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Upscaling Organic Agriculture System of La Trinidad, Benguet Farmers

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Abstract

In Benguet, Philippines, farmers are shifting to organic agriculture (OA) for them to produce safe food. The objectives of the study are to: describe the production techniques employed by farmers and organizations; describe the marketing techniques employed by farmers and organizations; and identify their motivations in venturing into the organic farming system. The study was conducted in La Trinidad, Benguet. The study used mixed methods, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods The quantitative data was presented descriptively. As in exploratory studies, the qualitative data was presented narratively. Highlight results show that organic agriculture is driven by both men and women although documented narratives in the study show that women were the first ones to have initiated shifting to OA. Organizations were created and established to support OA. To upscale OA production techniques, the farmers identified and described several farming techniques and practices. The marketing techniques are identified and described to upscale OA. There were motivations as to why they ventured into OA such as health and wellness reasons; appreciation of responsible farming; and realization of various forms of empowerment. The documented practices and responses in the study are then recommended to be considered by organizations working on similar advocacy.

Introduction

Much hope is vested in organic agriculture thus farmers across the world are joining the venture. Organic agriculture is a promising trade and sustainable development opportunity and a powerful tool for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, particularly those related to poverty reduction and the environment (United Nations, 2008).

The contribution of OA to the realization of the SDGs is paramount. Specifically, the study aimed to contribute to understanding SDG 1 (end poverty in all its forms everywhere). OA is anchored to producing sustainable food, thereby producing livelihood in a constant manner too. Notwithstanding, poverty is felt and experienced across the world. However, through securing and sustaining food for all families, poverty can be

reduced. On the side of farmers, OA would help reduce their chemical inputs, hence possibly increasing their yield and produce.

As for SDG 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture) and SDG 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well–being for all at all ages), OA becomes essential as it drastically lessens chronic and acute exposure to pesticides among farm workers (Payan-Renteria et al., 2012; Calvert et al., 2008; Damalas & Koutroubas, 2016) and the environment (Relyea, 2005; Chagnon et al., 2015). Further, the literature also points out that organic produce has higher nutritional value with greater vitamins (Baranski et al., 2014). OA likewise aims to contribute to healthy soil and facilitate the availability of nutrients to plants (Tal, 2018).

SDG 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) resonate with much of OA's aims as it recognizes both men's and women's role in the agricultural production cycle. Sisto and Furst (2019) quipped that women play an important role in the management and use of natural resources. OA is a farming system that is carried out with safe and ethical farming practices to maintain biological diversity, hence a reiteration of women's roles. Trauger (2004) added that sustainable agriculture techniques vitalize women, and provides spaces of empowerment for them.

OA is also significant in the achievement of SDG 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all). According to Crowder and Reganold (2015), by eliminating the expense of many inputs–including insecticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers – OA costs less and is economically competitive.

In the recent needs analysis of farmer organizations and individual farmers in selected areas in Benguet, organic farming has been slow in convincing our farmers to shift from conventional farming. However, particular individuals and institutions persisted thereby creating a springboard for OA development in the province. An interesting aspect is that most farmers started to shift to OA when they became member/s of particular organizations advocating OA.

Organizations are established to make their goals strong and sustainable. It enables better coordination and networking for its members and its external beneficiaries. As Wollni et al. (2008) quipped, farmers' organizations link farmers to market opportunities by helping them overcome information deficiencies concerning production standards and consumer preferences. Further, organizations facilitate collective decisions which are seen to be the powerhouse of unity (Neumann, 2003).

In La Trinidad, Benguet, a significant number of organizations have been established. The earliest organization catering to OA was established in 2005, and other succeeding organizations followed suit. With their establishment, several farmers underwent training on OA, which eventually qualified them to become members of these organizations. Organizational guidelines help ensure the quality of OA products; and practices as employed by their members. For instance, the Republic Act 100068 or the Organic Agriculture Act of 2010.

On the ground, farmers and their respective organizations can develop mechanisms to ensure that these guidelines are followed. As a result, contextualized experiences surface. These are seen to be contributory to the development of individualized and organizational practices and/or mechanisms as they espouse and advocate OA.

According to Food and Agriculture Organization-United Nations (2014), agricultural techniques are those that have been proven to work well and produce good results and are therefore recommended as models. These could be successful experiences that have been tested and validated. In the broad sense, these techniques have been repeated and deserved to be shared so that a greater number of people can adopt them.

Against this backdrop, the study was conducted to look at the experiences of OA farmers and organizations. From these experiences, it is hoped that techniques and narratives on OA production and marketing be captured and shared with organizations and farmers on a similar venture. In this manner, the techniques may be used by concerned agencies for policy recommendations to upscale OA in the Province. Further, OA is particularly participated in by both men and women farmers. This study hopes to explore

the voices of these farmers, including their motivations, as they venture into a challenging but rewarding farming system. In terms of method, the study may be able to assert the importance of a mixed-method research design in exploring the experiences of farmers with OA and that through such method, the meanings of OA to farmers may be explored in an in-depth manner.

Methodology

The study site is La Trinidad, a first-class municipality and the capital town of the province of Benguet. In the 1980s, it earned the distinction as "The Salad Bowl of the Philippines" after becoming one of the leading vegetable–producing municipalities in the country. Then, farmers shifted from vegetable production to strawberry and cutflower production converting the title the "The Strawberry Fields of the Philippines" up to date (Municipality of La Trinidad, 2014).

The study used the exploratory mixed-method design. According to Creswell (2014), this design is best used for exploring a phenomenon in depth and then measuring its prevalence. It used a purposive sampling method to identify the farmer respondents. The criteria used were: they should be organic agriculture farmers and members of organization/s that advocate/s organic farming. Most of the respondents were referred by the officers of the different organizations, hence the use of the snowball sampling technique. Of those who were referred, 30 agreed to participate in the study. Meanwhile, the key informants were seven officers of different organizations; and the two bookkeepers of BIGS. A guided questionnaire was used to gather the farmers' profiles, which is quantitative for the most part. Such was necessary to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic background and agricultural profile of the informants. These were collected at the start of the interview. On the other hand, an interview schedule was used to gather qualitative data. The practices and motivations surfaced from the responses during the conduct of face-to-face interviews with the farmer-respondents. All interviews were collected in the specific locations of the respondents, which include on their farms, or at home. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2011), respondent interviews are conducted to find out how people express their views, how they construe their actions, and how they conceptualize the world, from their subjective standpoints.

