, and her children who now dream alongside her. For Jennifer, farming isn't just a livelihood; it's a source of healing, pride, and a brighter future for her family.

Thanks to the AMIA program and her unyielding spirit, Jennifer has built a better life and inspired those around her to keep going, no matter the odds.**H**













# Lerry's optimism lead to life success

Lerry Vega, a cheerful and hardworking 66-year-old, lives in the quiet countryside of Numancia, Aklan, with her husband Leonido, 67. Together, they manage their 9,400-square-meter farm. Lerry's journey as a farmer began when she developed a love for gardening at 25 years old. Over time, her small garden blossomed into a full-fledged farm.

Life was not always easy for the Vegas. Before joining the Adaptation and Mitigation Initiative in Agriculture (AMIA) program, they struggled to make ends meet. But when the opportunity to participate in AMIA came, they eagerly embraced it, hoping for a brighter future. Their decision paid off.

Through AMIA, they received resources like water drums, hoses, boots, weighing scales, veggie tunnels, and a baboyan wala amoy (odorless piggery system). They also gained access to training and modern farming techniques. These interventions helped them achieve better harvests and a steady income of P37,000 every three to four months.

Despite their progress, challenges remained. During an El Niño season, their squash harvest yielded low income. Undeterred, the couple planted eggplants and bitter gourds, using seedlings provided

by AMIA. Although the results were similar, their resilience and optimism kept them going. They were also grateful to receive P10,000 in financial assistance through the Farmers Financial Assistance (FFA) program, which helped them weather tough times.

The Vegas diversified their efforts, adding rice production to their farm. On good seasons, they harvest up to 30 sacks of rice, earning P14 to P20 per kilogram. In less favorable seasons, their yield drops to 15 to 16 sacks, but their determination never wavers. Their hard work and persistence allowed them to save enough money to build a two-story house—a testament to their dedication and success.

Lerry attributes their achievements to the support from AMIA and her personal values of patience and generosity. “Primero lang ang madugay—need lang motivation,” she shares, emphasizing the importance of enduring challenges to reap meaningful rewards.

For Lerry and Leonido, farming is more than a livelihood; it's a way of life rooted in optimism and a desire to share their blessings with others. While they are unsure when they will retire, their story is a powerful reminder that with resilience, hope, and support, success is always within reach. **H**



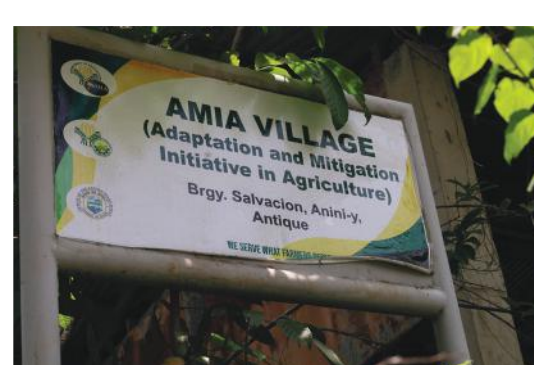
























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