



CURRENTS

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OPAFSAM Secretary Kiko Pangilinan addresses the locals and other officials and guests during the presentation of the Kabulnan River Irrigation System (KRIS)-Mamasapano Extension Project on April 16, 2015 at Brgy. Tukanalipao, Mamasapano. With him in the photo are NIA Administrator Florencio Padernal and ARMM Governor Mujiv Hataman.

IRRIGATION TO RISE IN MAMASAPANO

■ Daniel R. Cañizo, OJT with Lioneil G. dela Cruz, PAIS - CO

Tukanalipao, Mamasapano will be under the government's eye again after the issue concerning the 44 SAF Commandos who bravely died in their line of duty last January. This time, Office of the Presidential Assistant for Food Security and Agricultural Modernization (OPAFSAM) Secretary Francis Pangilinan, with various government officials, went there on April 16, 2015, to oversee and to jumpstart a new

NIA project called the Kabulnan River Irrigation System (KRIS)-MAMASAPANO EXTENSION PROJECT.

Secretary Pangilinan, together with NIA Administrator Florencio F. Padernal and Deputy Administrator Estrella E. Icasiano, met initially with ARMM Governor Mujiv Hataman before visiting Tukanalipao to launch the new irrigation project that will benefit the

farmers. "If the people have good harvest, we can have a sound economy," said Secretary Pangilinan. One hundred and thirty hectares of farm lands covering 99 families will benefit from this peace project.

Secretary Pangilinan also said that this project will help them "uplift their living conditions" after completion. This P50M-project's target completion is on December 31, 2015. *(continued on page 2)*

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The delegates cross the bamboo bridge that will be replaced with concrete through DPWH's initiative.

On the other hand, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) will be replacing the bamboo bridge that the 44 SAF Commandos crossed during their retreat with a concrete wider bridge. This convergence initiative aims to replace the "symbol" of poverty with modernity in Mamasapano and the neighboring areas. #



NIA Region 12 Manager Ali Satol presents the particulars of the KRIS-Mamasapano Extension Project.

Our foremothers, female ancestors, had their own share of yesteryears' struggles for us to reap the fruits of what we have today. It was in 1910 that the government began to focus the role of women in the workplace. Subsequent provisions slowly paved the way for women allowing them to participate where men used to dominate.

After almost a century, in 2009, R.A. 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women (MCW) was enacted into a law. *Layunin nito na itaguyod ang husay at galing ng bawat babae at ang potensyal nila bilang alagad ng pagbabago at pag-unlad, sa pamamagitan ng pagkilala at pagtanggap sa katothanan na ang mga karapatan ng kababaihan ay karapatang pantao.* (Praymer. 2009). (MCW aims to promote the quality and skills [excellence] of women and their potential as catalyst of change and progress through acknowledging women's right as human rights too).

Then Philippine Commission on Women Deputy Executive Director Teresita Sylvia M. Salud aptly described Magna Carta of Women as the "Bill of Rights" of Filipino Women.

As March celebrates the National Women's Month, let us pause and check where NIA stands now in terms of its efforts in bridging the gender gap.

NIA as an irrigation Agency has since opened its opportunities to women. Women assumed responsibilities in a male-dominated world of irrigation design, construction, implementation and monitoring, among others. Dominance of women in personnel and accounting sectors would not cause a surprise. Sphere of influence enlarged when the first woman, Atty. Imelda C. Isidoro, served the NIA Board of Directors as the Corporate Board Secretary. Mrs. Zenaida C. Sebastian followed as she rose from the ranks and was appointed to join the top management as the assistant administrator for Finance and Management in mid-80s.

Today, after almost three decades, women's role and contribution continued to manifest in the halls of decision making in irrigation development. More women are given equal opportunities to hold position in the middle management. In the central office, five out of eight departments, including engineering, are led by lady managers. As of December 31, 2014, out of 344 permanent employees, 191 or 55.52% are female in the central office.

EDITORIAL

Women, Power, and Irrigation

NIA INKS MOA WITH MWSS & NPC TO REHAB BUSTOS DAM

■ Lioneil G. dela Cruz, PAIS - CO

March 10, 2015 – NIA Administrator Florencio F. Padernal, NPC Chairman Gladys Cruz-Sta. Rita, and MWSS Administrator Gerardo A.I. Esquivel led the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the rehabilitation of the Angat Afterbay Regulator Dam (also known as Bustos Dam) at the MWSS Headquarters in Quezon City.

This project aims to rehabilitate the dam and its appurtenant structures to prevent further damages, improve irrigation service delivery and cropping intensity in the service area, and to serve as flood control during rainy season. The rehab covers the replacement of 6 bays rubber gates; improvement of apron, training walls, and gates; improvement of main canals, laterals, and other structures; and improvement of operations and maintenance and support services.



As stipulated in the MOA, MWSS will provide the Php1-B funding to cover the project implementation and will maximize the project to ensure domestic water supply. On the other hand, NPC will utilize the project to sustain its power generation capacity.

The Bustos Dam is operated by the NIA Angat-Maasim River Irrigation System

(AMRIS) in Region 3. AMRIS serves a total of 31,485 hectares benefitting 23,708 rice farmers in 16 municipalities in Bulacan and 4 municipalities in Pampanga.

