

CANADA FUND PROJECT BRIEF

1. Project Title and Site : Banana Rehabilitation and Socio-Economic Recovery of BBTV Affected Banana Farmers
2. Location : Nueva Vizcaya
3. Project Sector : Agricultural development
Agricultural extension
Agricultural co-operatives
4. Budget : Php845,750.00
5. Implementing Organization : Center for Organic Farming and Integrated Rural Development, Inc.
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6. Duration : May 02, 2005 - March 31, 2006
7. Project Description :

This project pilots a three-phased approach to restoring the productivity of 180 balangon farming households in Barangay Ocapon, municipality of Villaverde, Nueva Vizcaya. It consists of three major components: 1) campaign for the eradication of the banana bunchy-top virus (BBTV), the banana aphid scientifically known as *Pentalonia nigronervosa*; 2) dispersal of healthy suckers; and 3) support for organic banana cultural management and post-harvest assistance. Strengthening local structure through cooperative-building is a cross-cutting strategy toward generating community participation in balangon farm rehabilitation.

The plan is within the framework of biodiversity conservation and integrated socioeconomic recovery development. It applies the method of organic and diversified farming thereby protecting other forms of lives and conserving their natural way of life. Since balangon can be interspersed with other crops, the project will encourage diversified farming by dispersing seeds of tropical vegetables and fruit-bearing trees. In effect, the project is an integrated economic plan designed to address the basic economic needs of farmers.

This project will be implemented alongside similar Balangon rehabilitation projects in three other adjacent barangays of Villaverde (i.e., Cabuluan, Nagbitin and Sawmill). The latter will utilize contributions from the Provincial Development Fund and will test the use of tissue-cultured plantlets to be provided by the Nueva Vizcaya State University at a subsidized price of Php15-20 per plantlet.

8. Beneficiaries : 180 farming households

9. Expected Results :

- Total eradication of BBTV in 180 balangon farms
- All infected plants and possible hosts wiped out
- At least 80% of the households' balangon farms are totally rehabilitated
- 36,000 healthy suckers dispersed within 10 months (May 2005-February 2006)
- In 10 months, 180 farming households provided with seeds/seedlings of vegetables and other crops

- 180 balangon farmers adopted organic farming technology and trained on organic farming
- Balangon rehabilitation is collectively undertaken by 180 farmers in Barangay Ocapon

10. End of Project Results :

The following are the accomplishments after 10 months of project implementation:

Total eradication of BBTV in 180 Balangon farms. The proponent and the beneficiaries conducted information dissemination on BBTV by organizing small group discussion in clusters and/or puroks (sub-village). They also established a techno-demo farm (inter-cropping of bananas, pineapples, madre de cacao and citrus) measuring about 2,500 square meters and conducted a massive disease eradication campaign. These resulted to the total eradication of plant diseases and the rehabilitation of up to 80% of the Balangon farms.

Provision of disease-free balangon suckers. A total of 36,000 banana plantlets and suckers were dispersed to 192 grower-recipient. The outreach rate is 12 more than the target of 180 individuals. During the duration of planting from May 2005 to February 2006, the grower-recipient have developed a particular preference to the suckers than plantlets. They claimed that the suckers proved to be more resistant to disease and changes in weather conditions than the plantlets.

Promotion of organic cultural management of balangon. All of the 192 actual beneficiaries were convinced to adopt the organic way of raising and managing their farms. Ninety-five (95) percent of them had actually undergone a series of training and workshops on banana cultural management that were given in different batches. However, not all of the farmers availed themselves of the organic fertilizers that were offered for loans. Some of them believed that their farms did not need fertilizers as the soil was considered to be still naturally fertile. Their belief was based on the training that they got from the project such as the Farmers' Training, compost making, organic spray production and Cross Visits to model farms.

A total of 755 bags of organic fertilizers were loaned to the cooperative and its members. These fertilizers were applied to 75% of the suckers and plantlets. The cooperative was provided with Php 90,000.00 to purchase the fertilizers. The amount is included to the cooperative's revolving capital.

Formation of agri-based cooperative. A municipal-wide group named Villaverde Banana Growers MPC was organized and made operational with functional Board of Directors and officers. It has also its vision, mission and goals as well as defined programs and directions. The officers and members of the group were provided with appropriate skills training in managing and operating a cooperative engaged in the production and marketing of banana, buying and selling of rice and lending of farm capital.

Problems encountered:

- Although the infestation of diseases to their bananas was eradicated, and while the need for a concerted effort to battle the disease was needed, some of the residents were earlier apparently apathetic and uninterested to participate in the project. The apparent reasons were varied. Some did not want to invest time and money for something that was still not tested, the others were just contented to wait for the results of the project, while a few said they simply had no money to pay for the membership fee in joining the cooperative. The proponent did not force those who doubted. Instead, it built on the successes of its activities until the "Doubting Thomases" were convinced about the advantage of joining the project.
- There were some "Johnny come latelays". These were the individuals who earlier refused to join the project and were even making unkindly remarks about it. When they realized that the project was indeed providing benefits to the participants, they suddenly wanted to be in and demanded to be served immediately. The PMT managed this issue correctly. It prioritized those who immediately expressed their desire to participate in the project from the very start and in the process helped in the achievement of initial project successes.

Variance

In the original design, the project expects to produce 36,000 *balangon* plantlets in six months (or 6,000 plantlets per month). However, upon the recommendation of technical experts, the CORDEV decided to produce and distribute a mix of the *balangon* and *cardava* varieties, both of which are BBTV-resistant.

Finance

The proponent has already completely utilized the Canada Fund grant commitment amounting to Php 845,750.00. On the other, the combined counterpart contributions of the proponent and the beneficiaries reached Php 477,649.09 or 99.9% of the annual commitment amounting to Php 477,900.00. The expenditures are consistent to the purpose for which these were made available.