

## Doing more with less from rice farming...

### A story of TCP3 graduates

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Farming as her sole source of living, tilling the land she does not own to raise a family of eight, lowly educated, yet she was able to send her children to school.

Such is the life of Rogelia Batobalonos, 60, of Charito, Bayugan, Agusan del Sur. Since 1985, after her husband passed away, she was forced to manage the farm for her family's survival as she has no other source of income to earn a living. Managing a 1.5 ha of land is wide enough for a single person to manage. Rogelia was 37 then and she got hard time to manage the farm specially that she was not used to it, but she has no choice.

She planted traditional variety at the start, as she did not yet know the varieties recommended for her locality. What she usually did in her farm was what she thought was good enough.

It was in 2007 when the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Local Government Unit of Bayugan introduced to her community the new rice technology – varieties, seeding rate, amount and time of fertilizer application, among other things. Rogelia planted PSB Rc82 and for the first time she got a big harvest, from her base line that was 2.33t/ha, now her harvest played within the range of 5.35 – 5.71t/ha for the four cropping seasons.

Time runs fast and with God's provision, she was able to send her son to college and finished automotive course in a prestigious school in the region. Her other children have graduated in high school but were not able to continue to college due to personal reasons. Rogelia's son is now supporting the family for a living. "Daghan gyud kaayo ko og natun-an sa programa sa JICA-TCP3 [I've learned a lot from the program of JICA-TCP3]. Kung dili tungod sa mga bag-ong teknolohiya nga ilang gi-share kanamo, dili unta magmalambuon ang among panguma ilabina kanako nga nakahatag gayud og kalambuan sa akong ani nga maoy hinungdan nga nakasugakod kami sa among panginabuhi ug napahuman nako ang akong anak sa kolehiyo [If not because of the new technologies that they shared to us, our farming will not be progressive especially to me that it gave me bountiful harvest, which helped us survived from our day-to-day

living and have made my son finished in college].

Constant monitoring was the best thing that she did in managing her farm with her youngest son as her assistant. Truly, the existence of TCP3 in Charito gave her a number of yield enhancing and cost-saving farming technologies such as LCC (a tool to diagnose the nitrogen deficiency of rice), MOET (a diagnostic kit for soil nutrient deficiency), AESA (Agro-ecosystem Analysis), Pest Management and other technologies in rice farming, through a comprehensive trainings and technology demonstrations conducted in their barangay.

Another farmer from Charito, Diosdado Rebutada, now 47, migrated with his wife and children from Negros Occidental to Charito, Bayugan, Agusan del Sur.

Having only finished high school, Diosdado opted to go back to the farm, as he has been in farming since childhood. He pointed out, however, that the farming practices during his childhood were so different from the new technology this time. For instance, farmers usually used two to three bags of seeds for one hectare in the past, which he said is a great contrast to the recommended 40kg/ha now.

By 1982, he started farming a 2.5-hectare riceland, and was satisfied with the yield as he did not know yet that he can do more to increase his produce. Aside from rice farming, he also planted vegetables beside the farm and generated a good harvest, which his family sold to the market and the rest was intended for home consumption. Diosdado planted eggplant, string beans, okra and bitter gourd.

When the TCP3 Farmers' Field School started in Charito in 2007, "didto ko lang na-realized nga daghan pa diay ko og angay masayran aron muusbaw pa ang akong abot [I realized that I still have to learn more to increase my yield]," Diosdado said laughing.

Everything that was taught to us was something new, he said. The project gave him some seeds, thereby encouraging him to plant more. He is ever thankful for the assistance and the new technology as he reached an average of 5.71t/ha in the 1<sup>st</sup> cropping and increased to 5.91t/ha in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cropping. However, his income from vegetable production declined due to weather condition. As a result, he now ventured into pig raising to augment his income from rice



farming.

Speaking on behalf of the other TCP3 graduates, Diosdado claimed that they have learned so much through TCP3. For one thing, they learned how to use agricultural chemicals properly and when. They have also learned the proper amount and timing of fertilizer application, as well as the use of rice straw in the farm. "Kaniadto dako kaayo ko og gasto sa abono kay kada lihok mag-sige raman ko og palit, apan karon nga daghan na ko og nakat-unan nga teknolohiya isa na niini ang pag-gamit og organikong abono, dili na ko magastuan pag-ayo sa suplay sa abono sa akong basakan [Before, I spent a lot for fertilizers but now I can save since I have learned about the use of organic fertilizers]".