Further, key informant interviews with selected officers of different OA organizations were done, utilizing guide questions. Their responses to the practices and motivations of OA farmers helped generate data from the organizational perspective. Focus group discussions were also employed to gather consensual answers and to verify some unclear aspects during the one-on-one interviews. Participant observation was done to document the activities of the farmer-respondents. The project team has immersed with informants during farmers' group meetings or fora, organic farm works, and even during business transactions. Time-use method was used to describe the activities of participants. It was used to capture the activities of a woman farmer on a typical/ordinary day. Case studies are also integrated to capture the individualized experiences of participants. Case studies were used to narrate the experiences of the farmer-respondents who were willing to tell their stories to provide rich data to the respondents' claims. A review of secondary resources was also done to gather data on organizational profiles. Specifically, the secondary resources reviewed were the organizational profile, and bookkeeping resources of the organizations that provided consent to the research team.

Descriptive statistics using weighted mean was used to analyze the quantitative data. For the qualitative data, thematic analysis or categorization was used to surface themes from the responses of the respondents, specifically on the practices and motivations for organic farming. In the study, the inductive process of categories and categorization (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011) was employed. This method means that the coding and theme development are based on the content of the data. Category is a covering term for an array of general phenomena: concepts, constructs, themes, and other types of "bins" in which to put similar items. Categorization refers to the analytic process of sorting units of data with respect to the properties that they have in common (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Specifically, the data was organized based on the research problems and participants. After which, data reduction was done to filter out the data that will not answer the research questions. Examination of data chunks was done subsequently to identify the meanings for possible themes and sub-themes. Further analysis was done to categorize the data, where sub-themes having greater similarities with one another was clustered.

Bigger themes were identified from the data. Spiggle (1994) noted that the essence of categorization is identifying a chunk or unit of data as belonging to, representing, or being an example of some more general phenomenon. Time-use analysis was used to capture the activities of a woman farmer on a typical/ordinary day.

The study is limited in that it did not use the Republic Act No. 10068 (Philippine Organic Agriculture Act of 2010) Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) as the benchmark in identifying the good practices of the participants of the study. The good practices stated herein are based on the actual experiences of the participants and have not been evaluated vis a vis the IRR or by any other guidelines.

Profile of Farmer-Respondents

Table 1 shows that the majority of the informants are female and married. Most of them are members of two or more organizations for additional market and government support. The highest number (16.67%) falls in the age ranges, 46-50 and 51-55. In terms of educational background, 30% of them finished college education, followed by 23.33% of vocational graduates.

Most respondents, especially the high school undergraduates down to the elementary level, have learned about organic farming from people either relatives or employers. Informants also acknowledged that the seminars on organic farming have been facilitative in understanding organic farming practices.

Most of the informants are relatively related either on the following: mother-daughter, brother-sister, employer-laborer, cousin-cousin, brother-sister, and 'kailian' or coming from the same place. This implies that there is a higher tendency of going organic if you personally know someone who is into organic farming. Informants, whose parents and other siblings are into organic farming, shared that even before becoming organic farmers on their own, they had helped out on the organic farms. Their experiences and the pool of support from the people close to them are imperative in their flight into organic farming. Also, the 'employer-laborer' influence and trail can be seen amongst informants from one organic organization, where former laborers in organic farms have become tenants (independent from their employers) in the years to come. Most of the respondents claimed that they started to venture to OA when they found support from family, friends, and organizations.

Table 1

Profile of La Trinidad - OA Farmer-Respondents (n=30)

Profile	%
Sex	
Male	33.33
Female	66.67
Status	
Single	13.33
Widow	10.00
Married	76.67
Age	
16-20	3.33
21-25	3.33
26-30	6.67
31-35	6.67
36-40	10.00
41-45	13.33
46-50	16.67
51-55	16.67
56-60	13.33
61-65	13.33
Educational Attainment	
Doctorate Graduate	3.33
College Graduate	30.00
College Undergraduate	6.67
Vocational Graduate	23.33
High School Graduate	10.00
High School Undergraduate	6.67
Elementary Graduate	13.33
Elementary Undergraduate	10.00

Profile of Organizations

To validate the claims of farmer-respondents, their organizations were likewise characterized. Six organic farming organizations were registered in the Municipal Agriculture Office of La Trinidad as of 2015 (Table 2). These organizations were

organized with the main aim of consolidating organic crops for easier market and market linkages. The La Trinidad Organic Practitioner-Multipurpose Cooperative (LaTOP-MPC), with an office based in La Trinidad, was the first to be established in 2005. It is also the first organic farming association in Benguet to be certified by the Organic Certification Center of the Philippines (OCCP). It was led by male presidents since its creation. From 180 plus members, the bookkeeper said that only 172 members, as of the date of data collection, are continuously delivering organic crops.

Meanwhile, the Benguet Organic Practitioners' Association (BeOPA) is a household name for some organic practitioners of La Trinidad. Its membership cuts across all municipalities of Benguet, yet it was on hiatus for several years. Though province-wide, it is not as popular and established compared with LaTOP-MPC.

In 2009, farmers who are tilling leased areas of the Benguet State University (BSU) also organized themselves. These farmer partners of BSU underwent the Certificate in Practical Organic Agriculture (CPOA) training. The farmer's group would later be registered to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) as the Balili Organic Farmers Association (BOFA) in 2013. It is an independent organization from the BIGS center. Members are obliged to sell 20% of their products at the BIGS market (BIGS or the BSU Internal Guarantee System is one of the 'extension modalities' of the university and is under the supervision of the Technology Diffusion and Commercialization Division of the Office of the Extension Services).

Two organic organizations namely the Ambiong La Trinidad Organic Practitioners Association (ALTOPA) and Tawang Organic Farmers Association (TOFA) were organized in the year 2012 (Table 2). It was followed by the La Trinidad Organic Farmers Association (LaTOFA) in 2013. The La Trinidad Municipal Agriculture Office (LT-MAO), in its bid to support Organic Agriculture, assisted organic farmers by helping them acquire a stall in front of

Table 2

Profile of Organic Farmers' Organizations

Organization	Year Organized	No. of years of existence	Total # of members	President	Scope of Coverage
La Trinidad Organic Practitioners (LaTOP-MPC)	2005	17	172	Cesar Galuey	La Trinidad, Atok, Buguias, Tublay, Bauko of Mt. Province
Balili Organic Farmers Association (BOFA)	2009	7	32	Cecilia B. Olida	La Trinidad, Bakun, Kibungan, and Asipulo of Ifugao and Mt. Province
Benguet State University Internal Guarantee System (BIGS) Center	2009	7	139	Rev. Abelardo Sublino	La Trinidad, Bokod, Tublay, Acop, Ifugao, and Mt. Province
Ambiong La Trinidad Organic Practitioners Association (ALTOPA)	2012	4	25	Domingo A. Betnac	Barangay Ambion of La Trinidad
Tawang Organic Farmers Association (TOFA)	2012	4	28	Wilfred Puyao	Barangay Tawang of La Trinidad
La Trinidad Organics Farmers Associaiton (LaTOFA)	2013	3	48	Domingo A. Betnac	All barnagays of La Trinidad

La Trinidad's old market. Said stall is named 'La Organica' where members are organic farmers from selected barangays of the municipality.

