



“There is no barren land,  
only barren minds.”

*Bp. Jose Manguiran,  
Dipolog Diocese*



# A Preliminary Report on the State of Sustainable Organic Agriculture in Kapatagan, Lanao del Norte 2014

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A Requirement of the League of Organic  
Agriculture Municipalities, Inc. (LOAM)

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# Sustainable Organic Agriculture in Kapatagan, Lanao del Norte

(Preliminary Report 2014)

## A. Preliminaries

The adoption of sustainable organic agriculture in Kapatagan started in between the late 1990s and early 2000 with the Catholic Church and Non-Government Organizations as its pioneers. The Church, through the Social Action Center of the Diocese of Iligan, invited parish leaders from St. Francis Xavier Parish and underwent series of seminars on SOA. Among those who underwent such trainings and sincerely adopted the new ideas were Fredimor Pueblos, Arthur Balatero, Jimmy Tenebro, Mr. Bastasa and Melania Quiñon, among others.

The Tri-people Partnership for Peace and Development (Tri-PeaceDev) with its local partner in the municipality, the Demokratikong Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (dKMP) implemented SOA through their pilot area in Pulang Yuta.

The Local Government of Kapatagan, realizing the inappropriateness of petro-chemical based farming to address poverty of the people and the challenge of climate change made a formal claim of its being an organic municipality through a resolution adopted by the Sangguniang Bayan in 2008. Such declaration became one of the distinctive marks of Kapatagan, as one of the 22 municipalities of the province of Lanao del Norte.

Since then, serious efforts of living up to its self-proclaimed status have been exerted by the municipality through the municipal agriculture office, the Sangguniang Bayan and farmer-cooperators on the ground. The passage of an ordinance in 2008 banning, among others, the burning of rice straw was considered a breakthrough.



The institutionalization of the LGU's serious efforts of fully embracing SOA came a year later, in 2009. It was marked by the launch in November of that year of its pet program called "Agricultural, Coastal, Environmental Resources Development Program," commonly known as ACERDEV.

## B. Brief Municipal Profile

Kapatagan, a second class municipality is one of the 22 towns of the province of Lanao del Norte of Northern Mindanao Region. It has a total land area of approximately 25,048.41 hectares and a population of 51,916 (NSO, 2010).

Dominantly a rice-producing town, Kapatagan is bounded by the municipality of Lala and Panguil Bay on the North; Municipalities of Baroy and Salvador on the East; Municipality of Sapad in the Southeast; Municipality of Sultan Naga Dimaporo in the South and the province of Zamboanga del Sur on the Western and Northwestern part.

The municipality is 180 kilometres from Cagayan de Oro City, 89 kilometres from Iligan City, 20 kilometres from the Municipality of Tubod, the Capital Town of Lanao del Norte and 60 kilometres down East from Pagadian. It is a 60-minute ride by Ferry-land transportation from Ozamiz City, and 3.5 hour ride from Cotabato City via the Cotabato-Malabang-Sultan Naga Dimaporo-Kapatagan National Highway.

Kapatagan is located along the Cagayan de Oro-Pagadian-Zamboanga National Highway that is accessible by all types of vehicles.

## C. Report Proper

This Report covers five major aspects of the adoption of SOA in Kapatagan, namely:

- 1) Theoretical Appreciation
- 2) Alliance Building
- 3) SOA Application
- 4) Summary
- 5) Recommendations

### 1. Theoretical Appreciation, the birth of ACERDEV

#### 1.a Launch of ACERDEV

Building on the gains of the people in SOA, the LGU through a committee from the municipal planning and development office and municipal agriculture office came up with the program which is widely known as Agricultural, Coastal, Environmental Resources Development Program (ACERDEV).

As a program, ACERDEV seeks to address the challenge of poverty of the people and the destruction of the environment through the integration of SOA principles in the LGU's development programs and activities.



The ACERDEV was formally launched in Nov. 23, 2009 in Brgy. Bel-is in time with the launch of the LGU's 1.5-hectare Municipal Budwood Garden and Rubber Nursery. Guests from the Western Mindanao Integrated Agricultural Research Center (WESMIARC), Northern Mindanao Integrated Agricultural Research Center (NORMIARC), officials of the regional office of the DA-10 and the provincial government of Lanao del Norte were among those who graced the affair. All employees and officials of the municipality and barangay officials were



also there to participate in the rubber seedlings' ceremonial planting.

The Nursery was accredited with the bureau of Plant Industry of the Department of Agriculture-Manila in 2012.

