



Resource Development (Phils.) Inc.

## NEWS RELEASE

### Scholarship in Organic Farming for Agata's 'Beautiful Locals'


*Agata launches its agricultural scholarship program despite the COVID-19 pandemic*



Agata Assistant GM Anthony ties a red ribbon to Barangay Tagbuyacan resident Glenn Rose Colminas to formally welcome her and other participants during the launching of the TESDA certified Organic Agriculture Production NC II scholarship program. The scholars are women from the barangays of host Jabonga Municipality in Agusan del Norte.

**Jabonga, Agusan del Norte/ August 2020** – In an effort to address food security and augment its host community's food supply, which has experienced difficulty due to transport restrictions, Agata Mining Ventures Inc. (AMVI), recently launched its TESDA-certified Organic Agriculture Production NC II scholarship program for residents of Jabonga Municipality in Agusan del Norte Province.

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, restrictions on local travel put a strain on the free flow of goods in the region. And in addition to its relief efforts that provided essential goods to over 10,000 families in the past months, Agata recently granted scholarships to 25 local women from its host communities who will undergo training at the company-supported Mabakas Techno Demo Farm School.

 <b>AGATA</b> MINING VENTURES INC. <small>A TVIRD-MRL JOINT VENTURE</small>	Doc. No.	<i>AMVI-FOR-SM-021</i>
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Dubbed as “Beautiful Locals,” the P423,500 scholarship program aims to train women in raising organic chickens, hogs and small ruminants as well as producing organic concoctions, extracts, fertilizers and growing organic vegetables. Once the beneficiaries complete their course, they will be eligible to receive TESDA national certificates and be able to address more important issue on food production.

Mabakas is the only organic farm school owned by a mining company in the region that provides TESDA certificate courses under its Training for Work Scholarship program (TWSP). Through the move, local women with high school or college level education will avail of the program within 29 days training or 232 hours nominal duration.

Since 2018, over 1,800 scholars from host and nearby towns – 544 of whom are female – were trained in Mabakas. The institution offers NCII courses in Organic Vegetable Production, Organic Agriculture Production and DTI Entrepreneurship Skills Training. School Administrator Sheila Mae Arcala said that 106 scholarships are allotted for Beautiful Locals.

“It is a very good opportunity and we are thankful to be able to participate in this. We accept this challenge to learn and I am excited and looking forward to applying the things we will learn in our homes,” shared Irish Mae Luna, scholar and resident of Barangay Tagbuyacan in nearby Santiago Municipality.

The initiative comes as the company tries to provide other alternatives to sustain livelihood and secure local food supply, especially with the adjustments to the lockdown brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.


“This program provides a good opportunity for our women and our expectation is that it is not only for learnings but there should be (food) production in our beneficiary communities,” according to Agata Community Relations Superintendent Jonathan Bañez.

The Beautiful Locals program will also “awaken the spirit of gratitude in each participant as we embark on this learning opportunity,” emphasized Environment Manager Jesalyn Guinguing, the program’s founder.

Guinguing explained that the program reminds the participants to be thankful for the region’s natural resources and the opportunity to develop new skills despite these difficult times.

“As job security in various industries are also strained by the pandemic, Agata rolled-out Beautiful Locals to ensure sustainability in food production in our very own backyards,” Guinguing said.

Also, stressing the importance of women’s involvement in agriculture she added that “women need to be empowered and capacitated. We must learn, work on ourselves and start within our homes.”

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Since the establishment of Agata’s Social Development Management Program (SDMP) in 2015, it has been supporting the women’s associations in eight host barangays and underscoring each organization’s initiatives during the yearly celebration of women’s month.

As of writing, the current financial support extended to the barangay women's associations have been realigned and utilized in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic in their respective communities and on the barangay level.

Assistant GM Anthony Quijano said the project is a “dream a come true and Agata will expand the program to the other regions in the months to come.”

Agata’s philosophy of ‘Starting it right and keeping the end in mind’ continues to guide the organization to this day – building resilient communities that can sustain themselves beyond the life of the mine.

To date, the company’s nickel laterite direct shipping ore project has provided employment, livelihood, education and proper environmental management programs to conserve the communities’ natural resources.

“Realizing that almost all things, start with nature or the ground. Together with our scholars, we will expand and share this opportunity to different places in Mindanao. This is just the beginning,” Quijano said.

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**Press photos:**



1 Scholars proudly show their scholarship certificates during the program launch. They are joined by key Agata officers who have pledged their full support.



- 2 **Beautiful locals with a purpose.** 25 women from host communities will undergo a 29-day training and TESDA certification program on organic food production and to create an alternative livelihood in their respective barangays amidst the Covid-19 crisis.

#### **About TVI in the Philippines**

TVI Resource Development Philippines Inc. ("TVIRD"), is the local affiliate of TVI Pacific Inc. (TSX: TVI), a publicly-listed Canadian mining company focused on the exploration, development and production of precious and base metals from district-scale, large-system, high-margin projects located in the Philippines. Concurrent ownership of ventures is shared with partner company, Prime Resource Holdings Inc.

The commercial operations of Agata Mining Ventures Inc. (AMVI) mark the third successful mining project that TVIRD brought on-stream in a period of 10 years. The company is committed to exploration and mining practices that promote transparency, responsible stewardship of the environment, and the inalienable rights to life, dignity, and sustainable development of its host communities.

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