



DOLE Good News

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

In Luzon, DTCs' tripartite representatives validate HRD Masterplan for sugarcane industry

Secretary Baldoz, in a dialogue with tripartite partners, called for greater collaboration, support, and commitment to a national Human Resource Development masterplan that would eventually achieve decent work and better quality of lives for the most vulnerable workers in the sugarcane industry.



Labor Secretary Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz called on its tripartite partners, which include mill workers, field workers, planters sector, millers, regional directors and staff of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Regional Tripartite Wage and Productivity Boards (RTWPBs) in regions 2, 3, 4-A and 5 to greater collaboration, support, and commitment in coming up with a national Human Resource Development (HRD) masterplan that would eventually achieve decent work and better quality of lives for the most vulnerable workers in the sugarcane industry.

Baldoz underscored this message at the opening of a two-day Luzon Cluster

Consultation Workshop on the Formulation of HRD Master Plan in the Sugarcane Industry last January 8-9, 2015 at Lancaster Hotel, Mandaluyong City.

Undersecretary Ciriaco A. Lagunzad III, who headed the workshop, reassured the participants that safety nets shall be provided by the government to ensure greater productivity in the industry. He said social protection for the workers is one of the government's top priority. "The sugar mills cannot run without the canes and canes cannot grow without the workers," he emphasized.

The HRD masterplan is envisioned to support the sugarcane industry towards the path of greater productivity

and competitiveness in anticipation of the reduction of tariff rates on imported sugar to five percent in 2015. This tariff reduction seeks to prepare the local industry to compete with the produce of other ASEAN countries.

There will be three more consultation workshops in next two months, one each in the Visayas cluster (Regions 7 and 8), Mindanao Cluster (regions 10, 11 and 12) and Bacolod (covering Panay and Negros Occidental provinces). A national consultation workshop will be conducted after these series of cluster consultations. There are 26 milling districts all over the country, 11 of them in Panay and Negros Occidental provinces.

PACU reports 100 percent assistance to walk-in clients

DOLE Legal Service Director Romeo M. Montefalco Jr. has reported to Labor and Employment Secretary Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz that the Public Assistance and Complaints Unit, or PACU, which the Legal Service supervises, had assisted fully and completely all the 227 walk-in PACU clients who visited the unit from 5 to 28 January 2015.

“We are happy that despite the increase in the number of walk-in clients visiting the unit and the limited number of staff that we have, we were able to serve these clients satisfactorily,” Montefalco said in his report.

The PACU, according to Montefalco, also dealt on complaints of 14 clients who came in between 23 and 29 of December 2014. “These were carried-over complaints,” he said.

On a daily basis, January 5 was the day the unit served the highest number of clients, at 25, followed by January 7 when seven clients came and were promptly assisted.

Legal Service lawyers alternately assigned to the PACU resolved 54 legal issues, with illegal dismissal with the most number of complainants, at 30. They were advised to file formal legal complaints before the National Labor Relations Commission, or to submit them for Single Entry Approach (SEnA) mediation-conciliation in proper DOLE offices.

Separation pay issues were the concern of 29 clients. They were given the

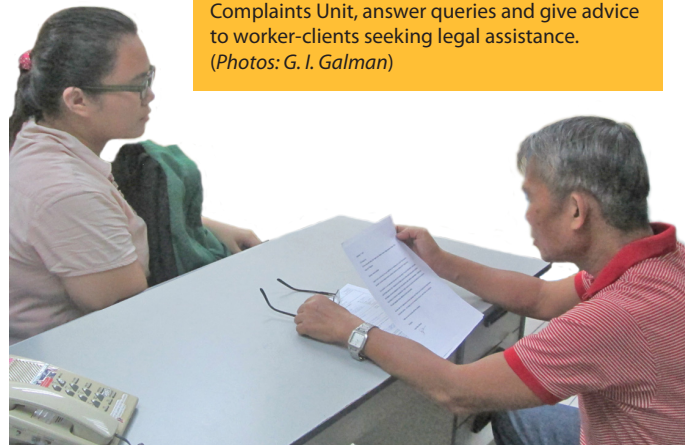


Atty. Maria Aisa O. Dimacuja (right) and Rodrigo O. Pereña, legal assistant (below, right), of the DOLE-Legal Service Public Assistance and Complaints Unit, answer queries and give advice to worker-clients seeking legal assistance. (Photos: G. I. Galman)

same advice received by complainants in illegal termination issues. The other issues with high number of clients are as follows: (1) non-payment of 13th month pay (12 clients); and non-remittance of social security premiums (SSS, Pag-IBIG, PhilHealth) (49 clients).

