



## GOEDEN: CREATING AN INCLUSIVE DIGITAL FARMING

*GOEden stimulates the digital market for local producers and suppliers and connects Filipino farmers to the right suppliers.*

The burgeoning start-up ecosystem in the Philippines continuously reshapes the digital transformation of the country’s agricultural sector. This presents opportunities for innovation and co-creation in the production and economic side of agricultural technology. GOEden, a start-up based in Tarlac, not only stimulates the digital market for local producers and suppliers, but also brings farmers to the right source of farming inputs, legitimate suppliers, and accessible agricultural services right at their doorsteps.

GOEden, an e-commerce platform, co-founded by Julieane “Juca” Lacsina of ZION AGRICULTURAL VENTURE INC., consolidates products and services provided by different agri-suppliers into a one-stop shop for farmers. It organizes and digitizes product inventories and sales so that agri-suppliers can monitor their stocks and operations in real time. GOEden intends to provide farmers with a wide range of farming options through a systematic digital platform.

### EMPOWERMENT OF AGRI-BASED START-UPS

The SEARCA Grants for Research toward Agricultural Innovative Solutions (GRAINS) funded the digital agriculture project implemented by GOEden titled, “Improving Farmers’ Access to Agricultural Technology, Products, and Services through Digitization and Consolidation of Local Agri-supply Stores. This project helped GOEden expand its online catalog for farmers and institutional buyers.

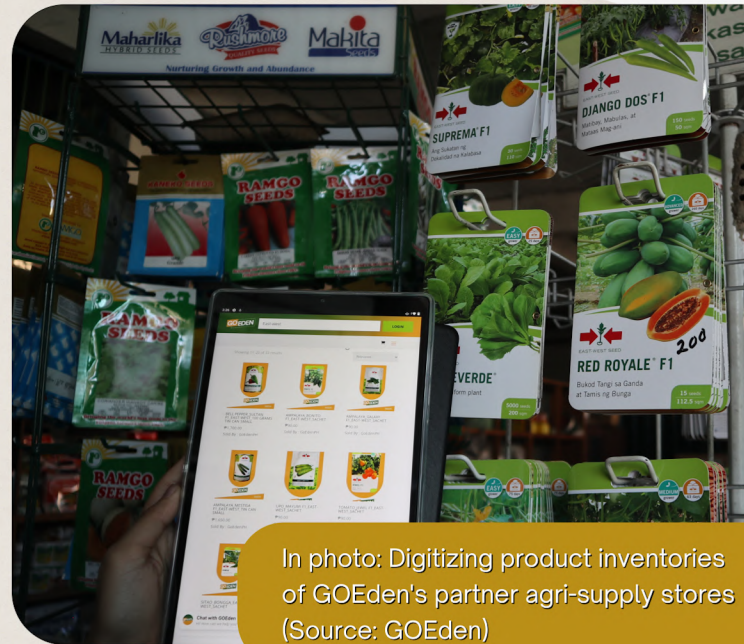


In photo: Introduction of inventory management and training to partner agri-supply store (Source: GOEden)





For Juca, the direct benefit of GRAINS goes toward GOEden in ensuring quick delivery of services to local farmers and rural communities. The impact of grants on start-up companies like GOEden is apparent in the efficiency of their daily operations. According to her, launching start-ups in the Philippines is more challenging than in other Southeast Asian countries. In this sense, grants are helpful in the completion and sustainability of different local business components, especially in a competitive market. GRAINS enabled GOEden to expand its current listing of agri-supplies and products and establish a back-end inventory management system for its partner stores in their already established online platform.



In photo: Digitizing product inventories of GOEden's partner agri-supply stores (Source: GOEden)

Juca shared that GRAINS played a part in the digitalization process of GOEden and in achieving its short- and long-term goals. The grant enabled the start-up company to hire staff and procure the needed equipment to develop its online inventory management system for its pilot partner stores. She added that, with this technology, they were able to list hundreds to thousands of products online, take high-resolution photos, complete product descriptions, account for stock availability, and provide other important product details such as variants and size.

On top of their recent milestones, and with the help of SEARCA-GRAINS, GOEden has been recognized in the start-up map and secured its first round of funding.