Table 2 also shows that only one organization is currently led by a woman president, which is BOFA.

Members of organizations depend on the scope of the organization be it municipal level or barangay level. The ALTOPA and TOFA organizations; and LATOP, BOFA, and LATOFA organizations are in the municipal and barangay level, respectively. Except for TOFA, all other organizations are registered either in the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) or the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). Only LaTOP- MPC is registered with the Cooperative Development Association (CDA). Table 2 presents the total number of members and Figure 1 shows the number of female and male members of each organization.

Organic farming in LT is significantly women-driven. The farmers have families to support and have formal schooling.

The highest income recorded is Php34,000.00 and the lowest is Php1,000.00 monthly income. This does not imply however that the informant with the highest income has also the largest area devoted to organic farming. A higher organic farm area does not translate to higher income. The lowest income listed in a month is Php3,500.00.

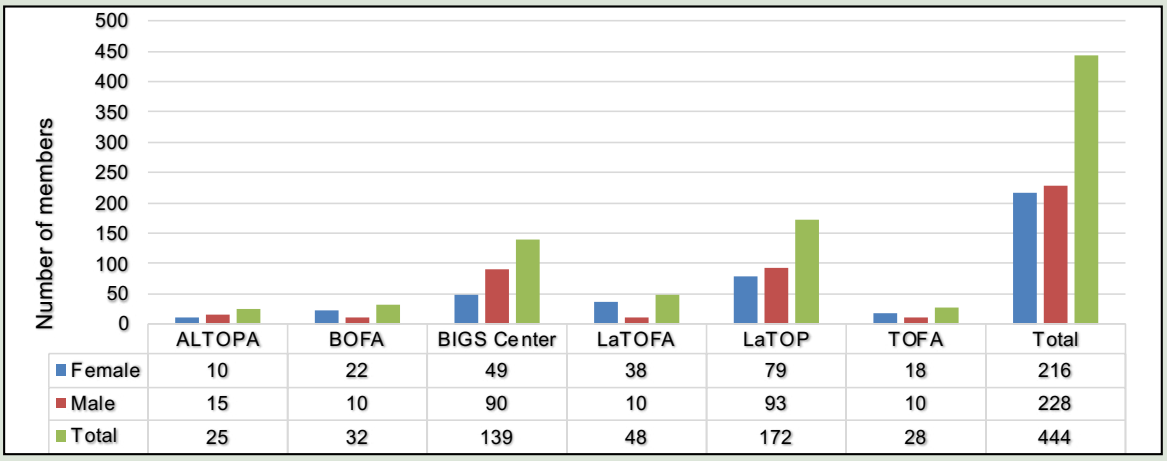
Many factors affect income from organic farming, other than the size of organic farms. These include farming strategy, types of crops grown and the number or variability of crops grown, market outlets, and amount of time given for organic farming. A gendered agendum also comes in, where a couple who both attend to organic farms see higher accomplishment in terms of lighter and shared workload, and income.

As to the scope of coverage, each organization caters to specific areas. This could indicate that the presence of organic farmers in particular areas could propel the creation of organizations that would represent them.

Organizing among organic farmers was found to be the best strategy considering the context in which this farming system is being undertaken. These organizations would later bring about crop programs and the establishment of market outlets. These programs in themselves are expressions of human capital development. This supports what the UN (2017) noted that countries with a unified organic movement develop the sector quicker.

Figure 1

Organic Farmers' Organizations and Number of Members



	ALTOPA	BOFA	BIGS Center	LaTOFA	LaTOP	TOFA	Total
Female	10	22	49	38	79	18	216
Male	15	10	90	10	93	10	228
Total	25	32	139	48	172	28	444

Results and Discussion

Production Techniques Employed By Farmers and Organizations

These techniques reflect how farmers and organizations go about their organic production activities. The meanings generated herein are based on the respective organizational and individual experiences.

Applying the Prescribed Organic Farming Practices Learned from Capability-building Activities

The respondents all underwent several capacity-building activities such as trainings and seminars for them to qualify as members of their respective organizations. As such, all of them related that they are religiously applying what has been taught to them, from farm planning, OA technologies, crop programming, plant care and maintenance, farm record keeping, and post-harvest techniques. Respondents shared that these capacitated them in learning about organic agriculture hence their application of what they have learned to their farms. They claimed that by applying what they have learned, the processes in organic farming are realized, and their products adhere to the standards of OA.

Norma, for instance, related that during the organic farming demonstration, she learned techniques of producing fertilizers. She mused that the demonstrations helped her acquire knowledge, which she eventually applied to her farm.

> *"Inpakat ko jay naadal ko idi demonstration, ket nakitak met nga effective. Isunga siak talaga ti mang-aramid jay inputs nga ikarkargak ijay farm tapnu sigurado nga organic inputs amin* (I applied what I have learned from the demonstration, and I saw that these are effective. I personally make all the organic inputs I apply to my farm).

Aside from practicing organic farming, she also practices natural farming in the sloping areas where she plants runners.

Another respondent quipped that continuous learning from their co-farmers and those who monitor from BIGS are very helpful in ensuring that what they are doing adheres to the OA guidelines.

These experiences imply that organic farming is heavily reliant on knowledge. Hence, learning opportunities are essential in capacitating and sustaining the knowledge of farmers venturing into organic agriculture. Such resonates with what Bliss et al. (2019) noted that organic farming is knowledge-intensive. To support farmers in improving yields and organic agriculture systems, there is a need to improve how knowledge is shared.

Multiple Memberships to Different Organizations for Better Access to Learning Opportunities.

The respondents related that when their organization invited members to attend seminars and other learning activities, they attended most of these. Most of the members have multiple memberships in organizations. *"Adda gamin ti trainings nga exclusive ti organization members. Ket no multiple ti membership mo iti naduma-duma nga organizations, ad-adu met ti access mo iti seminars,"* related one of the respondents.

As mentioned previously, two organizations and three organizations are at the municipal and barangay level, respectively. This structure allows dual and or multiple memberships of members. For instance, one could be a member of ALTOPA while also maintaining membership in the LaTOP-MPC and LaTOFA. Such implies that membership in organizations accords them more learning opportunities. Again, this result reiterates the importance of farmers being capable in terms of knowledge, skills, and practice for them to explore the opportunities of OA. As Forouzani et al. (2018) implied, the most important principle of sustainability in the OA system is its focus on increasing the capacity of the farmers, for them to produce desirable environmental, social as well as economic benefits.