### **1.b Mandatory Orientation on ACERDEV for employees, barangay and municipal officials**

The SOA is a “subversive” ideology. Subversive because it is a complete opposite of the present ideology of conventional farming which builds on the myth that food security can only be achieved through the use of chemical farming—and nothing else. Fed to our farmers through the concerned agencies of the governments and the effective use of mass media by the giant petro-chemical corporations, the corrupt ideology has rendered the small peoples of the world helpless against the sky-rocketing of chemical inputs' prices, and the irreversible damage of the farms' ecosystems.

Given this, the LGU like many other SOA advocates, believes that SOA is also a battle in the “hearts and mind” of the people. For it to effectively combat the corrupt ideology of chemical-farming, the LGU has to fight it with the new ideology of SOA—chemical farming's antithesis. In line with this, the LGU created a pool of educators from the MPDO, MICA and Municipal Agriculture Office (MAG) led by the local chief executive himself who conducted a general course on ACERDEV, covering SOA principles and ACERDEV's major programs. The general orientation took place in three batches in the first quarter of 2013, covering almost 200 employees and officials, and another three batches for over 300 barangay officials. The series of one-day orientations covered the following topics:

- i. Climate Change and Its Impact on the Municipality of Kapatagan
- ii. Critique of Pres. Marcos' Green Revolution
- iii. ACERDEV Proper
  - Local Poverty Situationer
  - 7 Dimensions of SOA
  - Salient Points of Organic Agriculture Act of 2008
  - FAITH/BIG/SALT/DIFS
  - Coastal Resources Management
  - Rubber-based farming
  - Alternative Medicine

## **2. Linkaging/Alliance Building**

### **2.a Local Government of Dumingag, Zamboanga del Sur**

The LGU-Kapatagan owes a lot from the experience of the Local Government of Dumingag under the leadership of Mayor Nacianceno Pacalioga. It is from the richness and kindness of Dumingag municipality that Kapatagan increased deepened its appreciation of SOA. On 22-24, 2011, twenty (20) farmers, five MPDO personnel, 1 from the Municipal Integrated Community Affairs Office (MICA) and SBM Alan Tabaquero



*Photos during Kapatagan's SOA training in Dumingag, Zamboanga del Sur.*

went to Dumingag to undergo the course on Sustainable Organic Agriculture and Rubber Production Trainers' Training held in Brgy. San Pedro, Dumingag, Zamboanga del Sur

On Oct. 15-31, 2011 Kapatagan went back to Dumingag for another round of training on SOA which was held at the Dumingag Institute of Sustainable Organic Agriculture (DISOA) in Brgy. Dapiwak. A total of 15 participants from the MAG, MPDO and MICA0 came back for another learning experience.

## **2.b Magsasaka at Siyentipiko para sa Pag-unlad ng Agrikultura (MASIPAG)**



*Top varieties after the First Cropping*

MASIPAG has been known not only in the Philippines but in other countries as well for its decades of resoluteness in its advocacy and proven practice in SOA. Cognizant of this and in view of Kapatagan's desire to acquire the right guidance in its campaign especially on the field of rice farming, it forged partnership with MASIPAG. On Feb. 22, 2012 MASIPAG Regional Coordinator Bobby Pagusara came to ink with Mayor Benjie Baguio the Memorandum of Agreement between them and the municipality.

Not long after the MOA signing, MASIPAG Orientation Seminar on Sustainable Agriculture (MOSSA) was held thereafter on May 28-30, 2012 in Brgy. De Asis. Thirty eight (38) farmers from barangays Curvada and De Asis, seven from the MICA0, one from MPDO and 5 from MAG participated in said two-day MOSSA.



*Mayor Benjie spoke with MOSSA Training participants in Brgy. De Asis.*

Not long after the MOSSA, first cropping of trial farms in both barangays were set up. Fifty trial rice varieties were sown in each of the two trials farms where the farmers can have a first-hand learning experience on which of the varieties would show outstanding qualities in the farms' particular environmental and cultural conditions. As of this writing, the 4<sup>th</sup> cropping--and the

last of the trial season has just been started.

On March 21-22, 2013 an exposure trip for the farmers was organized jointly by MASIPAG and LGU in Malitbog town and Brgy. Maluko, Manolo Fortich town in Bukidnon province and El Salvador, Misamis Oriental province. A total of 24 (18 farmers and 6 LGU personnel) joined in that learning trip.



