

AND CORPORATE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
THAT MANAGES RESOURCES, WHICH WILL
BRING ABOUT THE TRANSFORMATION OF ALL
THE FAMILY AND DEPENDENTS.
MISSION
TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE UPLIFTMENT OF THE
MEMBERS' SOCIAL ECONOMIC STANDARD OF
LIVING BY RECEIVING SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL
SUPPORT AND PROMOTING QUALITY PRODUCTS

A Big 'Catch' for the Wives of GenSan's Fishermen

RSA Fishermen/Dependents
Multi-Purpose Cooperative

To help their families make both ends meet, the wives of fishermen in General Santos City formed in 2008 a cooperative that has since been producing rags for the tuna industry. The venture now manufactures various other products, and almost doubles the families' incomes.



INITIATIVE IS ALL IT TAKES
RSA Fishermen/Dependents Multi-purpose Cooperative started with the initiative of the fishermen's wives to help bring income to their families. From 20 members, the cooperative now has 100.

General Santos or GenSan, the southernmost city in the Philippines, is getting to be known, not only for its sashimi-grade yellowfin tuna, but also for its emerging and thriving sewing industry.

While tuna fishing remains to be the primary activity in GenSan's coastal communities, the production of rags is a necessity in the industry's essentially wet operating environment.

The men do the fishing and other blue-collar tasks, and their wives do the sewing. This functional relationship has an economic origin. The husband earns only Php 14,000 a month, compelling the wife to help out to make both ends meet.

"That's because the salaries of our husbands are not enough for our daily needs," Graciana Andaya of Barangay Calumpang says in Filipino, referring in particular to the education expenses of their children, especially those in college.

Then came the livelihood opportunity in 2006 when RD Tuna Ventures encountered difficulties in sourcing its requirements for rags.

Promptly acting on that supply gap, community leader Marilyn Forio prodded some 20 women to organize themselves into a cooperative and produce the rags themselves.

The cooperative was formed in Barangay Calumpang from a Php 100,000 donation from the company and Php 2,650 from each of the 20 women for their individual shares.

Finally in 2008, the RSA Fishermen/Dependents Multi-Purpose Cooperative got registered with the Cooperative Development Authority and promptly began production.

However, the RSA Cooperative nearly folded up in 2012 due to internal challenges.

Coming to their rescue in 2014 was the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), whose Shared Service Facilities (SSF) project provided the cooperative with an almost Php 900,000 worth of machinery—including 20 sewing machines, three round cutters, three edgers, and three steam presses.

With the DTI's SSF grant, the cooperative has raised its monthly production capacity from 50,000 rags to 150,000 pieces of dye bags and 500,000 pieces of rags.

Moreover, DTI continues to train the members of the cooperative, enabling them to expand their product lines to pouches, bags, pillowcases, curtains, bedsheets, potholders, aprons, doormats, and even headgears.

"It was [through SSF] that I really learned how to sew, because from the very start I really knew nothing about sewing," says Jocelyn Nazareth, a member of the cooperative.

For its part, the cooperative trains the widows and the widowers of Barangay Calumpang and those of neighboring communities.

From near bankruptcy, the cooperative has made a complete turnaround, with its members receiving dividends of up to Php 10,000 each annually.

Paid daily, the seamstresses—both members and contracted—earn as much as Php 11,000 a month.