Also present during the MOA signing are NIA-Region 3 Manager Josephine B. Salazar and NWRB Deputy Executive Director Jorge M. Estioko. #



Potent Force to on Development

Likewise, in the field offices, women leaders slowly found a niche in the men's world. Women farmers have also been given the opportunity to lead in Irrigators Association.

This feat means women in NIA have come a long way to make an impression in irrigation development though the journey involves a long arduous way to the top.

The NIA-Gender and Development (GAD) Focal System was established in pursuant with R.A. 7192 (Women in Development in National Building Act) and authorized to "set aside a minimum amount of five percent out of the Agency's annual budget to be used for programs, projects and activities designed to address gender issues." The focal system was

reconstituted in 2009 and later in 2013 due to dwindling membership - most of its members retired or availed the Rationalization Plan (RPlan). New members were oriented of GAD's framework and undergone basic Gender Sensitivity Training. Other trainings, activities and fora were held and participated afterwards. However, the momentum stalled due to demands of the just implemented RPlan to prioritize primary duties and responsibilities of focal systems representatives.

With the full implementation of RPlan and advent of new generation of young professional, it is high time for the top management to appoint someone to serve as potent force in leading NIA GAD Focal System to address gender concerns and integrate in Agency's annual plans as well as sustain the valued contribution of women in NIA. #

KA SILVER: From Rice Fields to the Board Room

■ Lioneil G. dela Cruz, PAIS

Tending rice fields and coconut farms is a huge responsibility; leading a broad national coalition of farmers is another; but becoming a part of an agency's decision-making body representing farmers is one great leap! This holds true for Silvestre B. Bonto, Sr., the newest member of the National Irrigation Administration's Board of Directors.

Ka Silver, as he is most famously known, was recently appointed into the Board by Pres. Benigno Aquino III through an appointment letter dated January 22, 2015. In the said document, Pres. Aquino tasked him to represent the Rice and Corn Sector in the Board. He will be serving the unexpired term of former board member representing the private sector Engr. Ismael Tabije until June 30. It may be a very short time but he would certainly be there to exert extra efforts to efficiently uphold the welfare of the farmer-irrigators.

A farmer-leader

It is a very daunting task for sure but Ka Silver is fully equipped with the experience to efficiently represent farmers in the Board. Firstly, he is an actual owner and tiller of an eight-hectare rice field and a 12-hectare coconut farm since 1995. Saying that he knows the issues, concerns, and needs of farmers is an understatement.

Ka Silver, aside from being an actual farmer, is also an active farmer-leader. He has been working on the welfare of his sector, especially the rice-farming communities and consumers by way, among others, of his being very vocal against rice smuggling and the irregularities surrounding the operations of rice cartels in the country.

His leadership experience through the years is a sufficient credential in becoming a board member. He is the president of the National Confederation of Irrigators Association (NCIA) and head of the



Mr. Silvestre Bonto with Administrator Padernal during a meeting with the United Confederation of Farmers Irrigator Association (UCFIA). With them are: Engr. Reynaldo D. Puno, UPRIS Operations Manager; Engr. Bonifacio S. Labiano, IEC Div. Manager and concurrent Head Executive Assistant; and, Engr. Bayani P. Ofrecio, IDD Manager.

Angat Ahon Magsasaka, a non-government organization with thousands of the country's farmer's groups as members. He also was the founding auditor of the Alliance of Grains Industry Stakeholders, former President of the Philippine Farmers Advisory Board (PFAB), and Secretary-General of KASAMMA Hope Workers Labor Confederation.

Advocacies and accomplishments

As the new member of the Board, Ka Silver is guided with a few advocacies for him to be able to direct decisions towards attaining optimal impact to farmers. This includes primarily farmer representation (which he is now exercising in the NIA Board). His other advocacies and accomplishments are:

1. Seeking for bigger allocation of the farmers in rice importation through the Private Sector Finance (PSF), Minimum Access Volume (MAV), and Country Specific Quota (CSQ) in the Department of Agriculture – National Food Authority (DA-NFA) Rice Importation Program;
2. Rallying for a bigger allocation for the rice distribution program of the government through Sale through Market Determined Pricing (SMDP) that gives an avenue for farmers' organizations and cooperatives as farmer-distributor of NFA rice;

3. Requesting the government to create a special window for farmer organizations/cooperatives engaged in rice importation for financial support/assistance through the Land Bank of the Philippines to avoid being used and manipulated by some rice cartels and private financiers in rice importation and other related activities;

4. Encouraging farmers' organizations and cooperatives to be more participatory in the government's Institutional Procurement Program (IPP) through the NFA to ensure Food Supply Sufficiency Program (FSSP);

5. Creating a Farmers Regional Trading Center in every region to enhance farmers' market ability/responsibility and participation ensuring rice supply in the market;

6. Reviving the return of seed and fertilizer subsidy as farmers' incentives which is one of the element in ensuring the needed support for the FSSP;

7. Moving for the increase of buying price of palay from Php14.00 to Php17.00 upon assumption as President of PFAB; and

8. Requesting the government through DSWD for the inclusion of small farmers in the list of beneficiaries under the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Program.

NATIONWIDE STRATEGIES/TECHNIQUES

ON HOW TO MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF THE EL NIÑO PHENOMENON

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1 Implementation and adaption of water management



8 Strong linkage to Irrigators Associations



9



Information dissemination and distribution of information materials.

