

## Established a collaboration between the Regional DEVNET Center for Asia-Africa and IDEASS



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by Benjamin Milano

During 2011, collaboration was established between the Regional DEVNET Center for Asia-Africa and the IDEASS programme, in order to identify new innovations for human development coming from the actors participating in the DEVNET and DEVNET WINNER Network: [www.devnetnet.org](http://www.devnetnet.org) [www.winnernet.org](http://www.winnernet.org).



The Regional Center has a large history. In 1986, the United Nations Development Programme and his United Nations Development Fund for Science and Technology Development established the first five National Bureaus comprising the network for information exchange on trade and technology among developing countries. The Philippines is one of the developing countries that pioneered the flow of information on opportunities for trade and technology cooperation based on commercial terms (TIPS Programme).

In 1999, DEVNET was tasked by UNDP and UNIFEM to implement another pioneering programme called WINNER. On the existing organizational infrastructure of TIPS, the new programme was implemented throughout five of the over 20 countries that were participating in the TIPS programme. The same routine of receiving/editing/translating of information abstracts was carried out, but this time, with the inclusion of pictures (images) that are attached to the texts along with contact information.

The Regional Center for Asia and Africa is based in Manila (Philippines) and manage the TIPS/WINNER Programmes for the Asian and African countries in collaboration with UNDP, UNFSTD and UNIFEM. Supporting the WINNER Global Portal is one of the main activities of the Regional Center. The Center translates and validates Spanish abstracts from the Spanish-speaking countries of the network into English for use in the English version of the portal, in close collaboration with the Latin-America Regional Center in Uruguay. The Regional Center in Manila also circulate a e-newsletter, an electronic bulletin of trade opportunities for women SMEs, throughout the global network. Meanwhile, on a continuing basis, the uploading of trade/business opportunities offers by women SMEs has expanded the stored information on women SMEs on the WINNER portal in the Internet. The Manila-based Regional Center participate in trade fairs (national and international), conferences, business missions became basis for widely-promoting awareness about DEVNET and its programmes as well as enlarging the network contacts (both institutional and personal/professional basis).

The WINNER network has carried out in the participating countries an extensive program of capacity-building, in-person and by distance education, special assistance in actual and virtual training of women at various levels of competence. In special cases, WINNER applies an appropriate methodology for vocational training with a clear recognition of the diversity, which allows the programme to work successfully at different levels of formal education, knowledge of the working of an enterprise, and use of computer and addressing cultural nuances. WINNER has an important social content that supports women from the vulnerable sectors of society. It creates impact on development of activities, sales of products, but more importantly, develops the economic self-empowerment of the women. There are numerous stories, as told by women themselves that describe the success realized by women. Following are some examples:

### **Nature's treasure in wellness products**

When Aleli Pansacola president of Daila Herbal Community Enterprises Inc. set up the firm, the first responsibility she set on her mind is to give her clients the best quality soap at the best price. The next responsibility she put her heart into is to turn the community into a family of enterprises. Finally, the most important responsibility which she shares with everyone in Daila's production chain is protection and preservation of the environment. It operates a factory in Pila, Laguna employing 10 regular employees. During peak production months, additional hands are needed. The local community supplies the contractual employees. The factory produces as much as 7,000 kilos of soap daily. To date, Daila herbal products range from bath soaps, shampoos, insect repellent, laundry soap and hand sanitizer which appeal to local and international markets. She has gone on trade and business mission to other countries, thanks to the assistance and support provided by WINNER.



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### **Craftsmanship: feel it and do it**

Her products speak of creativity and passion-laminated ball of different sizes and exhibiting rare "texture" of varied "harvest items" as she calls them-sago or tapioca, banana fiber, mongo ipil twigs, pandan fruits, twine banaba seeds and even wood shavings. One can see passion in her eyes too as she speaks of the fledgling firm she recently establish. Loids Arts & Crafts is named after Loida Pingol-Yadao, 46, the diminutive but feisty entrepreneur. Even if the firm is only a few years old, her workers had been working for her for eight to ten years already. Loids Arts & Craft has ten workers. Yadao's more than 20 years experience working at Lahi Crafts, one of the Philippines' top exporters of handicrafts, has gotten her started on this bold entrepreneurial venture. She's still doing what she used to do at Lahi-product development and later, as designer-contractor. Yadao is one of those trained by WINNER and TIPS on the promotion of the role of women in the management of micro-small and medium-sized enterprises.



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### **Cheers to village women**

In the far-flung barangay of Mahagnaw In the northern town of Borawin in Leyte, the internationally-renowned hand-made paper made of abaca is created in between house work and farm work everyday. Abaca hand-made paper is produced by the entire community. Men gather abaca strips while both men and women grind these. The women do the mixing of chemicals to preserve and add color to the abaca. For the paper molding and drying stages, both men and women help each other in the process. Mahagnaw's abaca paper products are doing well in the markets of Manila and in Samar and Leyte. Greeting cards and stationery as well as novelty items made of abaca have gained their own niche in various parts of the country. Peak seasons for orders are during summer and the last quarter of the year. They were sent on exposure trips to learn about the technology and creative designs. For farmers having creative designs for the-made paper provides the basis for their competitive



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advantage. WINNER has likewise helped in training and promoting their goods to the international market by supporting the creation of a website and networking through the internet.

### **Local goodies tickle global taste**

Laing is a native Filipino dish that has coconut milk and taro leaves as its main ingredients. Preparation begins with the selection of young taro leaves which are washed, air dried, then cut to shreds. The main flavoring ingredient, fermented salted shrimp or alamang is running water to remove excess salt and impurities such as bits of shell. Rufino and Anna Manrique, owners of MoonBake, Inc., decided to make available the goodness of this native especially to many people at any time they desire. In the factory there are thirteen workers who take care of the washing, shredding and cutting of 500 kilos to taro leaves and stems, grating and pressing of 2,000 mature coconuts as well as cooking and canning of the finished laing. The normal production of laing is 2,400 cans (155gms) daily. “We have our products placed in the WINNER global portal thus foreign buyers can view them and contact us for orders. After being in the business for almost ten years, my husband and I realized that we have to keep innovating so that our company will also continue to grow.” Ana confides.



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