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International
Labour
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LABOUR MARKET-RESPONSIVE
ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMME
Province of Maguindanao

SOAP OF LIFE:

"Soap production provides more than bread and butter for families"

(Success Story of a Youth Entrepreneur)

by

Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
– Autonomous Region in Muslim
Mindanao (TESDA-ARMM)

One of the sixty (60) recipients of Starter Kits of the Labour Market-Responsive Entrepreneurship Training Programme in the Province of Maguindanao is a 22 year-old out-of-school youth and a resident of Old Maganoy, Datu Abdullah Sangki, 2nd District Maguindanao. The said programme was implemented by TESDA-ARMM for and in behalf of the International Labour Organization (ILO) under the MDG Joint Programme on Alternatives to Migration: Decent Jobs for Filipino Youth.



Suad M. Abdullah got married after finishing her secondary education in 2009. She married one of her classmates and they were blessed with one child. On the same year, the couple took free skills training in soap making sponsored and conducted by the Bangsamoro Development Agency (BDA). With the knowledge and skills they acquired and the help of a Php1, 000 start-up capital given by Suad's mother-in-law, they started the production of Halal Herbal Soap. At the beginning, their business went well. In just a week, they earned as much as their capital's worth.

However, five months after they started running their microenterprise, disaster struck. The couple almost lost their child to dengue, a mosquito-borne disease, during the dengue outbreak in their barangay. To save their child, Suad and her husband had to use all their earnings, including the capital of their soap business for hospitalization fees. This had cost them their means of living. They tried saving their business but the lack of funds forced them to totally give it up. Money was sparse for the family and they didn't have any sources of capital to start anew.

As luck would have it, TESDA-ARMM conducted a series of Training of Entrepreneurs on Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB), ILO's entrepreneurship training programme, in 2011. The main objectives of the training were to develop the entrepreneurship skills of out-of-school youths and guide them in making feasible Business Plans. Suad qualified to take the training. Not only that, her acquired knowledge and skills and experience in managing her own microenterprise helped her draft a feasible business plan on soap production.

The feasibility and viability of Suad's business plan gained the approval of the Selection Committee. They believed that her experience, knowledge and skills in soap production will help her become successful in the field of entrepreneurship.



Today, with the help of her husband, Suad continues to operate her microenterprise in her field of expertise, soap-making. Their minimum sales a week is no less than Php 5,000. Aside from that, they have also managed to earn back the Php15, 000 worth of their starter kit in just three weeks. After two months of operation, Suad now has eighteen (18) dealers including her mother and a few professional teachers.

With her growing success, Suad had been invited by a Non-Government Organization (NGO) to conduct trainings in soap production in nearby municipalities. She not only accepted the invitation, but has also agreed to provide the raw materials needed for the training.

Suad's business venture with her husband has helped the family's finances and their success also ruffled towards their dealers who earn interests in selling their soap. At present, Suad is planning to continue her studies and leave the management of their microenterprise to her husband but first she has to help stabilize their business.

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