*Manuel Labastilla of Masipag during MOSSA*



*Transplanting of trial varieties in Brgy. De Asis*

On December 21-22, 2013 four farmers participated in the MASIPAG Farmer's Guarantee System (MFGS) Orientation in Maigo, Lanao del Norte

Feb 12-13, 2014 three leaders from the people's organizations participated in the MFGS Training in the same town.

### **2.c Maranding Women Investors Multipurpose Cooperative (MWIMC)**

Fifteen punong barangays and 15 Barangay Kagawad (Chairperson-Comm on Agriculture) and 7 MICAIO staff participated in the Training on Organic Farming Advocacy conducted by MWIMC on Feb. 15-17, 2012

Participated in the Assessment of the Status of Organic Farming Promotion in the Province of Lanao del Norte dubbed as Talakayan sa Pagsusulong ng Organikong Pagsasaka (TPOP) conducted by MWIMC in partnership with DA-RFU 10 last April 4-5, 2013. One personnel each from MPDO, MAG and MENRO joined.

### **2.d Misamis University Community Extension Program (MUCEP)**

In line with ACERDEV, it has been the dream of Kapatagan to come up with a scientific or research-based Kapatagan Environmental Management Plan (KEMP). Incapable of doing it alone due to the limitation in its technical and financial resources, Kapatagan has partnered with the Misamis University for the specific undertaking.



*MU-LGU Research in coastal areas*

True to her dedication of serving the communities around her, the MUCEP readily offered her best researchers and field assistants for the joint undertaking. After the MOA signing in September 2012 with Dr. Karen Feliciano-de Leon, the research took off from April to June 2013 in 10 sample

barangays of the municipality. The research covered 7 study areas, namely: Flora, Fauna, Rivers, Marine, Air, Soil and Communities. These study areas were conducted in the preselected areas in the upland, lowland and coastal barangays.



Last January 27, 2014 the first round of validation of the research output was done with MUCEP Research Team. Adoption of the KEMP is expected in June this year.

### **2.e PAILIG DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION, INC.**

Last Sept 1, 2011 a Farm Planning Session with personnel from the MPDO was conducted with Iligan City-based PAILIG as facilitator at Rubber Nursery in Brgy. Bel-is. The activity aimed to enhance the capacity of LGU personnel to conduct farm planning in the communities based on the principles of SOA.

## **3. SOA Application**

This part of the report covers the actual implementation of SOA principles in different areas in the municipality.

### **3.1 Masipag Trial Farms in Brgys De Asis and Curvada**

First cropping of Trial farms in Brgys De Asis and Curvada managed by farmers people's organization were established in June 2012. A total of 38 cooperators have been involved. Today, the trial farms are at their last trial stage. Farmers have already identified their top 10 rice varieties from the original 50 that were given for trial. They are now on the production stage of the top varieties.

### **3.2 First Search for Best Mayor Benjie Bahay Kubo Garden**

On July 5, 2013 the LGU held the "First Search for Best Mayor Benjie Bahay Kubo Garden." Generally, it aimed to determine the extent of adoption of SOA among the households in Kapatagan as well as among the employees and officers of the municipality. The Search had the following specific objectives:

- Give recognition to FAITH adopters
- Determine the economic benefits of FAITH among the adopters
- Encourage non-FAITH adopters to adopt the same
- Promote the success of FAITH in and out of the municipality



*Cherrie May Villar. awardee of FAITH garden contest in Brgy. Durano*

Aside the from FAITH gardens, the Search also gave recognition to Organic Rice Practitioners. Ten were given cash award and certificate of commendation for their efforts in the promotion of SOA in their rice farms while more than a hundred households and 20 employees adopters were also extended cash award and certificates of commendation, during Kapatagan's 64<sup>th</sup> Foundation Anniversary last July 5, 2013.

From those over a hundred households, top 10 practitioner-households were selected and top 3 of whom were eventually honored as First, Second and Third Placers.

FAITH gardens collectively established by Purok leaders as well as those by barangay officials were also given special recognition through certificates and a little monetary consideration.

A Board of Judges composed of SBM Romellie Jose Rullo, MLGOO Vivian Cañete, MASIPAG Farmers Arthur Balatero and Fredimor Pueblos and West District Supervisor Ervin Plans toured around the 33 barangays of the municipality on June 19, 2013 to validate the initial survey conducted by MICAIO personnel led by Toto Monterona, and to determine the top 10 awardees.