Baldoz commended the Legal Service for its work in the PACU, it being a frontline office of the DOLE.

“The PACU under the Legal Research and Assistance Division of the Legal Service is a frontline office and I am pleased that it continues to be com-



mitted to provide prompt and efficient service to the public,” she said.

“The PACU welcomes employees and employers for assistance with respect to issues concerning all labor matters,” Atty. Montefalco said.

**If you believe
in Good News,
tell us.**



The Labor Communications Office is open to receiving letters from readers expressing their views and comments, and/or suggestions on articles that appear on the DOLE Good News. Letters should be no more than a hundred words. Your letters will be published in succeeding issues of the DOLE Good News. Send your letters to:

Department of Labor and Employment
Labor Communications Office
6th Flr. DOLE Bldg. Muralla St.
Intramuros, Manila

or e-mail us at dole_lco@yahoo.com/
laborcommunications@gmail.com

DOLE Good News



The DOLE Good News is published by the Department of Labor and Employment, with editorial office at the Labor Communications Office, 6th Floor, DOLE Building, Intramuros, Manila. The views expressed herein are those of the writers and/or their sources and do not necessarily reflect those of the DOLE or the Philippine Government's.

Readers' queries, comments, and suggestions are welcome. Mail or fax them in, or call us at telephone numbers 527-3000 loc. 621. Our fax number is 527-3446. You may also visit our website: www.dole.gov.ph; or e-mail us at dole_lco@yahoo.com or laborcommunications@gmail.com.

Editor
NICON F. FAMERONAG
Director, LCO

Associate Editor
CATHERINE MARIE E. VILLAFLORES

Staff Writers
CELESTE T. MARING
HAZEL JOY T. GALAMAY
MA. VERONICA R. ALMAZORA

Graphic Artist
GREGORIO I. GALMAN

Photographer
JOMAR S. LAGMAY

Circulation Manager
GIRLIE MARLYN E. ARCE

Contributing Regional Writers

DIANA JOYZ ESGUERRA - NCR

JULIENNE FORTUNATO - CAR

ARLY S. VALDEZ - Region 1

REGINALD B. ESTIOCO - Region 2

JEREMIAH M. BORJA - Region 3

FRANZ RAYMOND AQUINO - Region 4A

ROSEMARIE CAMPOS - Region 4B

RAYMOND P. ESCALANTE - Region 5

AMALIA N. JUDICPA - Region 6

LUCHEL TANIZA - Region 7

MELDY TABANAO - Region 8

GAY IRIS TANGCALAGAN - Region 9

MILDRED E. DABLIO - Region 10

SHERWIN B. MANUAL - Region 11

MICHELLET. OLOG - Region 12

IRIS C. ASIS - Caraga

OIC-Assistant Secretary and Concurrent Director of the Human Resource Development Service Katherine B. Brimon reported that DOLE was recently named by the Civil Service Commission as one of the target recipients of the Core Human Resource Management Professional Development Program. DOLE joins four other National Government Agencies (NGAs) and 11 Provincial Governments and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The five-month program aims to arm Human Resource Management Practitioners (HRMPs) of the priority agencies with strategies, to smoothen the progress of achieving the third maturity level, under the Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM) Framework. DOLE, for the second time, was conferred with level 2 status on its accreditation on 27 March 2014, denoting the Department has maintained satisfactory implementation of HR programs and systems.

“DOLE was identified by the CSC to benefit from the specialized training program for public human resource management, which will cover courses on Strategic HR; Competency-Based Recruitment, Selection, and Placement; Performance Management, Rewards and Recognition; Learning and Development; and Employee Relations, in the process equipping them

DOLE is one of priority agencies for PRIME-HRM level upgrade

with skills and understanding on the fundamentals of transforming HR into a strategic partner of the Department in achieving its vision and completing our mission for Filipino workers here and abroad,” Brimon said.

This rare opportunity to be a recipient of what is considered a scholarship was welcomed with fervour by the participating offices. Executive Director Arthur Luis Florentin of the CSC-Civil Service Institute emphasized that the goal is to assist the identified offices, who are either in level 1 or 2, reach the level 3 maturity in PRIME-HRM. To ensure progression, participants will be required with tangible outputs, such as Strategic HR Plan, Competency-Based Recruitment, Selection and Placement System, Competency-Based Workplace Learning and Development Plan, Strategic Performance Management System, and Employee Relations Program, that are in line with the requirements of PRIME-HRM.

