

## SUCCESS STORY



**WINROCK**  
INTERNATIONAL



**PHILIPPINE COLD  
CHAIN PROJECT**

## A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE: Winrock PCCP's Garungan Project in Buenavista, Agusan del Norte, Philippines

**E**nrique Gabales used to be a fish peddler residing in the town of Buenavista in the province of Agusan del Norte, Philippines. At the age of 54, Ricky, as he is locally called, peddled fish on his motorbike, carrying his goods in Styrofoam boxes installed on both sides of his vehicle. To provide for his family's day-to-day needs, Ricky had to leave home at dawn, procuring his stocks and peddling in neighboring towns. Sometimes, he worked at fishponds owned by operators in his community to augment his income.

In the first quarter of 2016, Ricky joined a group of smallholder fishpond operators, the United Aquaculture Operators Association of Buenavista (UNIQUETA), that utilized the services of the Philippine Cold Chain Project (PCCP). He attended PCCP's technical trainings in fisheries and organizational development processes. Through their engagement with PCCP, smallholder fishpond operators like Ricky were offered support for their production of garungans – young milkfish stocks at least four inches in size, i.e., about an inch longer than the regular milkfish fingerlings. These are supplied to operators producing milkfish in fishponds and fish cages.

In July 2016, Ricky was among the UNIQUETA members who received a Php60,000 production loan (about USD \$1,212) through PCCP's facilitation. With the loan proceeds, Ricky started producing

40,000 garungans. The loan also provided for the acquisition of pond preparation inputs and feeds. In two months' time, Ricky harvested his garungan, with a production output of almost 100 percent. His total sales amounted to Php128,000 (about USD\$2,586), providing him with a 108 percent return on his investment.

**"I never had in the past such a fulfilling experience. From my earnings, I was able to fully pay my loan and, with the excess, my wife and I did some improvements in our simple home. We also used a share of my earnings for developing our pond."**

Stories like Ricky's are fairly common among UNIQUETA members. About 80 percent of those who joined in the first production cycle had positive net returns at varying degrees. However, Ricky's story is exceptional in the sense that after struggling to meet his family's basic survival needs, he has been given access to an occupation that only those with ample resources can typically afford without external support. He was also among those who seriously applied his learnings from PCCP's technological trainings.





UNIQUETA members grow garungans (milkfish fingerlings) in adjacent ponds. Most of them rent the ponds and pay for it in an annual basis.

## A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE...

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UNIQUETA members recognize that the technical knowledge and skills they learned from PCCP have contributed to their fruitful production and served as valuable factors for their modest success. The various techniques in pond management relative to technology and production timing, the sufficiency of the production modules that allowed them to operate in viable scale, and the guidance in organizational management have resulted in beneficial outcomes for participants. The leaders of the organization were also keen and aggressive in identifying potential buyers that eventually materialized into actual sales transactions.

Thanks to UNIQUETA and PCCP, Ricky no longer peddles to sell fish, but focuses on the production of garungans. He is now in his third production cycle. **(Niolo Tingzon/Philippine Cold Chain Project)**



Ricky feeds the garungans (milkfish fingerlings) four times a day. The one sack of feed worth Php500 (USD\$10) is good for a month of supply. He also uses algae as an alternative feed. Garungans are harvested after three weeks or one month, and are sold to buyers for grow-out production. UNIQUETA has established contact to regular and local buyers, and members are also starting to build linkages to buyers outside the region. **(Photos by Jun Ayensa)**