2 Modify cropping calendar and pattern

- Downstream start of water delivery and distribution.
- Alternate wet and dry method of farming or controlled irrigation.
- Implement rotation of irrigations water delivery



10

Adopt new technologies in rice crop (reduced water requirement)



3 Plant short gestating rice varieties



11

Determination of dependable water supply by water source to come up with a realistic program area per system.



4



Repair damaged irrigation canals for free flow of water (patching of holes, desilting, etc.)

12



Establish linkage with Barangay and Local Government Units.

5

Repair and maintenance of all control structures



13

Creation of task force at Regional, IMO, and IA level including designation of point person from each level to closely monitor the possible effects of the El Niño in the area.



6

Plant vegetables and other crops that do not require too much water



14



Close monitoring by field Operations Staff in the water distribution and the areas being affected particularly at the downstream area.

7

Distribution of shallow tube wells to augment water supply especially those areas located at tail end irrigation systems.



15

Request of cloud seeding to induce rain.



PHOTO



NIA Administrator Florencio F. Padernal shakes hand with Mr. Gerardo A. Borromeo, President, Aurora Energy Corporation after signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NIA and the Aurora Energy Corporation on March 16 for the conduct of full blown Feasibility Study on the development of mini hydropower plant at the Sampaloc Regulating Dam located in Sampaloc, Rizal, Nueva Ecija. With them are Atty. Riza A. Ibañez of NIA Legal Services Dept. and Atty. Butch Perez of Aurora Energy Corp.



TUMAPOC CIS Turnover at Burgos, La Union on March 31.— attended by Burgos Municipal Mayor Jose B. Abansi, Region 1 RIM John N. Celeste, La Union Acting IMO Manager Gaudencio M. De Vera, Region 1 EOD Manager Frida Nidoy and Ms. Pilipina P. Bermudez, NIA Spokesperson and PAIS Department Manager who represents Administrator Padernal. Tumapoc CIS, a NIA-CARP-IC project in coordination with the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and Japan International Cooperative Agency (JICA) under ARISP III covers 62 hectares of farmland with 91 IA members as beneficiaries.



Administrator Padernal being interviewed by ABS-CBN reporter Bettina Magsaysay on March 18 about El Niño phenomenon mitigation.



Dr. Padernal meets with UPRIIS IA to talk about how they (NIA-IA) can work together as partners for uplifting the lives of farmers. With the IA are UPRIIS Operations Manager Reynaldo D. Puno and EOD Manager Rosalinda B. Bote. Also present were Silvestre B. Bonto-NIA Board member and NCIA President, Pilipina P. Bermudez PAIS Department Manager and NIA Spokesperson and Engr. Bayani P. Ofrecio. C.O. IDD Manager.



NEWS



The Bued #1 CIS in Rosario, La Union is successfully turned-over on March 31 to the Bued CIS Dam #1 Irrigators Service Association, Inc headed by its President Victoriano P. Petina, Jr. (2nd from L) by the National Irrigation Administration-Region 1 (NIA-R1) headed by its manager Engr. John N. Celeste. Also present in the ceremony were (from L-R) NIA-PAIS Manager Pilipina P. Bermudez, NIA-R1 EOD Manager Frida L. Nido. Bued #1 irrigates 300 hectares benefiting 303 farmers.



Candon City Mayor Ericson Singson and Ilocos Sur 2nd District Representative Eric Singson hand over the plaque of appreciation to OPAFSAM Secretary Kiko Pangilinan after delivering the keynote speech for 1,500 Ilocano farmers during the NIA's Farmers' Forum in Candon City on March 26.



Dr. Padernal grants an interview to some members of the press after the March 20 Press Conference.



Administrator Padernal at URIP on March 30. He visited the dam currently undergoing construction at Barangay Waloe, Loreto, Agusan del Sur together with NIA-Caraga Acting Regional Manager C'zar M. Sulaik, URIP Technical Staff headed by URIP Project Manager Gregorio Y. Pang, Jr., The project aims to serve 6,279 hectares with 3,385 Farmer Households (FHs) in 12 Irrigators Associations (IAs).



■ Anthony O. Alonzo, Clerk Processor, NIA-Region 7

NIA REGION 7 CELEBRATES 6TH ANNIVERSARY



Mr. Elpidio A. Requierme, IA President of Ilihan CIS receives the certificate of Turnover. Ilihan CIS is one of the 28 IAs recipient of the 2014 completed CIPs in the Province of Bohol.



"Without the farmers, walang trabaho ang mga... of the farmers," sums up Sec. Francis M.



Hon. Sec. Francis N. Pangilinan together with Gov. Edgar M. Chatto led the ribbon cutting of the NIA 7 chapel, among them are (L-R) NIA 7 Manager Mario H. Sande, Provincial Administrator Alfonso R. Damalerio, and NIA Administrator Florencio F. Padernal.



g NIA. We are all here, I have a job because I. Pangilinan's keynote address.

Tagbilaran City – National Irrigation Administration Region 7 celebrates its 6th year anniversary with the theme “NIA, IA, LGU Magkaagapay para sa Ikauunlad ng Buhay”. As this year’s theme suggests, NIA 7 emphasizes the significance of the relationship between these institutions in achieving the ultimate goal of uplifting the lives of our farmers and eventually provide Central Visayas adequate resources and contribute to the food sufficiency program of our government.

