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## A Future Built on Woodwork

### *The good life, carpentry, and DOST*



Gil Oredina, the owner of *Oredina Furniture*.

Fourteen years ago, the place was an idle piece of land, a fallow where carabaos, cows, goats, and other herbivores grazed. The wonder it has become after a decade and a half is a story worth telling.

The land's owner, Gil Oredina, was working as a carpenter in a shop in 1997. It was a period of struggling to make both ends meet, especially for a husband who was at that time sending his wife to college.

Carpentry was Gil's first job after graduating from college in 1992. It was a field somewhat unrelated to AB Political Science, his baccalaureate degree. Nevertheless, he proved to be quite efficient and skillful in woodwork. And it was actually through this area that futures were made clearer and beautifully contrived: that of the idle field, of Gil and his wife, and of the folks who will be called to work with him.

For four years, he was somebody's woodworker. Until his wife's condition, being pregnant with their first child at that time, demanded him to stay at home to tend to her. This compelled him to bring home some of his work from the shop.

This setup was the start of the big shift in Gil Oredina's life.

### *The carpenter is "IN"*

His home became Gil's workplace. He utilized a small area in front of their house as his "little shop." After each finished product, he would deliver it to his boss.

This arrangement went on until one day, Gil simply found himself accepting quick-jobs from neighbors who came directly to him for their furniture needs. Gil soon realized he had ceased taking work from his boss. Work was unfailingly and overwhelmingly coming to his doorsteps. This prompted him to acquire

permits for his "little shop" and register it to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), Social Security System (SSS), and to other appropriate agencies.

And so, in 2003, Gil had "*Oredina Furniture*" under his name.

Orders came in bulk and sets and were piling up rapidly. Gil could only produce so much. With only basic carpentry tools, He needed helpers for his growing number of customers. Another setback were the equipment he didn't have. If he were to seriously embark on a furniture-making business, he surely needed to buy tools and equipment designed for high-speed operation.



A cabinet and chairs made of "Sagat" stand in the middle of Gil Oredina's garage-turned furniture shop.



## ***"Success at first sight"***

As order after order made Gil and his four helpers busy, *Oredina Furniture* has begun to outpace the technology that operated the business. For three years, the furniture shop had to endure lack of applicable and appropriate equipment and tools for faster, more convenient production.

Thanks to a friend who informed Gil of the Department of Science and Technology's (DOST) assistance program for small and medium enterprises.

So in 2006, success for *Oredina Furniture* was spelled when Gil walked into the office of Engr. Ismael Gurtiza, provincial director of DOST – La Union. "I knew the moment DOST's menu of programs laid down before me, it was success alright," smiled Gil.

Under the agency's Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (SET-UP), Gil admitted that every problem in his shop was covered. He was right.

## ***DOST shares good life***



Two units 3 in 1 machine were provided by the DOST-La Union to *Oredina Furniture* under the SET-UP.



The SET-UP is for upgrading the productivity of SMEs through technological interventions. The furniture business is among the six industries supported by the SET-UP.

DOST and Gil set to work. The former provided the latter financial assistance worth P192,287.00, free of interest, for the purchase of 2 units-3 in 1 machine, chisel mortizer, router, *bandsaw* and phase converter. The agency made sure Gil's furniture shop is replete of trainings on technologies such as wood finishing techniques, wood treatment, productivity improvement consultancies and even on basic bookkeeping and recording.

*Oredina Furniture* felt the difference after all their technology needs were addressed by the DOST. From the original four, five more men were added to the shop's workforce. For many years, Gil had to feed his growing family as well as his workers with the meager profit of around P20,000 a month. Now, they are enjoying an average monthly earnings of P70,000. A green Toyota Sportsrunner is conveniently parked in a clearing beside the production area.

**"This is the good life," muttered Gil. "It feels great to be able to provide whatever my family needs and wants; my helpers are able to sustain their families' needs. All because of DOST."**

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