Discussions and workshops on the key aspects of the course formed a reservoir of knowledge and skills the participants will make use of as they attempt to develop the Strategic HR Plan of their respective offices.

“Luckily, for DOLE, we have started developing these systems/plans in

2011. The SPMS, for one, is now on its fourth year of implementation. In fact, our latest initiative was linking SPMS with the DOLE’s rewards and recognition program, the guidelines of which was submitted to CSC last year for its approval. Another is our effort to institutionalize the Competency-Based Training and Development, wherein Services, Bureaus, and Regional Offices have been very involved at developing the assessment tools. Implementation in six bureaus is already in progress. As to HR plan, initial steps to develop our plan were undertaken in 2013. A committee was even formed for this purpose. But now, with CSI’s commitment to assist priority agencies, finalization of our HR plan is guaranteed,” Brimon shared.

The Department’s inclusion in the program means acknowledgement of its hard work in making HR functions strategic and responsive to the needs of both the organization and its employees. Further developments will be pursued by the HRDS in the future to ensure sustainability.

“While we admit that there are tasks yet to be done towards becoming the Center for HR Excellence, one thing is certain: our concerted efforts will get us there soon,” Brimon concluded.



OIC-Assistant Secretary and concurrent Director of the Human Resource Development Service Katherine Brimon (left) says that the Department’s inclusion in the CSC’s program means acknowledgement of the DOLE’s hard work in making HR functions strategic and responsive to the needs of both the organization and its employees.

NRCO starts the year with entrepreneurial development training in QC

By MARCO ANTHOLIN SANTOS/ANTONETTE CAÑETE

The National Reintegration Center for OFWs (NRCO) conducted an Entrepreneurial Development Training (EDT) for 16 former Overseas Filipino Workers in Quezon City last 14 January 2015 to kick off the new year. NCR Reintegration Officer, Marco Antholin Santos, spearheaded the said training.

Financial awareness and managing micro enterprises were among the main topics of the training, followed by an open forum to further the discussions where the participants were given the chance to clarify matters pertaining to the “how and what” of the training that they can benefit.

Santos also gave pointers on the programs and services of the Department of Labor and Employment. As per report, a total of 4,412 OFWs and their families received livelihood assistance in the form of starter kits, tools and jigs under the NRCO program, with 304



NRCO-NCR Reintegration Officer Marco Antholin Santos explains to former OFWs the topics under the entrepreneurial development training. (photo: M. A. Santos)

beneficiaries coming from NCR, receiving total of P3.02-M livelihood assistance in the previous year.

The conduct of EDT in Quezon City is in response to the invitation of previous NRCO livelihood beneficiary and former OFW Teresa Furigay. She generously extended her assistance for the said training as she permitted

the NRCO to utilize her front yard for the said activity.

“Ito po ay maliit na tulong lamang para sa kapwa ko OFWs,” Furigay said. “Salamat po sa DOLE at NRCO,” she added.

Beneficiaries are former OFWs and their families, and residents from Commonwealth, Quezon City whom she met at the church she regularly attends.

Two former Overseas Filipino Workers received livelihood assistance from the National Reintegration Center for OFWs of the Department of Labor and Employment.

Merle Espina and Senando Gutierrez, both from Muntinlupa City, received the assistance in the form of goods to start a neighborhood store last 13 January 2015.

Espina, a former household service worker from Dubai, has experienced multiple change of employers. She decided to return to the Philippines for good and for her family.

“Iba pa rin po kapag sama-sama ang pamilya,” said Espina while thanking the DOLE-NRCO for the opportunity extended to her and to her family. “This is a simple way to start a

In Muntinlupa, NRCO awards livelihood assistance to two former OFWs

humble means of earning income,” she added.

The other beneficiary is Senando Gutierrez, who is a former undocumented migrant worker in Japan. He made a

sudden turn-around when he was caught and deported to the country.

According to him, he decided to stay for good. With his ample savings and assistance extended to him by DOLE-NRCO, he decided to be an entrepreneur.

“I was able to put up and start a humble sari-sari store in my front yard. Thank you very much, DOLE-NRCO,” Gutierrez said.

The NRCO Livelihood Assistance Program Awarding was facilitated by Emy Misa of the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) Muntinlupa and NCR Reintegration Officer Marco Antholin Santos.



Merle Espina and Senando Gutierrez, both former OFWs, beam after receiving their livelihood packages.