In its six years of dedicated service, NIA 7 has transformed Central Visayas to a stable rice producer, not only in the region but across the archipelago. And it doesn’t end with irrigation alone, as more irrigation facilities stretched further, accessibility to the remote areas has improve significantly giving our farmers the convenience in post-harvest services and assistance.

More than these physical accomplishments, NIA 7 has provided our farmers the necessary knowledge and skills through trainings, seminars, and workshops to improve their production as well as the discipline and leadership needed to administer their associations.

Six years must be a brief period compared to other regions but in that span, NIA 7 showed that duration doesn’t matter but the quality of service and the satisfaction provided to our clientele which are more than enough for the celebration. This year’s anniversary was remarkably one of the region’s best, highlighted by several activities including the blessing and inauguration of the Php 23.00M infrastructure projects inside the NIA 7 compound. These include the three (3) storeys Central Visayas Training Center which can accommodate up to 100 people, a multipurpose covered court, a three-bedroom dormitory, and a chapel.

Moreover, 28 Communal Irrigation Projects in the province of Bohol which were completed last year were also turned over to their respective Irrigators Associations. With a total project cost of Php 88.732M, serving a total of 1,276 hectares of farmland and benefiting 2,370 farmers.

The provincial government of Bohol and the Department of Agriculture through the office of the 2nd Congressional District also took advantage of the occasion and the attendance of roughly 400 farmers to distribute new farm machineries for the IAs of both CIS and NIS.

Together with top dignitaries in the Province of Bohol led by Gov. Edgar M. Chatto and NIA Administrator Florencio F. Padernal, the occasion was graced by no less than Presidential Assistant for Food Security and Agricultural Modernization, Hon. Francis N. Pangilinan.

“When I was asked to come here, I did not think twice because my friend of 20 years is here.” referring to the Governor whose support to the NIA over the years was tremendous. “I am very happy to provide whatever support we can give to the region, to the province so that we can address issues of food security and farm modernization” he said, opening his keynote address.

With his experience as a farmer prior to his appointment to oversee the NIA and three other agencies, he is not a stranger to problems in this field and in the agriculture sector in general. “*Nakita ko kung gaano kahirap ang pagsasaka, at doon po ako nagkaroon ng kakaibang respeto at pagkilala sa sakripisyo ng ating mga magsasaka*” Sec. Pangilinan added. Wrapping up the activity was a brief open forum addressing farmer concerns and discussing the NIA’s plans and programs between the IA and Administrator Padernal.#



BACNOR IA President Rolando Dallego (center) poses with MARIIS Division III Manager William B. Oppuer (third from left), National Irrigation Administration Senior Deputy Administration Felix M. Razo (fourth from left), MARIIS Acting Operations Manager Wilfredo C. Gloria (fourth from right) and officers of the NDC 5 CIA of which BACNOR IA is a part of.



BACNOR IA of MARIIS, honored

An Irrigators Association of MARIIS-Division III was recognized as Outstanding Irrigation Association during the 4th Agri-Pinoy Rice Achievers Awards held at the Newport Performing Arts Theater in Resorts World Manila, Pasay City on March 26, 2015.



BACNOR IA President Rolando Dallego proudly holds their plaque as Outstanding Irrigators Association.

BACNOR IA of Barangay Bacnor, Burgos, Isabela was one of the five irrigators associations, nationwide, honored for their significant contribution to rice production for the year 2014.

Rolando Dallego, BACNOR IA President said the recognition was unexpected and they are very thankful for the commendation. "We could not have done it without the help of NIA-MARIIS," Dallego said.

MARIIS Division III Manager William B. Oppuer shared that their office is happy to provide the support necessary to strengthen irrigators associations and to empower their members.

MARIIS Acting Operations Manager Wilfredo C. Gloria said that MARIIS is very proud of the IA's achievement.

He shared that this is the second time that an irrigators association from MARIIS was recognized by Agri-Pinoy. In March 2014, Ligaya IA was also awarded Outstanding IA during the Rice Achievers Awards 2013.

"We hope that this would serve as an inspiration for all our other IAs to strive harder towards achieving their goals," he said.

BACNOR IA, an IA member of NDC-5 CIA, received a cash award of P1 million which they plan to use to acquire a combined thresher-harvester through the 85-15 scheme of the Department of Agriculture. They also intend to purchase a lot where they could build their office. The IA currently holds office at the Bacnor barangay hall.

The Agri-Pinoy Rice Achievers Awards is an annual event organized by the DA National Rice Program in recognition of the outstanding and significant contributions of the local government units, irrigators associations, small water impounding system associations, agricultural extension workers and local farm technicians to the Philippine rice industry. It gives credit and appreciation to the men and women who made invaluable contributions for the increase of the national palay production. # (Melissa Curameng-Agbisit, PRO, MARIIS)

FFP Celebrates Birthday with NIA Family



Dr. Padernal used to celebrate his birthday in private - with his family. This time, the "very first time" his 2015 birthday celebration is spent with his NIA family. Thus, on this special day, NIA Open grounds is arrayed with colorful "Fiesta sa Nayon" motif.

Known for being a dedicated and committed public servant, his birthday celebration started after the hard day's work with Zumba.

Surprise guests from showbiz made the night so lively and entertaining. Most of all, Dr. Padernal shared his family and friends with NIAns on this beautiful day. Thank You, Sir Rencie. May God give you good health and sound wisdom as you lead us serving the public.



