

akong nabubuhayan ng loob para magpatuloy.” (As a widow, I had no choice but to be a hardworking and strong woman for my children. I admit, there are times that I felt hopeless and feeling weak because no matter how I strive in working just to uplift our living condition seems like nothing happened. On the other hand, everytime I saw my children and thought about their future, on what might be tommorow that awaits them I courageously faced the day with hope and faith).

She added, *“masaya ako at nagpapasalamat dahil nakasali ako sa organisasyon ng WOW kung saan nabigyan ako ng kapital para magkaroon ng mini-grocery at nabigyan ng pagkakataon na ipakita ang aking karunungan sa pagluluto kung saan nagiging pandagdag rin sa kinikita ko pang araw-araw”.* (I am so blessed and fortunate that I had given a chance to be a member of WOW wherein they gave me a livelihood capital to start my mini-grocery and also I grabbed the chance to showcase them my skills in cooking. Whereas it became add-ons to our source of income).

She now operates WOW mini-grocery. She is also a member of WOW since 2014 whose potential to conduct a business was visible. Hannade was one of the leading women of WOW contributing to the strong foundation of the organization like other women in the

community. Now, she is earning about fifteen thousand (15,000.00) pesos a month with her mini grocery funded by the LGU. She continues to inspire other women in their community and aiming to be an instrument in uplifting the socio-economic goal of WOW organization to its members.

“Beautifying Lake Marayag” located at Brgy. Bayanga Norte, Matanog, Maguindanao. WOW-Matanog members are the forerunner in beautifying it. It is an abandoned place in the past that is now being developed as a tourism destination in the place. WOW members maintain the surroundings of the place which include cleaning and flower gardening. With the active and collective participation of women, the municipality of Matanog is now known for its beautified Marayag Lake.

It aims to transform the widely devastated areas of the place brought about by the arm conflicts in the past, it is the portion of the locality which was known for horrible human activities (criminalities) such as high way robbery. The area was a dumping site of murdered/salvage victims. An abandoned place that terrifies travelers. It is also the sole flooded area in the municipality that water of the lake overflows and crossing the highway during rainy season and prevents vehicles from traversing.

To encourage others to come and visit the place, major activities for women are being held in the area. WOW-Matanog members maintains Marayag Lake and all its improvements. For this effort,

WOW-Matanog members have been recognized and featured in the Asia's Magazine as a group of women which contributed to transformation of Marayag Lake.

"Gulayan sa Barangay" was established by WOW-Matanog members surrounding the lake. In developing Marayag Lake, WOW-Matanog has been the partner of the LGU in conducting several socio-economic activities. This aims to discover, improve, and promote the stunning beauty of the lake as nature's haven.

Since Matanog residents suffer from reaching distant bazaar which could only be found in Poblacion, town center, WOW-Matanog members have established *"Gulayan sa Barangay"* or gardening as one of their activity which helps the WOW-Members gained income for their livelihood. *"Gulayan sa Barangay"* is a continuous effort of WOW-Matanog member since 2014. Every barangay has its own garden and is composed of varieties of vegetable. People doesn't have to move that far to provide for their viand and it does not only serve the residents but the travellers as well. Aside from being fresh harvest from own agriculture, it can help the widows to sustain and raise the orphans. LGU-Matanog employees are one of their purchasers to help them in sustaining their basic needs. As a matter of fact, some members of WOW used their income in sustaining the studies of their children. As for now, they can sell each P300-P500 a week and an average of P3,000.00 up to P5,000 per month, where living is well supported.

“Dagangan ni Kaka”, a long term plans of WOW-Matanog as the organizations primary economic activity. This is not a typical sari-sari store but one which will possibly provide all the basic needs of the populace of the municipality. Dagangan ni Kaka started in a small business enterprise of WOW-Matanog out of the small financial support of the local government. Initially, it provides only consumable goods for the day to day life of the surrounding communities. The *“Dagangan”* was extended to a *“carenderia”* with ready to eat foods. This concept was influenced by the fact that it is situated in the municipal town center. Among the avid customers of the establishment are the LGU officials and employees and by passers. It is also in the *“Dagangan ni Kaka”* where the transaction for food catering services of WOW-Matanog is being processed. This an initiative of WOW-Matanog in line with their livelihood program supportive to the other activities that they are pursuing like the restaurant and other food services they offer.

“Cofta Chairs for rent”, this is an alternative source of income of WOW-Matanog members. The place is being far from highly urbanized towns where socio-economic services are widely available, its constituents find it difficult to resort to this services to be used in times of various gatherings and occasions. This business being offered into a very low price is gaining positive reception from the people of the town for the objective is not merely to raise income but to provide service that is promoting convenience and conduciveness to everyone.

At present, WOW-Matanog has 350 “Cofta Chairs” available for rent at five peso per piece (P5.00/piece).

