



SAMBA: Samahang Mandaragat ng Banilad

The Tune of Hope for the Marginalized Fisherfolks



A barangay situated at the coastal shore of Pinamalayan, Oriental Mindoro, Banilad boasts a captivating white sand beach and exquisite highland. But, the lives of Baniladeños are from the beauty of its surrounding.

As a place that stands 15 kilometers away from the town center – a passable road, a proper water system, or a farm-to-market thoroughfare was impossible for Barangay Banilad. Fishing is also the people's main source of income, so having all these hindrances, it was hard for Baniladeños to make a sustainable livelihood.

This is when the fisherfolks decided to form an association that represents their Barangay, especially during calamities when they feel like they were being abandoned.

The Samahang Mandaragat ng Banilad (SAMBA) was established in 2007 by only 17 members and was first registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

“Dahil nga po sa kawalan ng representante ng mga mangingisda sa aming lugar, ito ay aming pinagsikapan na mairehistro para magkaroon kami ng boses dito sa bayan ng Pinamalayan, lalo na dito sa Barangay Banilad,” said Bernie Sañorin, President of SAMBA.



Since the formation of SAMBA, the members started working their way around the difficulties that surround their Barangay. They first constructed a water system that supplies water to over 130 households at a very affordable price of ₱50.00 for the minimum consumption of 10 cubic meters with an additional ₱10.00 per additional cubic meter.

Veronica Mago, one of the members, said that before the initiative of SAMBA to put up their Barangay's water system, the people of Banilad only rely on the nearby river.

“Dati, wala po talaga kaming tubig. Sa ilog lang po kami umaasa. Maaga po kaming umaalis para makapag-laba. Ngayon po, mayroon na kaming kanya-kanyang gripo sa mga bahay. Malaking tulong po sa amin ang patubig ng SAMBA,” she added.



On June 25, 2009, they applied for accreditation with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) as an organization which proved to be a great move for the group. With their registration to the DOLE, they became eligible to apply for a group livelihood assistance under the DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP).





Seeing the group's ingenuity, the DOLE, through the Oriental Mindoro Field Office (OMFO), approved their application for livelihood in 2019 granting them assistance worth ₱500,000.00 for the establishment of a bakery.

They proposed the bakery business because of the uncertainty of their gains from fishing due to the changes in the weather. They likewise wanted their people to save time and money to access bread.

Among the equipment provided by the DOLE were a dough roller, double deck oven, stainless flour mixer, stainless bread rack, stainless steel table, assorted polyethylene plastic and sando bags, polyethylene plastic for tasty bread, display rack, as well as raw materials like flour, sugar, lard, margarine, yeast, powder milk, eggs, cornstarch, cassava starch, vanilla, food colors, baking powder, and edible oil.



RODERICK TAMACAY
Director of DOLE-OMFO

Director Roderick Tamacay of the DOLE-OMFO stated that the bakery business sees a lot of potential for growth that is why they decided to approve the project.

He said, "Maganda ang potensyal ng business. Hindi lang sa location ng bakery kung hindi pati na rin sa mga namumuno dito. Nakita natin na successful 'yung mga ibang proyekto kaya iyon ang naging indicator natin para mabigyan sila ng tulong mula sa gobyerno."

Since the turnover of the project, the SAMBA bakery saw an increase in production and sales. From 2019's ₱588,945.00 to 2021's ₱700,000.00, it does not only become another source of funds for the group but also an employment-generating scheme for the community.

The association also enjoys other benefits such as coverage to PhilHealth, for those employed in the bakery, an additional source of profit shared at the end of the year, a patronage refund privilege, or what they call *Balik Tangkilik*, and access to training and seminars.



Training conducted by DOST in 2019

Also, because of their undertaking, SAMBA has done more than for their group. They gave a security blanket to the community for immediate assistance whenever they need it. A sense of brotherhood molded between the association and the people.

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Then Regional Director Joffrey Suyao commended the efforts of SAMBA in alleviating their lives. He said that the government continuously promotes poverty reduction which is why they would always extend their greatest effort to reach all potential beneficiaries.

"Nagsusumikap, nakikipag-coordinate, at nakikipag-partner ang DOLE MIMAROPA sa mga LGUs at sa ating komunidad sapagkat naglalayon kami na makatulong sa poverty reduction ng ating bansa. Bumababa po tayo upang makita ang mga pangangailangan ng ating mga komunidad," he added.