

Travails of an old farmer

Jashmin Tumopas



Pino Damian, from *Barangay* Nabaliwa in Pangantucan, Bukidnon, shares his everyday difficulties in raising a family. One of these is how to put food on the table. Another is how to earn money to buy things that he cannot grow on the land he tills.

For these, Pino believes that security of tenure is the key.

“I believe that it is important to have tenurial security over land because

whatever happens, it (the land) cannot be taken from us. Having secure ownership is a big help to my family,” he said.

He supported his family through the years by cultivating a few crops on land he owns for their own consumption and for sale so that they can buy things that they cannot grow and provide for the children's education.

“As a farmer, it is very important to have my own land because it is a source of my family's livelihood. Farming is hard work but it has been my occupation my whole life because I have not gone to college and this is the only thing that I know how to do,” he shared.

Pino's family has been living in the *barangay* for the past 30 years, where all his children were born, studied, and grew up in. All their joys and sorrows, triumphs and tribulations, have been shared in this patch of earth they call home.

But not all is rosy in this *barangay*. While land is what sustains them, land is also the cause of trouble between inhabitants.

People do not seem to know where the boundaries of their lands are. Thus, encroachment into their neighbors' property often occurs, which leads to petty disputes and bad blood among neighbors.

However, that is not Pino's immediate and most pressing problem. His problem is that he is too old and too tired to farm.



Thus, Pino and his wife just rely on their children's support for their daily needs. This arrangement is quite difficult because their children earn meager incomes and have families to support as well.

“It pains us to rely on our children for support because they have their own families to feed too, but I have no choice but to wait for what they can give me and my wife,” Pino laments.

Pino feels that old people like them have become a burden to their community because, like many small communities in the Philippines, the entire population

pitches in to help those that need it most – people like Pino and his wife that can no longer earn a decent livelihood to sustain themselves.

“As the head of the family, I was used to “fixing” things, to providing for my family. Now that I cannot do that anymore, I feel so useless,” Pino says.

Unfortunately, Pino passed away last December 2020 and was not able to fully enjoy the security of tenure brought by the issuance of the Certificate of Customary Land Occupancy. However, the document was personally delivered to Pino’s wife. ■