Sustaining Advocacy in Producing Safe Food and Healthier Farming Practices

All respondents admitted that when they ventured into organic agriculture, they became advocates of safe food and healthier farming.

Anita, one of the respondents, claimed that she has regained her lost health through organic products. Before, she felt dizzy, her fingers numbed, and her eyes hurt working on the conventional farms. Her whole family consumes clean and healthy line of food and radiates this to the community. Anita continues to support their people's organization by being an active organic farmer and sharing her learning and success with others. Anita adds to the high number of women on the frontline to fight farmers' enemies, deteriorating health, and depleted soil. With numerous threats linked with conventional farming and women, it is worthy to emulate her safe, healthy, eco-friendly, and 'lighter' way of dealing with her health and the land.

Organizational Involvement in Crop Programming

For some who started earlier than most, they claimed to have the luxury to grow any kind of leafy vegetables especially lettuce. There were few organic farmers, thus there is lesser competition. But, as the number of organic farmers grew through the years, organic organizations implemented a crop plan that each farmer should follow. This is to avoid 'pullouts' because of the lack of market and oversupply. "Pullouts" are products displayed at the organic market stall that remained unsold for a number of days (at least 2 days) and so are being "pulled out" by the farmer-producer.

Here, each farmer plans the crops that he/she will grow on a monthly basis. For BIGS Center, organic farmers plan on the crops that they will plant for the next six months (July-December and January-June). The organization provides a programming template that includes specific banner crops along with incidental plants; the date of planting and expected harvest; and the expected production volume.

Table 3

Farm Areas of Farmer-respondents

Area	Responses (n=22)
150-1,150 sqm	16
1,151-2,150 sqm	3
2,151-3,150 sqm	2
3,151-4,150 sqm	0
4,151-5,150 sqm	0
5,150-6,150 sqm	1

The benefits of crop planning are the following: it helps match the production capacity of the farmers and the available markets and the assurance that every crop grown sees a market outlet. In terms of database, the crop plan allows them to easily locate farmers producing specific crops. Competition among farmers is reduced and is achieved through crop planning.

Crop planning is being implemented by all organic organizations. They vary in their programming template, which also reflects the scope of membership and market.

Adherence to the prescribed area for organic farming. The area for organic farming is limited in size for it to be manageable. Tenants of the BSU organic farm maintain an organic farm not less than 500 square meters. As of data gathering in 2015, the highest recorded area is 6,000 square meters while the lowest is 50 square meters, among informants.

Farmers, due to recording limitations and since their farms were not subjected to measurement, could not give specific, or even estimations, for the following: area exclusively grown with main crops, area for side crops, seed germination area, and vermicompost area. However, with their clamor for organic certification, farmers also recognize the need to subject their organic farms to measurement.

Inspection and certification are integrated within the organization. Respondents shared that one of the biggest factors in upscaling their production techniques is the regular inspections of their farms provided by the BSU Internal Guarantee System or BIGS. According to a BIGS officer, such is done to ensure that each member follows the guidelines in OA. The farmer-respondents shared that with the series of inspections done on their farms, they were eventually given certification as an organic farming system.

While OCCP Inc. is there to provide inspection and certification to food and food products, farmers find the process tedious and expensive.

Hence, to serve as an alternative certification-giving body for organic farmers, the BSU Internal Guarantee System (BIGS) was established to cater to its members. Once granted the certification from BIGS, a farmer can use the organic label in his products. The market outlets and networks forged by the organization are also accessible to the members through certification. This BIGS scheme allows participatory monitoring of organic farming compliance from its officers and members.

Farmer-members, who are qualified to be inspectors, render their services for free to fellow farmers, who subject their farms to inspection.

Organic farmers and organic organizations that are not OCCP certified are not allowed to advertise their crops as "organic." An informant who is not OCCP-certified said that technically, she is an "illegitimate organic farmer." This is why BSU and its organic growers established their own monitoring system through BIGS.

Case Study

The farming activities of farmers mostly revolve around the guidelines taught to them during trainings and capability-building activities as required by their respective organizations. These activities may be reflected and summed up in the case story of Anita.

Anita, a Migrant Organic Farmer

Humble Beginnings. *Anita, a 53-year-old organic farmer traces her origin from Asipulo, Ifugao. She came from a poor big family with nine children, of whom she is the second to the last. Her family survived by growing sweet potatoes on the swidden farms and working in others' rice fields in exchange for a few bundles of palay. Finishing an elementary education is a big success for her.*

From Laborer to Tenant. *Anita moved to the Mountain Trail for a greener pasture in her late teens. She married later a fellow laborer from Isabela. They tilled the land for vegetable production and then served years as laborers on conventional farms. She recalls years of toiling on other farms, working in a newly sprayed garden and soil, enduring numbness in the fingers, dizziness, and hurting eyes. Laborers work the worst activities on the farms, she said. They are also meagerly paid. During those times, she was paid 100 to 150 pesos per day. In 1999, her husband suffered from a stroke and totally left her a year later.*

Together with her two daughters, they moved to La Trinidad in 2006, renting a boarding house up to date. She first worked as a laborer on a Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) farm rented by certain BSU employees at the BSU experimental farm for around four years. Then, she heard of the Internal Control System (ICS) training conducted by the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) at the BSU Compound. Her employer paid for her and another laborer's registration fees, which cost Php3,500 each at that time.

By the time the contract of her employer ended, BIGS Center had opted that the one to till the land should be a farmer who had finished the BIGS qualifying course. Being able to finish her ICS from phase 1 to 1V, which qualified her as a BIGS partner, Anita succeeded her employer in the said area. Part of the area was covered already with farm tunnels/rain shelters handed over to her by her employer, which she is grateful for.

From Gainful Work To Empowerment. *She is a member of the BOFA, an organic farmers' organization of BSU organic farm tenants. She joined the Benguet Organic Practitioners Association (BEOPA) to increase the market. However, she only delivers her crops to BIGS Center and BOFA stall. A lot of members compete for the market in the BEOPA, being a province-wide organization. Though it included farmer-members from other provinces, BIGS Center has a larger consumer demand than BEOPA. Anita noted Php100,000 as her annual net income from organic farming. She disclosed growing more crops during the rainy season, which runs from June to September. During this season, water is abundant, and the temperature is cooler. She could gain a gross income of Php5000 per week. The dry months would only see Php1,000 gross income per week. Due to the increase in temperature, more "pullouts" are subtracted. Anita takes back these pullouts and adds these to her compost pile. Sometimes, these so-called "pullouts" add up to some income losses. Women organic farmers find it practical*

to look for other buyers, especially if there are anticipated "pullouts." Usually, these women producers also hop from one office to another to sell their organic products.