“In 2014, a total of 72,343 jobseekers in Region 1 landed in jobs because of the strong coordination between the Department of Labor and Employment Regional Office 1 and the Public Employment Service Offices (PESOs).”

This was the statement of DOLE Regional Director Grace Ursua at the Regional PESO Year-end Performance Assessment held in Bantay, Ilocos Sur in January.

Lauding the region’s PESO managers, Director Ursua said PESO contribution to last year’s employment facilitation has exceeded accomplishments in 2013 by 103 percent, or an increase of 2,215 employed persons.

“This occasion is a good venue to highlight all your invaluable efforts in providing prompt, timely, and effective employment facilitation services in your respective jurisdictions,” Ursua told the 75 PESO managers in attendance.

“I also take this opportunity to share that our partnership has earned for the whole region three milestones awards in the recently concluded DOLE-wide YEPA, namely, Top Three Outstanding Regions and special citations for being one of the top three finalists in the implementation of the SPES, livelihood program, and Labor and Employment Education Services (LEES),” she added.

Citing reports from its field offices, Director Ursua said Pangasinan led other provinces in job placement with 35,851 jobseekers employed; Ilocos Sur was next with 18,094; 11,178 were employed in Ilocos Norte, and in La Union, 7,270.

“With your steadfast commitment to deliver decent work to our workers, you have willingly accepted greater responsibilities, so much so that your job facilitation function has expanded to include other programs of the DOLE,” she said.

In the implementation of the DOLE’s livelihood program, Pangasinan PESO clinched the Best PESO award in the provincial category, while Candon City bagged the award in the city category; Bacnotan, La Union for 1st to 2nd class municipalities, and Magsingal, Ilocos Sur for 3rd to 5th class municipalities.

In Region 1, strong PESO support helps DOLE place over 72-K jobseekers in 2014

Meanwhile, Ilocos Norte PESO led the provinces in the implementation of SPES; while Laoag City beat the others in the city category; Rosales, Pangasinan for the 1st to 2nd class municipalities, and Sarrat, Ilocos Norte for 3rd to 5th class municipalities.

“Congratulations for a job well done. Together, let us continue harnessing our human resources and building the capacities of our clients to make them our active partners in achieving inclusive growth,” Director Ursua said. (*Arly Sta. Ana-Valdez*)



DOLE Regional Office No. 1 Director Grace Ursua (top), lauded the region’s PESO managers for their contribution for last year’s employment facilitation, such as the Labor Day job fair, which attracted thousands of jobseekers.



Officials and staff of the Lyceum of the Philippines University and the DOLE-NCR Manila Field Office are all smiles after the conduct of a capacity building exercise for a school-based PESO.

DOLE builds capacity of NCR's first school-based PESO at LPU

The Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU) - Manila and DOLE-NCR's Manila Field Office (MFO) have taken a step further in strengthening its partnership to build the capacity of the region's first school-based Public Employment Service Office (PESO) at LPU.

LPU-Manila Human Resources Director Myrna G. Reyes welcomed the DOLE-NCR MFO led by Director Leonides P. Castillon, Jr. at the university's Multi-Purpose Hall in Intramuros, Manila on January 23, 2015 for a capacity building exercise entitled "Orientation on DOLE Employment Programs Implemented by a School-Based PESO."

DOLE-NCR Employment Promotion and Workers' Welfare (EPWW) Senior LEO Genevieve T. De Castro started with the presentation of the salient points of the PESO Act of 1999. She also elaborated on Labor Market Information (LMI) and Project JobsFit which identified key employment drivers in the country through 2020.

With the popularity of job fairs and online job boards, MFO Senior LEO Labor Law Compliance Officer

(LLCO) Anthony D. Sapasap apprised the participants of job fair and Phil-Job.net guidelines for reference.

Complementing this was MFO Senior LEO/LLCO Ryan Roberto E. Delos Reyes' exhaustive discussion of career guidance and employment coaching. He also introduced DOLE's Special Program for the Employment of Students (SPES).

Considering the entrepreneurial spirit thriving among some students and graduates alike, MFO Senior LEO/LLCO Zarah Jane S. Cabrera underscored the benefits of venturing to be one's own boss, and offered information about DOLE's Youth Entrepreneurship Support (YES) Program.

A team of seasoned regional and field office labor and employment officers (LEOs) shared their knowledge and experiences in program implementation to 15 LPU-Manila PESO staff members.

Director Castillon punctuated the event with a presentation of the Statistical Performance Reporting System (SPRS) to which the LPU-Manila PESO must comply with as

part of the DOLE-NCR-LPU-Manila agreement in November 4, 2014.