*Awardee of FAITH garden contest in Brgy. Tipolo*

### **3.3 Organic Fertilizer Processing and Related Support Facilities**

#### **3.3.1 Household**

Community organizers from the MICAIO roamed around the barangays of the municipality to conduct seminars with a total of 1,441 persons on organic fertilizer processing such as OHN, TASIPALUSO, vermin culture, etc. As a result, 73 vermi beds were established at the household level. A seminar with women organizations of *dulao* granules making, herbal medicine and other oriental medicines were also conducted.

#### **3.3.2 Municipal (Organic Fertilizer Processing Center)**

The municipality produces 5 tons of bio-degradable waste daily from its domestic and commercial sources. To utilize the said waste, the LGU will soon operate its 3.6-million peso organic fertilizer processing facility in Brgy. Bel-is. Said facility, aside from being a processing center, has also a seminar hall with basic amenities designed specifically for the institutionalization of the LGU's education work on SOA.

#### **3.3.3 Dryer, Rice Mill and Warehouse for Organic Farming**

With counterpart funding from LPRAP 2014, a package of dryer, rice mill and warehouse will be established in Barangay De Asis. This facility is for the exclusive use of organic rice farmers in Masipag-assisted barangays in Curvada and De Asis.

### **3.4. Bamboo/Balite Nursery Establishment and Planting**

To complement the efforts addressing poverty and the erosion of farmlands and riverbanks, the LGU embarked on bamboo/balite planting especially along river banks. It began at the middle of 2013 by holding a forum on the Environmental and Economic Benefits of Bamboo. Experts from the DENR-Bukidnon and engineered bamboo investors came to speak on a forum with



*Bamboo planting materials in community nurseries*



96 farmers on August 5-6, 2013. Fifteen farmers were contracted by the LGU to raise bamboo planting materials in their respective areas.

Similar forum was conducted among DepEd officials the following month.

The LGU aims to procure 10,000 planting materials from community-based bamboo/balite nurseries .

### 3.5 Rubber-based Farming

Established in 2009, Kapatagan's Budwood Garden and Rubber Nursery has already supplied to individual farmers budded planting materials equivalent to over 200 hectares of previously cogon-dominated, idle lands. This year it aims to cover another 100 hectares of idle lands.



The Nursery is a holder of an accreditation from the BPI-Manila, the only LGU-managed nursery to acquire such recognition in region 10. On September 3-4 2013, a forum on the Rubber Plantation Management was conducted in the municipality with Dr. Romulo

Cena from the University of Southern Mindanao-North Cotabato as resource speaker.

## 4 Summary of Accomplishment

ACERDEV was launched in 2009 with the launching of the Municipal Budwood Garden and Rubber Nursery. But actual takeoff of the SOA in the farms started two years later, in 2011. It formally began with the dispatch of the community organizers under the MICA O. After three years since then, major achievements have been noted in the following fields:

- a) Theoretical and legal bases of ACERDEV has been discussed by MICA O in all of the 33 barangays with their officials during regular and special sessions as well as among the employees, barangay and municipal officials
- b) Knowledge and skills in organic fertilizer making were conducted among 1,441 households
- c) Recognized over a hundred SOA adopters through FAITH, 10 SOA rice farmers, 20 employees and officers
- d) Now on the 4<sup>th</sup> cropping of two MASIPAG trial farms
- e) Forged alliance with MASIPAG, LGU-Duminguag and Misamis University for the needed trainings and other important technical support
- f) Adoption of FAITH added a minimum of 30 peso daily income or 900 peso monthly income for adopters
- g) Rubber Nursery has covered over 200 hectares of idle lands

## 5 Recommendations

The challenges that need to be addressed by the LGU if it wants to succeed in its campaign on SOA are the following:

- a. Increase monitoring on the communities/households who have initially adopted SOA
- b. Tap or allow long-time SOA practitioners especially those trained by the Church and NGOs to play direct and important role in the implementation of SOA
- c. Continue internal consolidation and capability-building efforts among ACERDEV implementers/organizers especially those assigned in rice and other staple crops
- d. Provide avenue for the marketing of organic products especially from the communities
- e. Strengthen SOA committees in barangay councils and institutionalize cooperation among them
- f. Adopt legislative and executive measures to protect and enhance the gains in SOA (e.g. Plastic Holiday, Declaration of SOA barangays, balik-bayong, etc)
- g. Enhance partnerships with SOA institutions/movements locally or abroad for sharing of learning experiences
- h. Continue to provide the needed support facilities for SOA such as driers, mills, warehouse and the like
- i. Systematize documentation of SOA experience