Table 4 presents the cost of production incurred by Anita last April. Her total cost of production was estimated at more than Php10,000 per month. This did not include her expenses in buying equipment during the previous years. She was able to record Php19,280 from selling a volume of the following crops: polonsai, iceberg, spinach, kale, parsley, green ice, lettuce, romaine, wansoy, and lettuce. However, the value of the total pullouts, Php910, was deducted from this total sales value. Ten percent of the collected sales was subtracted and given to the BIGS center for operational costs. Pullouts are taken back by farmers. She mixes these crops with other inputs such as the ashes, coconut dust, chicken dung, sunflower, and kitchen refuse for compost.

Table 4

Cost of Production of Anita Last April, 2016

Particular	***Amount***
A. Inputs	
Ashes (10 sacks @ 40/sack)	*400.00*
Chicken dung (5 sacks @ 110/sack)	*550.00*
Cocunut dust (3 sacks @150/sack)	*450.00*
B. Labor	
Planting, weeding, and land cultivation (per day labor) (8 pax @ 250)	*2,000.00*
Snacks of laborers	*500.00*
Value of family labor	*3,250.00*
C. Packing	
Plastic bags (12 rims @ 250/rim)	*3,000.00*
Stickers (9 pcs @ 50/pc)	*450.00*
Grand Total	**10,600.00**

* *The table includes the value of unpaid labor that she and her daughter devoted to their farm. The computation was derived using the average labor price of Php250 per day. It does not include the value of seedlings she produced form teh old seedlings and exchanged with fellow farmers.*

**The structure used is based on Taming the Market Forces: Conditions of Women Potato Farmers in Barangay Paoay, Atok by Batani, (2000).*

Source: Interview with Anita, 8 May 2016

Table 5 shows that the amount left after total expenses were subtracted is less than Php6,000. She claimed that her income in organic farming is higher than her wage when she was a laborer. Anita refused a 'job order' offer from the BSU as she said that she could gain more from tending an organic farm. She also has an account with the BSU multi-purpose cooperative, which she opened through her income in organic farming. More importantly, what she considers priceless are the knowledge and skills that she learned from seminars and trainings open to them. She learned how to do vermicompost, multi-cropping, crop rotation, and Internal Control System (ICS), and she says she is still learning other skills in her trade.

Her organic garden is evidence of these learnings. She religiously grows more than one crop in the same area, and successively cultivates different crops in a specified order on the same garden plots. These strategies prevent the depletion of soil nutrients and destructive weeds and pests. Other than organic farming strategies, she also learned about bookkeeping and basic accounting.

Table 5

Anita's Net Income in April, 2016, a 'Peak' Period for Organic Crops

Particulars	**Amount (Php)**
Total product value	19,280.00
Less: pullouts	910.00
Collected Sales	18,370.00
Less 10%	1,895.00
Net sales	**16,553.00**

Table 6

Anita's Net Income from Organic Farming in April 2016

Particulars	**Amount (Php)**
Net sales	16,553.00
Less: total expenses (Table 4)	10,600.00
Net sales	***5,953.00***

Marketing Techniques of Individual Farmers and Organizations

This section presents a synergy of techniques employed by individual farmers and their organizations. Some techniques are presented as practiced only by individual farmers.

Multiple Memberships to Organizations to have more Marketing Opportunities

As mentioned earlier, all respondents are members of one or more organization/s. Such enables them to have access to the established market outlets by their respective organizations.

To put such in context, one sentiment keeps on resonating from the farmers– marketing is a challenge. More so since they are selling products that are a lot more expensive than the vegetables sold in the local market. However, market outlets are explored more conveniently when they become members of their respective organizations. Groceries and bigger stores were included in their market outlets.

Organic farmers apply for membership to farmers' groups or any other entrepreneurial groups at the barangay, municipal, and province levels for added markets. The more market outlets, the lesser the "pullouts" as farmers could divide their crops amongst these outlets.

There are also market outlets that have linkages with specialty markets that request herbs. Herbs are usually grown as side crops and or buffers by many organic farmers. These items are not popular with local people. Being a member of organizations with buyers from other places of these crops would benefit farmers more as all crops on the farm (main crops, standing crops, and side crops) would be sold.

Further, most OA farmers' groups are venturing into networks/linkages that will provide market opportunities. As some informants quipped, the only way for them to continue OA farming is its potential in the market, since farming remains to be seen as the major source of livelihood for many communities.

Putting it on a practical note, organic farming is endeavored with the hope of it still sustaining the family's basic needs in terms of cash returns. This is then left to the capacity of a certain farmers' group to forge networks with other organizations/institutions for the benefit of their members.

In interviews with key informants (officers of organizations), and a review of secondary documents, Table 7 shows the established market outlets of different organizations. A MOA by both BIGS and BOFA with BSU enabled the farmer-members to avail of a viable space to sell their

Table 7

Summary of Market Outlets of Organic Farmers' Group

Name of Organization	Market Outlets
La Trinidad Organic Practitioners (LaTop)	La Trinidad Public Market stall 36, Café by the Ruins, SM Supermarket- Baguio, Baguio Public Market, Tiongsan SuperMarket, Mega Mall- Manila, and CSI Super Market -Dagupan
Balili Organic Farmers Associaiton (BOFA)	BIGS Center, Organic stall in Km.5, Benguet Organic Practitioners Association (BEOPA) Stall
Ambiong La Trinidad ORganic Practitioners Association (ALTOPA)	La Organica Stall
Tawang Organic Farmers Association (TOFA)	La Organica Stall
La Trinidad Organic Farmers Associaiton (LaTOFA)	La Organica Stall
Benguet State University Internal Guarantee System (BIGS) Center	BIGS Center

crops at the BSU Organic market and BSU Marketing Center. The LTMPC is also supplying OA products for the Café by the Ruins (a restaurant), SM-Baguio (Supermarket), Mega Mall- Manila, and CSI Super Market in Dagupan Warehouse club.

The establishment of La Organica stall was initiated by the La Trinidad Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO). The name La Organica is a trade name used by the LaTOFA. The stall presently stands at Km. 5, La Trinidad. It has only one market outlet, which is responsible for forging networks with traders that usually order in bulk.

