



operation aimed at ensuring that products are consistently manufactured to a specified quality appropriate to their intended use."

"She has helped small and medium-sized enterprises improve their food safety standards," says Juvy Benliro, trade and industry development specialist, Department of Trade and Industry in Capiz. "Thus, she has helped the food processing industry in the province become more competitive in the local and global markets."

The top three food products in the province are canned smoked crabmeat, canned sardines, and pickled and preserved fruits and vegetables. In 2007, the industry exported \$10 million worth of products to the United States and sold 10 million pesos worth of food products locally.

Encabo is saddened that Miura will return to Japan in March 2011. "I consider myself lucky to have had a specialist like Naoko at my company," he says. "She provided an expert's perspective."

For her part, Miura is pleased that she has been of service to entrepreneurs like Encabo during her two-year stint. When asked what accomplishments, professional and personal, she was most proud of, she replies, "One of my clients has improved his plant by my recommendation, and I understand culture in the Philippines and love it."

While Miura will miss her friends and native Filipino dishes, her photographs will always remind her that she has effectively shared her knowledge with Filipinos who are grateful for her assistance.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH NGO

# Profiting from Ecological Balance

A project brings back ecological balance and provides incomes to the poor coastal community of Balaring in Silay City. The next step: a program that will achieve the same results in a mountain setting.

The barangay of Balaring in Silay City is synonymous with fresh seafood. Many customers feast on the shellfish and sea fish served at seven restaurants in the area. Fisher folk earn a lot from the abundant mud crabs and oysters.

Tourists flock to the Balaring Coastal Ecotourism Area. There, they enjoy walking on the 700-meter bamboo footbridge, watching the herons and egrets, and planting mangroves.

1 It's hard to believe that just a few years ago, the residents of Balaring were in dire straits. Years of cutting mangroves for firewood and converting mangrove swamps into fishponds had harmed the marine life in the area. By the mid-1990s, their livelihoods as fishermen were threatened.

2 Ikaw Ako Japan Negros Partnership for Environmental Protection (Ikaw Ako) lent a helping hand to the poor community. The Japanese non-government organization (NGO) established the Balaring Coastal Ecotourism Area in 1997. In that year, Ikaw Ako started planting mangroves in the area to revive the mangrove swamps.

Mangrove swamps play an important role in the environment. "They serve as nurseries for fish and shellfish," says Mari Kurata, a forester and coordinator of Ikaw Ako. "Mangroves provide food for many marine species. Their tangled roots protect the shores from erosion, and they provide shelter for many animals." The NGO has reforested more than 20 hectares of mangrove swamps in Negros Island.



3 In 2007, Ikaw Ako partnered with JICA on a project to reforest the mangroves in other parts of Negros Island. The project, completed in 2010, created and carried out a mangrove reforestation plan in cooperation with project stakeholders. The NGO works with the Silay City government and the Balaring Mangrove Planters Association (BAMPA) to manage the Balaring Coastal Ecotourism Area.

Nelly Dunlao, a BAMPA member, spends many mornings planting mangrove seedlings. She recalls how she and her neighbors used to worry that the strong waves would wash away their houses into the sea. Now that the mangroves have stabilized the shorelines with their root systems, they are assured of the safety of their homes.

4 The next step: a project that will restore ecological balance and provide livelihoods to the communities around the Malisbog watershed. Last year, Ikaw Ako and JICA agreed to carry out the project "Watershed Reforestation and Environmental Education Programs - Introduction of Ecotourism" in the area.

"We have focused on activities in the coastal area, but because the water from the mountains flow into the ocean, we must now work on the mountainside," says Kurata. The project aims to set up a plant nursery and a program for students and other visitors to plant trees in the watershed. In the process, it will generate a steady stream of visitors to the area, which has many waterfalls and much ecotourism potential. The project will end in 2013.

## GRASSROOTS PROJECT FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH THE REFORESTATION OF MANGROVE AREAS IN NEGROS ISLAND

### PROJECT SITE:

The municipalities of Cauayan, Sipalay, and Hinoba-an in Negros Occidental

### OBJECTIVES:

- To create, implement, and maintain a mangrove reforestation plan in cooperation with project stakeholders
- To promote crab raising in the mangrove swamps as an additional means of livelihood
- To promote an environmental education program in cooperation with a school

DURATION: 2007 to 2010

COST: 9.7 million yen

## WATERSHED REFORESTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS - INTRODUCTION OF ECOTOURISM

### PROJECT SITE:

Silay City, Negros Occidental

### OBJECTIVES:

- To construct and properly utilize a plant nursery
- To improve the local people's acceptance of visitors who want to participate in reforestation
- To promote environmental education

DURATION: 2010 to 2013

COST: 28.9 million yen