IA SUCCESS STORIES Benguet's Taloy Sur Irrigators learn to lead and leap

■ Mylene I. Malecda, PRO, NIA - CAR



Manong Brian Ducat was his father's son—from his muscular physique to his happy demeanor. And, like his father who was the first president of the Taloy Sur Irrigators Association, Manong Brian now leads the 25-year-old IA that maintains the Taloy Sur Communal Irrigation System (CIS).

Taloy Sur CIS located in Brgy. Taloy Sur, Tuba, Benguet was first constructed in 1988 and rehabilitated after that big earthquake in 1990. The irrigation system was custom-built, composed mainly of reservoir tanks and HDPE pipelines to serve the mountainous topography and distinctive crops of Benguet. It supplies irrigation to vegetables such as sayote and Baguio beans as well as some cutflowers such as rose and anthurium. Taloy Sur IA's office which was established through the organization's fund raising activities is located at the 2nd View Deck along Marcos Highway in Taloy Sur, Tuba.

Like Manong Brian, other officers of Taloy Sur IA were also children of the old members of Taloy Sur IA. Together, they equipped themselves with the skills and knowledge in managing an organization by attending all seminars and trainings conducted by NIA and other agencies.



Through the system management training, they were able to learn how to operate and maintain their irrigation system with minimal supervision from the NIA. According to the officers, minor damages to their irrigation facilities caused by storms are efficiently repaired by the members themselves. Water delivery schedules and other guidelines are also strictly implemented.

With knowledge gained from the audit management seminar, the organization is now able to conduct an audit of their accounts, an accomplishment that was lauded by the Central Office's Validation Team.

"The officers and members of the IA are young, active and effective," said Maritess Manuel, institutional development officer (IDO) of NIA-CAR. "We always see

applications of what they have learned in seminars conducted," she added.

Ratings of the IA in functionality surveys reveal gradual improvement through the years, record shows. For their 2013 performance, Taloy Sur IA impressed the Central Office's Validation Team with their well-organized financial and organizational records as well as with their remarkable system operation and maintenance functions. They were given a perfect rating!

Taloy Sur IA was practically handed down from a generation, nurtured by the descendants and has grown to become the Cordillera's Regional Outstanding IA for 2013 under the CIS category. #



The Empowered Woman at Work and at Home

■ Florentina L. Magbanua, Sr. IDO, Negros Occidental. IMO, Region 6

The arrival of giant hauling trucks caught attention particularly when the small lady in a flowing knee length black skirt emerged from piles of five million pesos worth of farm implements on the mid-day of April 6, 2015. Her smile was genuine, radiant, and contagious. She radiated power that made onlookers moved to unload the implements from the trucks. Soon, the lady was carefully counting and inspecting each implement which were already occupying a large space of Negros Occidental Irrigation Management Office Compound. Those implements were the third batch of farm machineries and tools for the Irrigators Associations provided by the Provincial Government.

Who is this lady that looks so appealing yet authoritative either on stage, at home, in public or even in the middle of piles of grass cutters, pumps, rice threshers and hand tractors? Well, she is **Ms. Rosemary R. Caunca** or Ma'am Rose, 77 years old, a widow, grandmother, retiree, and proud bona fide farmer.

"I am an empowered woman" says Ma'am Rose. "I speak my mind freely without fear of opposition but it is not the reason why I claimed to be empowered, it is my passion to empower other people especially the women so that they could also experience genuine freedom" she clarified. "We should speak with grace and humor but with sincerity and authority. Most of all, we should walk our talks," she added.

Ma'am Rose engaged into full time farming upon retirement as Director of Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) in 2003. She spent 42 years of service in the government that started as a Barangay Development Worker after graduation from the University of the Philippines in 1962. She climbed the ladder of Office leadership and harvested dozens of awards in every level of promotion bringing along honors and recognitions to every barangay, municipality, city or province that she represented. She was known to her colleagues and subordinates as a strict lady boss but with a soft heart.

As a farmer and President of Paselomak Irrigators Association (IA) and League of Federations of Irrigators Associations of Negros Occidental (FIA), Ma'am Rose daily wakes up at 5: 00 in the morning, rushes to her shower, eats a quick breakfast, and heads to her present Office in Brgy. Sampinit, Bago City. It is her self-imposed rule to be on her table before somebody knocks the door. There she would start her routine, mostly by checking if the signage "No receipts, No water" and "No clearing No water" hanged visibly at the entrance of her IA Office. Similar to her government service, Ma'am Rose, started as an ordinary IA member, became a Turnout Service Area Group (TSAG) chairman in 2006, elected IA President in 2008, voted FIA President in 2010 and Regional FIA secretary in 2012. Now, she is a member of the Executive Committees of the Bago City Development Council

and Provincial Development Council of Negros Occidental. Through Ma'am Rose, the interests and needs of the Irrigators Associations are included in the Annual Investment Plan of the City and the Province.

"I am so busy but am grateful for this opportunity to be of service to the farmers. I am so in love with the participatory approach program of NIA that educating each farmer through the IAs becomes a personal conviction. Seeing every farmer paying his Irrigation Service Fee (ISF) or doing his assigned canal clearing task brings great pleasure to my heart," says Ma'am Rose.