“WOW Resto”, the resto is located at Marayag Lake, Brgy. Bayanga Norte. As what has been said, WOW-Matanog members is the partner of LGU in developing Marayag Lake as an eco-tourist destination in the municipality. To fast tract, the physical changes in the area, the LGU allowed the group in building the resto in the place to expand their meaningful and resourceful activities. Just like in some other places of the country, Matanog through WOW-Matanog members is conceptualizing to establish a “Stop Over” where pasalubong center is visible and other recreational services are available. Currently, the operation of WOW Resto is aimed to serve travelers and walk in clients. As they say, the resto serves the best native coffee in the region.

As part of the WOW-Matanog member’s effort to widely inspire women constituents of the municipality, the GAD municipal government also recognized their Sakurab and Coffee products for exportation to Japan. With the effort and support of the LGU, WOW-Matanog members have now become competent women with beneficial role in the socio-economic development of Matanog, Maguindanao.

WOW-Sakurab is one of the well-known product of Matanog or in the province of Maguindanao, whereas it became the first product being exported in International particularly in Japan. They made it as one of the main ingredients in making “kim Chie.” It aims to widen the

scope industry of “kim Chi” from “sakurab or scallion bulb” in Matanog, Maguindanao.

WOW-Matanog members are multifaceted and do possess different skills that can be used in earning and utilizing income, some of them are engaged in dressmaking wherein the LGU-Matanog initiates and support them through supplying five sewing machine to be used. WOW-dressmakers are the ones who sew the school uniforms of their Co-WOW members’ children both uniform in Arabic and in English, aside from it they are already well-known in the municipality of Matanog as wholly seamstresses wherein most of the residents are their regular customers. Each of them can earn about P5, 000.00 a month, and is sufficient enough to support the other needs of the family.

The participants expressed the lapses faced by the organization. They agreed that they needed funds, have their own fund and they will hold their money to sustain the organization if the time comes that the administration changes they will still have the organization. They also suggested strengthening their skills in marketing and management to avoid bankruptcy. They also recommended that they were still in need for additional linkages in the community.

WOW Agri-mart is owned by samra. She is also a member of WOW-Matanog since 2014.

She quoted,” *Bilang isang miyembro ng organisasyon, hindi po namin maipagkakaila na meron din*

pong mga kakulangan na nagaganap. Kailangan po ng organisasyon namin ng sariling pundo para kahit po mapalitan ang kasalukuyang administrasyon ay magpatuloy pa rin ang pamamalakad ng organisasyon namin. Kailangan din po kameng turuan o mas lalong hasain ang aming kakayahan sa pamamahala ng negosyo para makaiwas sa pagkaluge. Kailangan din po namin ng iba pang tulong na mag-uugnay saamin sa komunidad para mapalawak ang aming organisasyon.”

She added “*Alhamdulillah! sa dalawang taon na pagnenegosyo ko ng agri-mart ay lumago ito ng mabilis dahil lahat ng taga dito saamin ay dito na namimili, at dahil sa patok ang negosyo ko kinakailanagn ko magpatayo ng dalawa pang building na ngayon ay sinisimulan ng gawin.* (After 2 years in the making, the WOW Agri-mart has grown faster due to the demand of product in their barangay, and there is need for the extension since it is the only Agri-mart in the poblacion. Thus, Construction of two (2) storeys Agri-mart building is now ongoing. WOW Agri-mart not only gained profit for itself but can serve the residents suffer from reaching distant bazaar, people don’t have to move that far to buy products).

She was selected and qualified to be one of the recipient of the LGU Small and Medium Enterprise Development Project. She opted to venture into agri-mart as it is the product demand of the people in their barangay since most of the residents are farmers. With the establishment of the agri-mart, the supply for farm inputs is now readily available in the barangay. One of the goals of the LGU in strengthening women's capacity was achieved in her project as it plays a significant role in shaping the social and economic development of the society.

IMPLICATIONS

The participants' membership in the Women of War program provided them capacity especially by attending series of seminars and trainings like Parenting skills, Women's right and Human's right; micro-finance and livelihood skills trainings specifically in food processing, sewing and proper planting of veggies and fruits; and Small Medium Enterprises (SME's) building in support to their micro-finance and livelihood skills. They have also identified the Government and Non-Government agencies that extended help to their organization.

After joining WOW program, the participants felt happiness because they were able to survive life's adversities and were able to manage problematic situations. The participants revealed that they have become a better and wiser individual than before. They are now confident that they put value on their capability. They have shown

community involvement where they joined activities not only in their organization but in the Barangay and Municipal too. Finally, they verbalized that they are now accomplished human beings because they can now have established responsibility to their homes and to the community. They were able to handle the responsibility that their husband left. Furthermore, they savored positive independence which they can't do before because they are not yet capacitated. They were able to extend help voluntarily to their neighbors and to the community. They valued the spirit of camaraderie and volunteerism.

The participants expressed the lapses faced by the organization. They agreed that they needed funds, have their own fund and they will hold their money to sustain the organization if the time comes that the administration changes they will still have the organization. They also suggested strengthening their skills in marketing and management to avoid bankruptcy. They also recommended that they were still in need for additional linkages in the community.

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