Meanwhile, LaTOP-MPC being the oldest and having the most number of members rings a bell in every household. Its popularity can be owed to its members who are icons of organic farming in the region like Pat Acosta, Felix Tan, and Eric Tinoy-an, among others. It is also the only organic organization to be certified by the OCCP, which is one reason why it can advertise its crops as 'organic'.

The BIGS center is a BSU-based organization and a market outlet, at the same time, it also serves as an internal accrediting system for its members. Members of this center have to undergo the trainings conducted by the BSU and have their farms inspected by the members of the internal inspection team. This BIGS' scheme allows participatory monitoring of organic farming compliance from its officers and members. Farmer-members, who are qualified to be inspectors, render their services for free, to fellow farmers who subject their farms to inspection.

The BOFA is an offshoot of the BIGS' marketing. Members of the organization are automatically members of the BIGS Center, as they are obliged to sell a percentage of their crops. But, members of BIGS are not necessarily members of BOFA. The move of the BIGS center in the establishment of BOFA is anchored on one practical reason, among other bigger goals, which is to access resources. BOFA, as a SEC-registered association and as a people's organization and an academe-based organic farming association, can easily access government's services, such as support from the Department of Agriculture, Department of Labor and Employment among others.

These results imply that at the conduct of the study, individual OA farmers are heavily reliant on the learning opportunities provided by their respective organizations.

Adherence to Prescribed Product Packaging

According to a key informant from one of the organizations, they prescribe particular packaging details that members should abide by. All the informants use plastic bags or plastic boxes as packaging materials. The products are packed in retail sizes. The packed items are glued with labels consisting of the logo and name of the farmer or farm code to guarantee that the products are organic.

Farm code is also important for inventory and traceability purposes. Only LaTOP features a Star Ranking System which shows the level of compliance/conformity to conditions and regulations of organic farming, with six stars being the highest. One star embedded in the logo means the organic farmer is a new member of the association. He or she is also just starting to adopt organic farming practices.

Individually-established Suki System

This technique is unique to individual farmers. Some respondents noted that they are selling or supplying their crops to households, and even some retailers such as stores.

Challenges like the oversupply of some products in the stall will cause pullouts. To solve this, some farmers ventured out on their own to look for some market outlet for themselves, however, pullout remains an enduring issue.

Motivations for Organic Farming

Health and Wellness Reasons

The majority of the informants practice organic farming for health reasons. They either practice organic farming to get cured and/or prevent aggravation or to maintain a healthy well-being. As they shifted to organic farming, their exposure to synthetic chemicals significantly lessened which to these informants, resulted in the improvement of their well-being.

Some informants related the negative effects

of conventional farming on their health and the benefits of organic farming. A key informant shared that she was diagnosed with myoma, and her doctor advised her to avoid carrying heavy loads. Since she is not able to avoid this situation in conventional farming, she instead shifted to organic farming. Since then, according to her medical check-up, the lump has not increased in size. She says she owes the positive medical feedback to her shift in organic farming as she is able to avoid being exposed to chemicals and heavy couriers as she only harvests a few crops at a time. Another informant Rosalia, aged 55, related that she was brought to the hospital thrice while working on a conventional farm. She said that she felt pain in her head and eyes which accordingly was caused by her unavoidable exposure to synthetic chemicals. Biomedical perspectives confirm the correlation of pesticide exposure to health hazards (Nicolopoulou-Stamati et al., 2016; Sidchogan-Batani et al., 2012).

The long-term goal of countries advocating OA is to develop sustainable, healthy food systems to benefit public health (FAO-UN, 2018). The same organization then reiterated that in OA, the use of pesticides and residues in conventional crops should be restricted to achieve the goal of SDGs.

Appreciation of Responsible, but Economically-responsive Farming

All of the respondents have expressed the realization of responsible farming and recognition of the need to have better farming practices for the next generation. Some respondents maintain conventional farms and only allot a smaller lot for growing organic crops. The conventionally grown crops are sold for income, while organic produce is left for family consumption. These products are only sold when there is more than enough for the family's consumption. Further, most respondents shared that unlike in conventional farming where every pest is a source of 'panic', in organic farming, pests are not always seen as a source of low yield but can even be considered 'normal.'

People see organic crops as safe, mainly because they are not sprayed with pesticides. Compared to the past when organic crops were newly introduced to markets, today, the demand for these has been growing through the years as evidenced by the increase of market outlets, an increase of organic farmers, and sales records of individual farmers and market outlets.

As organic farming provides an alternative to farmers, organic crops in the market give choices to consumers. Interestingly, buyers of organic crops are also conventional farmers. A key informant shared that her friends, who, after selling tons of crops to La Trinidad, would drop by at the La Organica stall to buy organic crops for their families' consumption.

The overriding reason of most respondents engaging in organic farming is to provide safe food for their family's consumption. One of them shared that having been exposed to synthetic pesticides prompted her to allot a portion for her family's consumption and to sell if there is a market for organic products. In a study conducted by Lapple (2013), organic farmers are found to be the most environmentally aware farmers, and less profit-oriented compared to conventional farmers.

Realization of Shared Roles, Responsibilities, and Decision-making Power of Men and Women

In conventional farming, decisions as to 'what crops to plant,' what to spray' etc., are mostly done by male farmers, with the woman playing a support role.

Initially, women respondents claim that they have been 'alone' in pursuing organic farming. But, when their husbands and other household members saw their seriousness, they also helped in certain stages of the production cycle. Some informants claimed they do farming with their husbands even in cases where husbands still retain their own conventional farms. In the production cycle, husbands usually do the cultivation of lands, gathering of compost materials, and making of the compost pile. Wives, on the other hand, do the weeding and sowing of seeds. In the marketing aspect, husbands help in the packing of crops, and in carrying heavy loads from the farms to the roads. The wives do the house-to-house retailing of crops.

In conventional farming, Nguyen, et al. (2019) in the case of South and Southeast Asia noted that in general, women continue to be regarded as secondary farm laborers despite their principal contributions. Men are persistently assumed to be de facto heads of households and principal earners. Further, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2021) pointed out that women's economic participation is confined to

the lower levels of the value chain (such as weeding and seedlings planting). Social norms and practices prevent women to be involved in the lucrative stages of agricultural value chains such as trading and price control. However, in the context of organic farming in this study, both men and women equally get to decide land utilization, farming activities, and trading decisions. Likewise, both men and women have equal access to OA opportunities. For instance, a couple involved in OA mentioned that they both attend learning opportunities (Figure 2). *"Agpada kami nga ag-atendar iti seminars ta duwa kami met nga aggarden,"* shares one woman-respondent when asked who attends the capacity-building activities. Such implies that empowerment is also realized in equal access to learning opportunities. Their organizations, as attested by the respondents, do not discriminate against any gender – all members have the privilege to learn. In OA, both men and women play shared roles and responsibilities; access to information and capacity-building activities; and earning profit for the family.