At home, Ma'am Rose is a busy homemaker. Her receiving room, dining room, and bedrooms are covered with beautiful curtains she personally designed and intricately sewn with her old sewing machine. She plans her menu and sees to it that her children and grandchildren are well fed and taken care of with the aid of her helper who has been with the family for 45 years. She takes pride in rearing her three children who are all professionals yet remained obedient to her even if they have their own families now.

"A woman can only claim that she is empowered if she has authority both at work and at home" says Ma'am Rose. #



Ma'am Rose counting and inspecting the farm implements for the Irrigators Associations provided by the Provincial Government



Ma'am Rose giving orientation to the IA Board of Trustees



On Fieldwork, Family, and Life and Success as a NIA n

■ Lorna Tejero, Bukidnon IMO, Region 10

I started working in the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), Valencia City on September 7, 1981 in a special project as Engineering Assistant A. When Bukidnon Irrigation Project (BIP) was completed, I was transferred to Pulangui River Irrigation System (PRIS). On Feb. 2, 1995 I was accommodated by my mentor and a great man, Engr. Julius S. Maquiling, former head of NIA-Provincial Irrigation Office (PIO) (now Regional Irrigation Manager of Region 10) under the Engineering Section.

I was assigned in the field for two years as a project inspector at Kalinda CIP, Dahilayan, Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon. Fieldworks were not as easy as eating camote. It was full of mixed emotions. I experienced riding a stake truck, dump truck, bulldozer and even hanging in a mixer. I used to hike three kilometers, back and forth. I learned to ride in tandem on a "habal-habal." I also experienced being chased by a fighting bull because my jacket was red. I was almost bitten by a rabid dog and jumped to a main canal. (Perhaps, because this very worthy animal wanted to taste the peanuts I just picked from a farmer's garden and the stolen native guavas along the road.)

I learned to shout "Run LT, Run!" and did multiple jumps over some "nuno sa punso" (*para hindi masumpa ang aking kasumpa-sumpang kagandahang tanging alay sa lupang sinilangan*) and the "helicopter-like TNT (*tago nang tago*) moves" scrolling inside the siphon of broken desire. Unfortunately, my neck was decorated by "jolly bees or lampinig bites." Thank God they were cured by a natural antiseptic I learned from my late grandma - the medicine of an endangered species like me and more than any feminine wash.

I underwent right-of-way negotiation against an ex-military who became a tomato planter who didn't want his area to be a part of the main canal of NIA. A full packed .45 caliber man like "x-men" guarded his area. I was able to make this man go back to his normal temper and allow NIA to brush off his full blown tomatoes with a bulldozer, free of charge. He recognized me as the high school crush of his youngest brother. My aunt was his mentor and confidant that's why he gave up his wonderful tomatoes to pay his last respect. He also listened to me

that by allowing NIA to pass by his land he could share to his fellowmen not only his riches but a legend that will be carried from generation to generation.

I only went home on Fridays, leaving my then two innocent kids who still needed a motherly care and a husband with a healthy "biceps." I learned to sleep on top of a rotten plywood full of "bunhok" under a temporary bunkhouse. Yet, I managed to live in the field of wilderness like a queen. I am the only rose among the 13 thorns - my very respectful field office big brothers who were afraid of my husband's shadow. They went up the hill to get a pail of water for my morning bath at our instant simple but clean comfort room. But no indecent proposals were allowed to maintain camaraderie (*kami ra diri*). I experienced the beauty of sunrise and sunset, the drops of the morning dew, and the cool breeze from the mountains.

My routine comfort place when far from the bunkhouse was the elevated bench flume only to find out that up above the elevation, survey men were surveying and sighting the best angle of the north and southwest formation of my body. Anyway, my 36"-24"-36" vital statistics was not spotted because I used to bring a "malong" which covered only my eyes so that I could see no evil.

The four most important things I gained in the field as a NIA n are UTI (Unity, Transparency, and Integrity), STD (Sipag, Tiya, at Diskarte), HIV (Happiness In Volume of work), and most of all respect, trust, and confidence from the community because with all modesty, I worked with honesty, rain or shine. As a project inspector, the project was completed with flying colors - no mixture of tainted accomplishments, without eraser mate, but a clear complete view of the diversion dam to irrigate approximately a hundred hectare of high value crops. The farmers accepted it as high as a zip line.

Despite of the blues in the field mixed with sweet and sour episodes, I never quit. Like Yolanda, I am a positive strong woman. In my golden years, I can compete with the beauty of a Madonna. Like a virgin, I am not invaded with negative thoughts. I managed those experiences lightly wishing that someday I would be assigned back to the office. That is my wish to the "nuno sa punso" - to wear a NIA uniform with my bag without a bug and pair of stockings without the king and queen of the hungry bees where I could go home normally on time and sleep on a bed with my own comfort room.

All the wishes came true even without a genie: I am now back to an office - a fully air-conditioned environment, cool and stress free. Sometimes, my imaginations are still wandering the real "dust in the wind" field environment and the strong heat of the sun that no facial cream could endure. Nothing, as hot as the natural show of the love and care given by the farmers. These were the best memories in NIA that colored my years.