"We hope that this capacity-building activity will further strengthen our partnership and make us more effective in implementing programs for the benefit of our clients," concluded Director Castillon.

Expressing her gratitude to the DOLE-NCR MFO team for their efforts, Director Reyes conveyed, "... this orientation seminar will positively capacitate us in order to successfully implement PESO programs in our university."

The two institutions have agreed to establish a responsive school-based PESO mandated under the PESO Act of 1999.

Labor Secretary Rosalinda D. Baldoz described the cooperation as "... in line with efforts of the government to strengthen public-private sector partnerships in the pursuit of President Benigno S. Aquino III's overarching goal to nurture and develop the country's human resources, push back joblessness in the grassroots, and strengthen labor and employment facilitation in the country ." (Richard G. Valenzuela with Jeremiah T. Carlos)

DOLE Region 8 bares 2014 performance scorecard, sets new directions for 2015

DOLE Regional Office No. 8 chief Elias Cayanong said at a management committee meeting of the regional office that while 2014 was a tough year, it managed to deliver its key services to its clients and achieved many of its key targets.

“The past year was tough for us considering the natural calamities that beset the region still recovering from Typhoon Yolanda. But I salute our officials and staff for their remarkable resiliency, energy, performance, loyalty, and commitment that they invested in their work,” he said.

The regional office, he said, has achieved 99 percent of its target in terms of number of beneficiaries and 90 percent in budget utilisation for the Special Program for Employment of Students, or SPES, the DOLE’s leading employment facilitation program.

On the Government Internship Program, or GIP, he said the regional office exceeded its target by 8 percent, and surpassed its targets in labor market information delivery and public employment services, also in terms of number of clients and institutions served.

On the new Labor Laws Compliance System, Cayanong reported that the regional office covered 111 percent of its targeted establishments and 100 percent of its target number of establishments with deficiencies provided with free appropriate assistance leading to correction and compliance.

On conciliation assistance through the Single Entry Approach, or SENa, the regional office scored 80 percent in settlement rate, surpassing its target of 75 percent. It scored 97 percent in disposition rate, and achieved 100 percent of its target on the Speedy and Efficient Delivery of Labor Justice (SpeED).

On livelihood, the regional office exceeded by 12 percent its targets under the DOLE Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (DILEEP).

In his presentation of the regional direction for 2015, Cayanong emphasised the importance of collaboration and convergence, as well as the right attitude, as key elements necessary to achieve regional performance targets.

“We have introduced the Microsoft One as an IT support because I expect on-time

and real time reports in a synchronised and efficient manner,” he said.

He also bared the likelihood of a reshuffle or a cross-training for employees to give them opportunity to learn the whole facets of DOLE operation.

“We all have to learn other people’s jobs, so job and people alignment in the regional office is needed to understand and define how the different areas of our work sync with one another,” he said.

It is in financial management that Cayanong said the regional office will put more focus.

“We have set up teams to monitor the liquidation of DOLE-funded projects and to fast-track review and approval. Copies of cash programs and monthly cash plans per field office will be provided as guide for setting up utilisation targets. I expect fast and efficient disbursement of project funds,” he said.

Finally, the regional official challenged all members of the regional office to unite and work towards a common goal—achieving the public mission to promote gainful employment, develop human resources, protect workers and promote their welfare, and maintain industrial peace.

“I see in us the potential to take the regional office to an exciting new level of excellence. Together, we can do it,” he said. (LMG)

Regional Director Raymond D. Agravante has awarded certificates of accreditation to four new occupational safety and health practitioners in Northern Mindanao, bringing the DOLE Regional Office No. 10’s continues drive to strengthen the administration and enforcement of occupational safety and health to a higher level.

“The accreditation of OSH practitioners seeks to enhance the culture of safety and health and voluntary compliance with general labor standards, pursuant to D.O. No. 16 Series of 2001,” said Agravante.

“The accreditation will increase the number of competent individuals qualified to carry out the provisions of the OSHS, thereby reducing hazards and accidents in the workplace,” he added.

Two of the four new OSH practitioners are Engr. June G. Blancaflor, electrical foreman; and Engr. Winifred L. Madera, jr., control room operator. Both are connected with STEAG State Power Inc., located in Balacanas, Villanueva, Misamis Oriental.