Figure 2

Power Duo: Couple Organic Farmers Pack Their Crops Together for her to Catch up with the Last Ride in the Sitio

Avoiding the Cycle of Indebtedness

Organic farmers claimed that they can now experience relief from debt and some even say that they are permanently cutting the cycle of dependency on suppliers. First, they do not use chemical inputs but utilize biological elements, which are usually recycled from animal wastes, table residues, and plants, among others. For established organic producers, they enjoy a cycle of less input of financial and human capital to high income and astounding health. Marais and Eiselen (2017) found out in their study that in OA, farmers are able to save on fertilizers, chemicals, and other synthetic inputs. Further, as they produce safe, ethically-produced food, the prices of their products are potentially higher hence could lead to better financial benefits (Veisi et al., 2017).

Manageable Time Use

Previous studies proved that farmers in Mt. Trail are time-poor (Sidchogan-Batani & Ngina, 2011) due to workload demand in the context of conventional farming. Today, a considerable number of women informants in the two sites claim that they are no longer pressured by time since their organic farms are small-scale. Table 8 presents a typical daily time-use of a woman organic farmer. Her husband is a full-time conventional farmer. She confided that it was only when she shifted to organic farming that she allotted time for other tasks and to herself. Accordingly, in organic farming, she does not need to rush her work as she used to do when she was in conventional farming.

The form of empowerment in this sense is the ability to manage their time according to their priorities. Some respondents shared that when they were still into conventional farming, there were too many farming activities and they barely had time for other essential activities (such as wellness and leisure activities). When they ventured into organic farming, their time became more manageable according to their needs; of which they can even explore other opportunities outside farming. Jayakarani et al. (2012) defined individual empowerment as where the person experiences a process of transformation that enables him/her to make independent decisions and take action on these decisions to make changes in their life. Knowledge and the presence of an enabling environment are the agents for such to occur.

Involvement in farmer-led sustainable agriculture is seen to facilitate empowerment. They are more involved in their communities and are more positive and in greater control of their lives than conventional farmers. The study also shows an increase in communal labor and community activities (Bachman et al., 2009).

Table 8

Time-Use of a Woman Organic Farmer

Day	Time	Activities
Monday	5:00-6:00 AM	Preparing food for the family (3 members) for breakfast and lunch Watch early news
	6:01-8:00 AM	Breakfast: doing the laundry
	8:01-10:30 AM	Watering plants; weeding; Harvesting; Shredding plants for the compost pile
	10:31-11:30 AM	Reading the Bible, watching television
	11:31-12:00 PM	Reheating food for lunch/cooking
	12:01-1:00 PM	Lunch
	1:01-3:00 PM	Watching afternoon shows
	3:01-5:30 PM	Weeding; Dicing/plotting; Watering of crops
	5:31-6:00 PM	Preparing for dinner
	6:01-7:30 PM	Studying the bible
	7:31-10:00 PM	Watching news and drama

**This is her time-use on a typical day when she does not have seminars and church activities to attend.*
**As can be gleaned, she uses give hours only for farm labor equivalent to 30 hours a week.*

Strong Organizational Support

Requests for support are most likely responded to when organizations are the entities asking for it. In the narratives of the officers, their respective organizations were able to ask for support, especially capacity-building activities.

Overall, La Trinidad organic growers are more stable and robust in terms of production and marketing, as they are also more organized and are able to push for some institutional support. "*Iti tulong ti organizations nga naki-myembro ak, nakadesido ak nga ituloy ti OA. No siguro awan dagitoy agtul-tuloy nga seminars ken training, baka adda ak pay lang nga ag-is-spray ti napigsa nga pesticides*" (With the help of OA organizations where I membered, I decided to continue OA. Also without the exposure to series of trainings and seminars, maybe I am still practicing heavy pesticide spraying), mused one of the respondents when asked about the importance of being a member to his respective organizations.

It is generally known that converting to OA entails a difficult, long process. It is information-intensive that requires several sustained learning opportunities because changing a farm system affects all aspects of a farming family's resources. Risks are likewise common with the conversion, such as market and production risks. Such emphasizes the need for a strong support system. Organizational support is primary. Organizational support is essential to their members' development. In a study done by Jayakarani et al. (2012), mechanisms of support from organizations are focused on knowledge; agency (self-identity, decision-making, effecting change); opportunity structure, and capacity building. These are vital as the organizations further identify needs, then devise plans of action, and implement solutions.

The Essential Roles and Values of Women in Farming are Realized

All women respondents mused that when they got involved with OA, their farming roles have been more realized. *"Idi nag-organic farming ak ket napanunut ko ti salun-at ti pamilyak, iti daduma nga priorities ko, iti benefits na daytoy desisyon ko nga ag-shift ti nasal-salun-at nga panag-garden"* (When I ventured into organic farming, I realized its benefits and importance to my family, priorities and decision making in safe farming system), related one woman respondent.

Women farmers engage in organic farming, perhaps because organic farming activities are

tedious. Women, who are naturally detailed in work, can catch up with the laborious process (Figure 3).

The continuity of traditional women's role in terms of health and well-being seems to permeate organic farming, where the women who chose to do organic while their husbands remain in conventional farming, are motivated by the need to provide healthy food for their families and their community. This also goes well with the women's perspective of looking at the "spiritual" side of farming, with these women claiming that "spraying goes against the essence of praying." Women who have husbands see victory every time their husbands help them in the more difficult phases of the farming cycle; one was even able to convince her husband to partner in the endeavor full time.

While there have been challenges in organic farming, women farmers already value their work not just in terms of 'cash' derived but also in terms of the health benefits as well as "what they are contributing to humanity and environmental sustainability." Realizing their "little joys" in organic farming, these women also are joining in the advocacy of being accountable in producing safe food for humanity.

It can be concluded that their reasons for venturing into organic farming are beyond producing and selling; their reasons transcend the basic purpose of farming, which is producing food. For these organic farmers, they are producing safe food and taking care of the environment – which are both supportive to the indigenous worldview of humanity as just one element in the whole ecosystem.

These insights agree well with what Stephenson and Lev (2015) said on the "variety of advantages to farm direct marketing," where the farmer sets the price or is more in control of the price and that 'good products and services can get attractive prices and therefore, small farms can be profitable.' In terms of leadership, the story of Cecilia, the President of BOFA is worth mentioning.