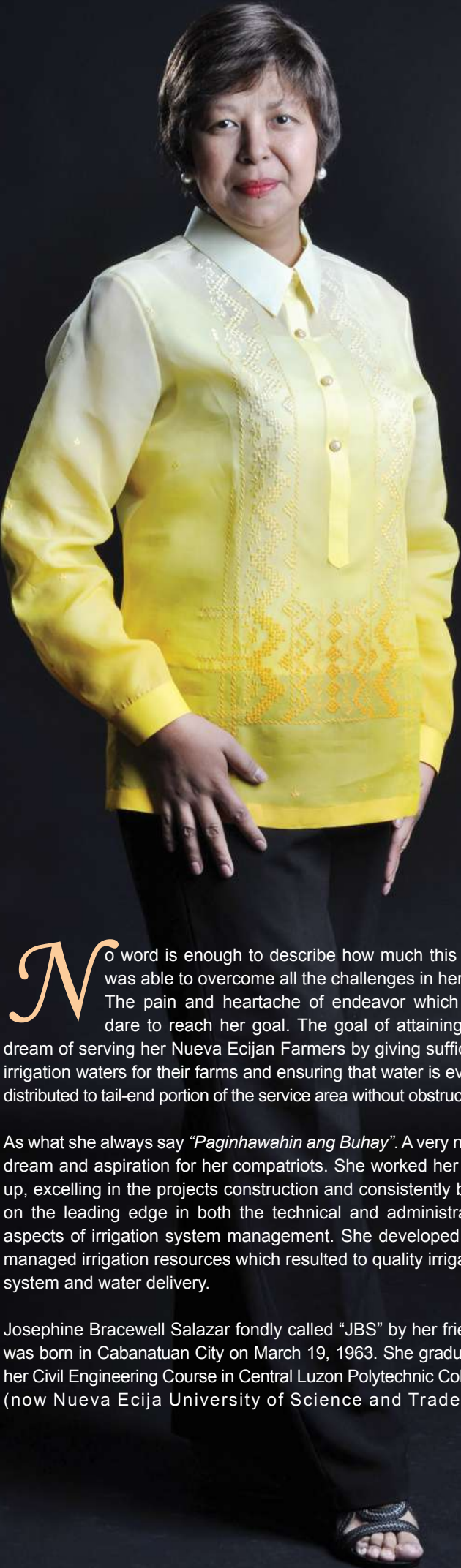
After all those years, thanks to rationalization, I became a permanent employee on July 16, 2009 as a Senior Water Resources Facilities Technician (SWRFT) under the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Section-Bukidnon Irrigation Management Office (BIMO). I was then designated as a Collection Representative under the Administrative and Finance Section in 2013 under the management of Division Manager Engr. Jimmy L. Apostol. He is the Coco Martin of Region X, *dahil siya ang kuko na nagbibigay ng liwanag at pag-asa sa madlang magsasaka ng sambayanang Bukidnon*.

I was able to feel the farmers' beautiful hearts every time they visited NIA to pay their Irrigation Service Fee (ISF) thanking NIA for a sustainable irrigation system that improved not only their lives but also their well being. They are not anymore riding their carabaos, but wow, a Fortuner parked in front of the office because of the good fortune NIA extended. I delivered the collected ISF to the bank 100% untouched. I had no fear that a "riding in tandem" or evil ones would side swipe along my way as long as they would respect my capacity then I could swift them away. For I could penetrate even the most misunderstood personality. I was ever ready to protect the farmers' payments with all my blood and soul, to overcome evil with good. The ISF Collection for that year increased to P3M.

At present, I am back to O&M Section. *Sabi ng mga kaopisina, siya ang "babaing walang section,"* but definitely I am a female. I am the Jill of all Trades because my duties and responsibilities are not focused to one section. Sometimes I'm requested to canvas office tables and window blinds, help in office renovation, decorate the stage, lead the prayer, and sometimes an emcee. I am always the top rated ninang, a friend and a confidante, the entertainer and sometimes a singer. An emissary to the governor, an errand girl and sometimes the sweeper. But on top of all these, what matters most is that I love my job.

As a NIA employee I maintain my figure because I know that as a government employee I have to maintain not only good looks but as a public figure ready for criticism. Definitely I'm not a corrupt employee but viruses corrupted my old laptop. My only dream is to remain as a dignified employee until retirement from work - not from life - and to receive a sustainable pension and to have a house I can call a home.

Being a NIA employee with dignity is more than a million rice field. My two wonderful kids finished college because of NIA but of course with the special participation of my husband who is a good provider and a lover. No blueprint of words can describe my gratitude and thanks to this challenging but wonderful agency. Even without publicity, even without a network, NIA works. NIA played a very important role in my life, making my family complete from A to Z - like Centrum.

A full-length portrait of Josephine B. Salazar, a woman with short dark hair, wearing a yellow long-sleeved blouse with intricate embroidery and dark trousers. She is standing with her hands at her sides, looking directly at the camera.

The BRAINS & BEAUTY

(Success story of Regional Manager JOSEPHINE B. SALAZAR)

■ Eliseo V. Bitangcol, PRO Region 3

1984 and her Master's Degree in Business Administration at Pamantasan ng Araullo on 1999. She was a recipient of the AusAid Scholarship in Australia where she finished her Masters' Degree in Regional Development at University of Queensland in 2004.

She started working with National Irrigation Administration (NIA) - UPRIS as Engineer A on 1986. Through her commitment and hard labor she was promoted to the position Division Manager in 2009 to 2011 and acting Operations Manager in 2012.

