

She believed she could, sew she did: Arlyn Analiza Oquendo

The town of Pandi in Bulacan is one of the towns in the country that has always been known for producing colorful garments and embroidery. As such, garments has been one of the main industries in the locality in addition to small-scale dressmakers and tailors.

Arlyn Analiza Oquendo, who was born and raised in Pandi, was one of the locals who drew income from making clothes and dresses. Belonging to a poor family, Ana and her family were included as members of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program. For 5 years, the cash grants that she receives from the program has been of great help for her especially in providing for the educational needs of her children.

Blessings came her way when Ana was able to apply for livelihood assistance under the Sustainable Livelihood Program in 2016. Ana was one of the selected SLP participants from Pandi who were provided with skills training on Dressmaking. Her successful participation in the training allowed her to pass the assessment and receive a National Certificate Level II.

With her newly-acquired skills and her brand-new toolkits, Ana finally achieved her dream—to acquire her own sewing machine and become a skilled and licensed seamstress. Little did she know that the pour of blessings were just getting started. During her training, Ana was able to impress her trainers with her quick-wittedness, skillful hands and unwavering determination. For this reason, she was recommended by her trainer to join ATEC Technological College as a trainer's assistant.

Seeing her potential to become a full-pledged trainer, ATEC helped her to acquire scholarships and take a Trainer Methodology course. Her learnings and experiences that she was able to acquire as a trainer's assistant helped her obtain a Trainer Methodology Certificate and a National TVET Trainer Certificate which established her as an official Trainer and Assessor for Dressmaking NC II.

Little by little, Ana's family is able to rise up from poverty. Aside from her regular job, she still sews and sells clothes, rags, and curtains to earn additional income. As a way of paying it forward, Ana willingly provides free informal training to her fellow 4Ps beneficiaries to help them upgrade their skills on dressmaking. She is always ready to extend assistance to her students whenever necessary and even if it is outside her duties and responsibilities as a trainer.

They say, to create something beautiful and useful makes your life more meaningful. For Analiza, what makes her life meaningful are not the beautiful and useful clothes or dresses that she makes, but rather the students that she was able to nourish and mold by sharing her knowledge and experiences.

###