Case Study

Painting Woman's Ingenuity and Leadership in Organic Farming

"Dapat lang ag-avail tau. Haan tau maibaga nga awan ti itulong iti gobyerno. Adda ngem agdawat tayo. (We should avail. We cannot say that there is no help from the government. There is, as long as we ask for it.)," said the outspoken and indomitable 31-year-old Cecilia who is the president of Balili Organic Farming Association (BOFA). She is the only woman president to take the highest position amongst organic farming organizations both in La Trinidad and Buguias. The secretary, a position traditionally assigned to women, is held by a male farmer in the organization.

Cecilia's unwavering confidence and chatty personality transcend anyone who spends a meaningful time talking with her. She believes that there is a need for people's organizations to request assistance such as capacity-building trainings and farming materials from concerned agencies of the government. She mentioned that requesting assistance from government agencies has been a challenge for most organizations. Cecilia has invested time and sacrifice in propelling the wheel of the organization. Starting Young

Cecillia married at age 19. Her parents who are vegetable farmers encouraged her to tend a small area. Farming was a practical job for her. This allows her to help in the family's income and food generation while still looking after her child. Meanwhile, her uncle also offered her garden plots to start with. Her parents and uncle encouraged her to attend a seminar on

Figure 3

Scenes of Organic Farms: Farm Managed by a Male and Female Farmer

Note: Exhibit A and B is a Farm Managed by a Male and Female Farmer

organic farming which is being conducted by Benguet State University. The seminar is the Certificate in Practical Organic Agriculture (CPOA), an extension program of the BSU College of Agriculture, which allowed her to apply for a lease in the University's area. Like other tenants at the BSU Organic area, she was able to avail of a 500m² area. The location was also favorable to her as this is near their home in barangay Balili. She eventually became a member of the BOFA. BOFA members are expected to be members also of the BIGS center where they are obliged to sell at least 25% of their organic products. The said marketing center takes 10% off the price of every crop sold.

Metamorphosis

Cecilia rose above being a member to a leader at a young age, a position usually held by male and elder members. She became an acting Secretary of the organization when the elected secretary voluntarily withdrew. As secretary, she had a closer look at the issues confronting the organization. She noticed that the same problems are being complained about every meeting yet no solutions were undertaken to resolve these problems. For this reason, she said, most members developed an "allergy" to meetings. Meanwhile, she always pushes others to be active and to take initiative for the organizations.

After a year of being a secretary, she became the first woman president of the organization, leaving behind her male opponent in the election with five or six votes in a voting crowd composed of only 10 females and 22 males. She preceded a three-year presidency of a male colleague. Before the election, she was doubtful of herself; first, because she is a woman and second, she recently came from abroad. However, her colleagues reassured her saying, "At least sika ta naturtured ka. (At least, you are braver.)"

Immediately in her stint as the president, she convened members for a sort of "organizational development" activity. Persistent issues in the organization and how these issues can be resolved were tackled. One of the permeating problems is the lack of marketing policies that result in having more 'pullouts'. In BOFA, they were able to resolve this by setting a crop plan where they specify the number of packs of crops to be delivered by every member. In this way, every farmer has a chance to sell crops and gain income. This scheme is religiously being followed by BOFA members.

It is also during her time that the organization's Constitution and By-laws was written and approved, which improved the overall management of the organization and its members. She was also able to implement what she thinks is helpful to members which she is not able to do in the BIGS center. Cecilia is automatically a member of the BIGS but due to an alleged offense, she was not allowed to deliver anymore to the marketing center.

She was also able to negotiate for a 5-year extension of the MOA of farmers with BSU. This agreement will help farmers to benefit more as there is a greater opportunity for income generation and a higher chance for farmers to recoup their losses and investments. Her presidency in the organization is further lengthened when the members decided to retain the set of officers.

Barangay Balili also became the champion during the Strawberry Festival parade. Cecilia thinks that one of the winning factors was the showcasing of organic vegetables from BOFA members. The Balili LGU allowed the organization to continue managing the booth.

Leadership as a Restraining Factor

While she feels grateful for being a "tenant" or renting BSU land, she also wishes that the University administration would comprehend the plights of organic farmers at the BSU farm."Our situation here is different. We cannot do whatever we want since renting a farm lot also entails being obedient/observant of some rules, which they find cumbersome. Even establishing a compost area would entail processing for request from BSU," she said. There is a policy on organic farming, which they are hard up accomplishing. For instance, Cecilia shared that there should be a common packaging area and compost area as stipulated in the organic farming policy. In realizing this, BOFA members need help from the university's administration.

She also shared that BSU farmers request that the walls dividing the road and the farm

is so low that passers-by unmindfully throw their garbage on the farms. She said GI sheets would be enough to improve the walls if there is no budget for cement. BOFA members are also willing to counterpart labor during the construction. Cecilia shared that organic farms and crops should always be clean from pesticides and pathogens. However, this may become problematic and difficult to achieve for farms without buffer zones as they are adjacent to open field Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) farms.

As farmers, they often encounter visitors who question them about the 'truthfulness' of their being organic. They are hard up in defending as these questioning visitors are also correct. For instance, one visitor remarked that there should be some distance between farms from roads and GAP or conventional farms. BSU tenants are caught up between defending the owners of the land or acknowledging that the comments of the visitors are right. She opined that this issue should be addressed by BSU if it is serious about being an organic University. "All areas here should be converted to organic as even visitors always comment about adjacent farms which are not organic," she said. She shared that they (farmers who are chanced by visitors) are always embarrassed by visitors as most of them are knowledgeable of the requirements for organic farming. She recognizes though that there have been plans and efforts in improving the organic farms. However, she said that these might have been delayed for factors involving the change in the university's administration and priorities. Indeed, the flight of organic farming involves not only organic farmers themselves. For it to be successful, it entails holistic support from different sectors.

Conclusions

The production techniques are capacity-based. Farmers shifted to OA because of the knowledge and skills they have acquired from learning opportunities such as seminars, trainings, and workshops provided by their respective organizations. Hence, organizations play vital roles as they are capable of seeking support such as funding, and capacity-building opportunities. Marketing techniques employed by the farmers are organization-dependent and backed up by individual techniques. Their motivations are anchored on health, responsible farming, organizational support, empowerment, and gender equality. These are strong values and ideologies that may serve as a foundation for sustaining OA in the municipality.

Recommendations

Capacity-building activities may be sustained by organizations because these are essential in sustaining OA farmers. More marketing opportunities may be explored by the farmers themselves, and so are their organizations. The documented techniques may also be used by other organizations involved with OA to increase their market sales. The motivations may serve as bases for further planning the directions of OA in the Municipality. With gender equality being realized in OA, the results may be used by concerned agencies in integrating gender components as they continue with the OA program in La Trinidad, Benguet.

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