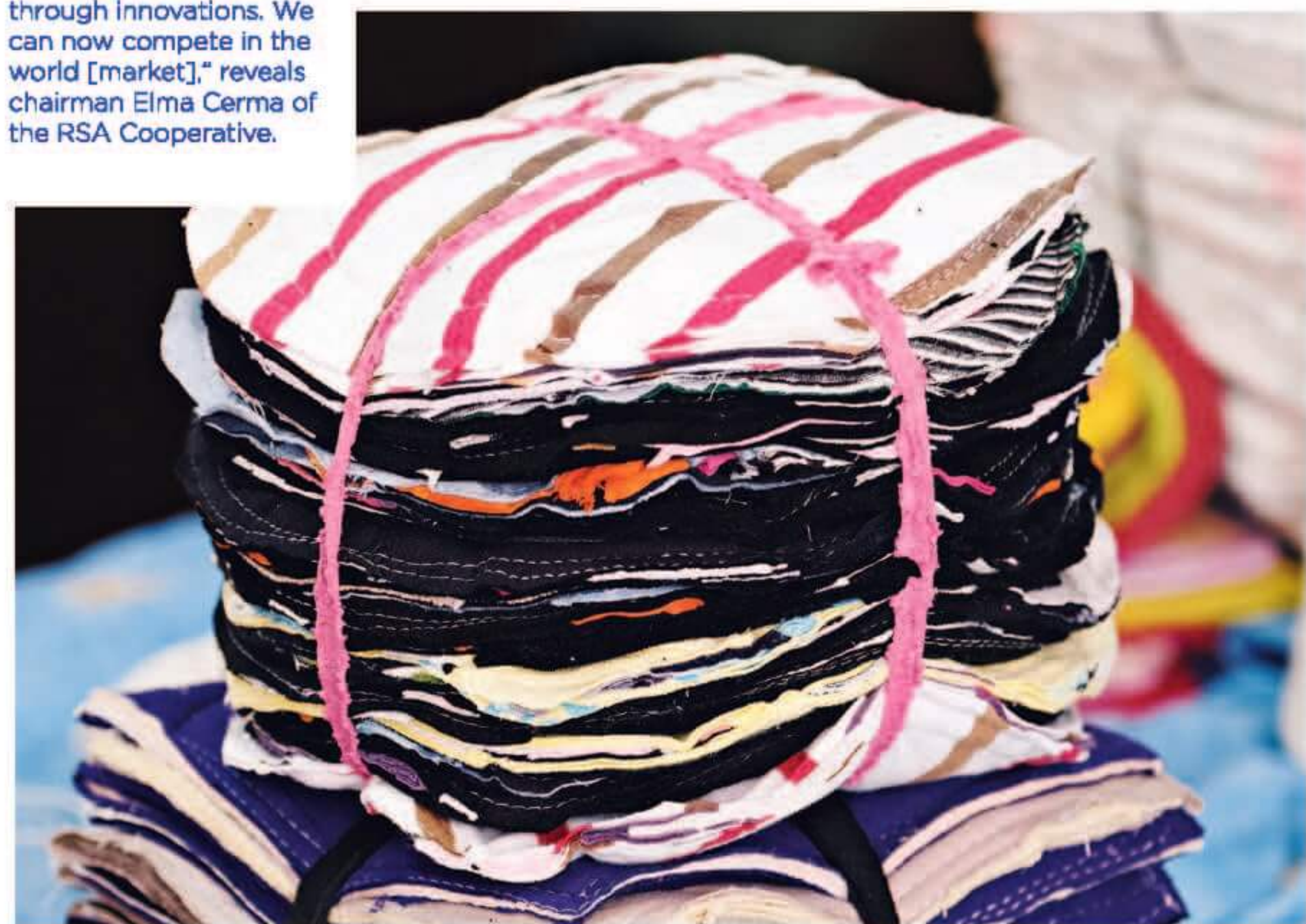
Expectedly, the cooperative's membership has ballooned from the original 20 to 100. And from the previous Php 20,000 monthly net income, the cooperative now makes a whopping Php 200,000.

To their fishing husbands, that amount is, indeed, a big "catch."



EXPANDING HORIZONS

"Through the SSF program, we have been able to continue developing our products through innovations. We can now compete in the world [market]," reveals chairman Elma Cerma of the RSA Cooperative.



BUSINESS UPGRADES
Machineries such as sewing machines, round cutters, edgers, and steam presses were provided by DTI. Each member of the cooperative underwent trainings allowing them to expand their product lines.



DID YOU KNOW?
General Santos City is the "Tuna Capital of the Philippines," having 7 out of the 10 tuna canneries in the country and hundreds of other contributing services, giving more than 61,000 jobs in the city.

HOW DTI HELPED

RSA Fishermen/Dependents Multi-purpose Cooperative achieved a more efficient production because of the machineries and equipment—20 sewing machines, 3 round cutters, 3 edgers, and 3 steam presses—provided by DTI's Shared Service Facilities (SSF) project. Members and employees are also given various trainings and workshops on product development.