For two consecutive years (2010 – 2011), the UPRIS Division 3 under her management received the "Best Division Award" and named as the "Most Viable Irrigation Management Office" of UPRIS for its record breaking revenue collection. She was recognized for her exemplary performance as Manager of Division III in 2010 for attaining the highest collection performance that contributed to the financial viability of UPRIS as a whole. On the succeeding years she became NIA's "Most Outstanding Frontline Irrigation Manager of the Year" and UPRIS Division III as the "Best Managed Frontline Irrigation Service".

With her dedication, leadership and excellence she was promoted as Department Manager on September 4, 2012. By then she managed the entire UPRIS. That was the start of her topmost dream of serving the farmer constituents of NIA – UPRIS. She excellently delivered the requirements of her job and did it outstandingly. On the 51st NIA Anniversary celebration in June 2013 she was awarded as the "Most Outstanding Operations Manager". She shines like a gem in a male dominated occupation.

On top of all the recognitions, JBS was also a recipient of the "Civil Service Pag-asa Award" given by his Excellency President Benigno S. Aquino III in Malacanang Palace in 2012. It was a nationwide search for outstanding public servants of the country.

Due to change of NIA management in the midst of 2014, she was transferred in NIA Regional Office III. A bigger place where she can utilize her excellence in management and planning skills to further improve the irrigation systems. And again, in the short period of her leadership in the said office, she managed to increase its viability index never before attained by the entire region. A clear manifestation that Regional Manager JOSEPHINE BRACEWELL SALAZAR is truly a boss with brains and of course with a beauty and charm of a true Filipina.

No word is enough to describe how much this lady was able to overcome all the challenges in her life. The pain and heartache of endeavor which she dare to reach her goal. The goal of attaining her dream of serving her Nueva Ecija Farmers by giving sufficient irrigation waters for their farms and ensuring that water is evenly distributed to tail-end portion of the service area without obstruction.

As what she always say "*Paginhawahin ang Buhay*". A very noble dream and aspiration for her compatriots. She worked her way up, excelling in the projects construction and consistently been on the leading edge in both the technical and administrative aspects of irrigation system management. She developed and managed irrigation resources which resulted to quality irrigation system and water delivery.

Josephine Bracewell Salazar fondly called "JBS" by her friends was born in Cabanatuan City on March 19, 1963. She graduated her Civil Engineering Course in Central Luzon Polytechnic College (now Nueva Ecija University of Science and Trade) on



Health & Wellness

Women's Health Matters

Breast and Cervical Cancer Information

Women, make a promise to yourself... Take care of your health with regular exams.

There are certain cancers — **breast and cervical cancer** in particular — that women need to know about... Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women.

What are breast and cervical cancer?

Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control. Cancer is named for the part of the body where it starts, even if it spreads to other areas of the body.

Breast cancer is a disease in which cancer cells form in the tissues of the breast. There are different kinds of breast cancer. The kind of breast cancer depends on which cells in the breast turn into cancer, which can begin in different parts of the breast, such as the ducts or the lobes.

Cervical cancer is a disease in which cancer cells form in the tissues of the cervix. The cervix is the lower, narrow end of the uterus.

Risk factors for breast cancer include the following:

Reproductive Risk Factors:

- Early age of menarche (the beginning of the menstrual function; especially: the first menstrual period of an individual)
- Late age of first birth
- Few or no pregnancies

- No breastfeeding
- Late age at menopause

Lifestyle Risk Factors:

- Overweight or obesity
- Lack of physical activity
- Alcohol consumption

Risk factors for cervical cancer include the following:

- Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection. HPV is a common virus that can be passed from one person to another during sex.
- Having multiple sexual partners.
- History of sexually transmitted disease.
- Having first sexual intercourse at a young age.
- Even if you do not have any of these risk factors, you still need to be screened. They are not the only reasons why cancer may develop.

What can you do to protect yourself from breast and cervical cancer?

- **Learn about women's health resources and programs.** Ask a doctor about your need for a mammogram or Pap test. Your doctor can help determine what is best for you.

- **Women who are breastfeeding** can reduce their future risk of breast cancer by postponing weaning. The total number of months a woman breastfeeds can impact lifetime risk. Breastfeeding is good to both mothers and babies.
- Talk to your doctor about the HPV vaccine.

Ways to reduce risk for cancer:

- Regular physical activity
- Eat fruits and vegetables
- Diet high in fiber and low in fat
- Overweight and obesity may increase risk of cancer
- Lessen alcohol consumption (or none at all)
- Get rid of tobacco /cigarette smoking

Breast cancer screening recommendations:

- A regular clinical breast exam by your doctor. A clinical breast exam is an examination to feel for lumps or other changes.
- Beginning at age 40, discuss mammography with your doctor to understand the benefits and risks and to determine what is best for you.
- By age 50, all women should receive regular mammograms. A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast. Mammograms are the best method to detect breast cancer early when it is easier to treat. A mammogram can often detect a lump two years before it can be felt.

Your health depends on good communication!

Asking questions and providing information to your doctor can improve your care. Communication leads to better results, satisfaction, care and safety.

Remember, Health is Wealth!

by: Maria Luisa A. Frias, PAIS-CO
(Excerpts from: *Learn To Live Healthy Living* from Anne Arundel County Dept. Of Health, Annapolis, MD. U.S.A)

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