They were awarded their accreditation certificates by DOLE Assistant Regional Director Rodrigo A. Deloso at a ceremony on 12 January 2015 at the DOLE WODP

In North Mindanao, DOLE accredits four new OSH practitioners

By MILDRED E. DABLIO

Training Centre on Kauswagan Highway, Cagayan de Oro City.

The other two new OSH practitioners are Engr. Alvin M. Villanueva, safety and health section chief of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ Bureau of Mines and geosciences located in Macabalan, Cagayan de Oro City, and Agnes L. Sato, senior safety engineer of the National Grid Corporation of the

Philippines-Mindanao Systems Operation in Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City. Agravante awarded them their certificates in a proper ceremony last 26 January.

The DOLE regional official expressed confidence that the certificates awarded the four new OSH practitioners will give them edge in their offices, especially in lobbying and working for safety and health policies.



DOLE Regional Office No. 10 Director Raymundo Agravante awards certificates of accreditation to OSH practitioners in Cagayan de Oro City.

The Kaunlaran ng Kababaihan para sa Kinabukasan (KKK) is a women's group based in Sitio Hiwalayan, Brgy. Bacong, San Luis, Aurora organized in January 25, 1996.

The group initially comprised 25 women-wives of farmers who have undergone a series of organizational and other social preparation trainings supervised under the SEA-K program of the Department of Social and Welfare Development.

Ten years later, the group registered as a rural workers association with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and recipients of P42,000 for their Training-Cum Production on various meat products under the Women Workers Employment and Entrepreneurship Development Program.

In 2010, the group decided to venture into a new project, *sabutan* weaving. *Sabutan*, a palm tree found in Aurora, is the primary source of raw material in making native products such as hats, mats, fans, bags and other novelty items.

The art of weaving *sabutan* was passed on from generation to generation. It is a source of livelihood to some Auroran families by selling them to support their basic needs. Back then, men were usually seen in the fields attending to their crops, while women stayed in their homes doing household chores. In their spare time, they would weave *sabutan* to make them usable items in their daily lives.

The challenge was bravely faced by the association head-on, through tapping hidden market of tourists, which has become a big part of Aurora's local economy despite the unpredictable demand for *sabutan* products.

According to KKK President Feliciano Espinosa, the group had difficulty in selling their products because they did not know how and where to market them. "We love to keep the tradition of *sabutan* weaving alive, but there were times we were forced to sell our products at a very low price, even lower than the cost of making the product itself. Truly frustrating," she said.

While Technical Education and Skills Development Authority has tried to keep the tradition of this craft alive, by integrating courses on *sabutan* weaving in their course offerings, this proved to be unsustainable because the income out of this undertaking could not yet support



Sabutan weaving: Keeping the Auroran artisans' spirit alive through DILEEP



(Top) Eva Capiro of the DOLE-BWSC (center) monitors a *sabutan* weaving facility managed by KKK President Feliciano Espinosa (left). Above, workers churn out beautiful *sabutan* hats.

and ensure a decent living for those who want to venture in the said craft.

Espinosa shared that their effort to organize themselves at the wake of opening Aurora as one of the most recommended new tourist spots to visit in the country paved way for them to regain their dreams to revitalize the almost lost culture of *sabutan* weaving in the province.

With a newly-discovered market, the demand to produce more *sabutan* products was inevitable. The inherent craftsmanship of the women weavers transformed ordinary hats to a high fashion accessory that immediately became a hit to the tourists.

The KKK underwent various skills training, product development seminars, and other design enhancements, which resulted to more product lines. Included in their items are slippers, decor boxes, trims, folders and pillows.

Such increase in production stretched their limited capital affecting primarily the day-to-day operations of the business. It was in this circumstance that they sought the assistance of DOLE through the Community Enterprise Development livelihood enhancement under the DOLE Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (DILEEP).

A total of P349,000 was awarded to KKK to support its business expansion and contribute in sustaining generation of employment through this industry.

From a mere seven *sabutan* weavers, KKK has now a total of 21 weavers and regularly conduct *sabutan* weaving learning sessions, particularly to those women within their community and nearby barangays.

At present, the salary of the weavers now range from P5,500 to P6,000 per month, providing decent income for those who would like to learn how to weave *sabutan* -- a strategy, which is very important in sustaining the project and continuing the tradition.

The old and indigenous craftsmanship could still find its place in the modern market if it would be nurtured through financial and technological support from government.

The DOLE interventions, with its mandate to develop and facilitate decent employment to all Filipinos, could result not just toward increasing incomes, but also to save an old artisanship, an integral part of Aurora's culture, from completely vanishing. (Jerry Borja)