## SMARTER AND BETTER FARM MANAGEMENT

When asked about the value proposition of GOEden's technical services, Juca answered, *"Essentially, in the process of digitalization, data is king. In an organized manner, data helps us [GOEden] serve our farmers with proper recommendations on input use. At the same time, data helps our partner stores make wiser and more data-driven business decisions in terms of what products to stock, how much to stock, and when to stock."*

In their 10 years of field experience and in their customer journey mapping—interviewing over 200 farmers in South and Central Luzon—the GOEden founders have validated key problems in the procurement of agri-supplies. First, most of the time wrong recommendations are given to farmers due to limited information on available farming options. Second, farmers in marginalized areas need more access to various product inventories. Third, agri-suppliers need to be more cohesive and centralized in online platforms. Lastly, legitimate agri-suppliers are hard to identify especially in e-commerce websites and online marketplaces. These factors may affect the decision-making process of farmers and may lead to inefficient farm management.



*“Imagine this scenario. You are selling in a physical store and a farmer asks you if you have this certain product. If you do not memorize the 500 items listed on your shelf, you are likely taking time to sell to a farmer, then eventually lose a customer or recommend a wrong item”, Juca explained. She added that, with GOEden’s features, farmers can cut travel time to multiple stores and avoid settling for products that fall short of requirements or getting the wrong recommendations.*

*“Now that these inventories are filed in a digital system, it is easy for us to search, categorize, update stocks and prices, and identify items that are out of stock”, said Juca.*

## IMPACT OF DIGITALIZATION ON THE AGRI-SECTOR

Juca expounded that “digitalization” provides efficient business processes, as well as effective time management and enhanced work quality. In digitizing farming options, farmers have direct access to all available information.

The GOEden team does not expect that the digitalization process will happen overnight in rural farming communities. However, based on their study, there are proxy indicators that some farmers—including those living in secluded areas— use their smartphones to check out items on mainstream e-commerce platforms and browse Facebook and Youtube for information. This means that cellular and internet services are already available even in remote communities. E-commerce platforms like GOEden have an opportunity to eventually connect and serve more local farmers.

This digital transformation is a major shift for agri-supply stores that practice manual recording using traditional pen and paper. GOEden has been assisting four brick-and-mortar stores in Tarlac, Laguna, and Batangas in digitizing their product inventories composed of grafted seedlings, cuttings, fertilizers, pesticides, and tools for agriculture.

This innovation has changed the daily operations of GOEden’s end-users. For instance, if a physical store has 500 listed products, it is easier to sort, filter, and recommend a product using the digital inventory system. It lessens product inquiries through phone calls, SMS, and online chats.



In photos: Farm visits to GOEden's partner agri-supply stores  
(Source: GOEden)





In photo: Product inventory using the GOEden's digitized management system (Source: GOEden)

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AGRICULTURE  
FOR  
EVERYONE

GOEden



## TESTIMONIALS OF GOEDEN'S PILOT PARTNER STORES

GOEden's pilot partner stores in Tarlac, Laguna, and Batangas were interviewed about their practices before using the digital inventory system. Most of them manually recorded their product inventories and sales through excel sheets and record books. Fast transactions were not recorded or documented. One of the stores recalled that they only receive orders when buyers directly visit their store or personally message them through their social media accounts.

All of them agreed that digitalization provides more accurate results and lesser time to record and sort products. Moreover, actual products are posted and updated regularly in terms of stock and price. Agri-suppliers are less confused because of the real-time monitoring of products and sales.

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR GOEDEN

With this promising direction, GOEden is open for potential partnerships, especially with agri-suppliers who offer various agricultural inputs and services to expand the legitimate and quality farming options for our local farmers.

The GOEden team currently conducts field-based tech caravans to inform distant farming communities that they can order products and avail of services through GOEden to lessen their production and transportation costs. In addition, information campaigns are ongoing to disseminate best agricultural practices on pest identification, pesticide mixing, storage, and disposal. Lastly, the start-up company plans to develop GOEden Lite for faster website loading and transaction in areas with poor internet connection.

Juca hopes that GOEden's story helps paint a better and clearer picture of their life's vision and mission. Its ultimate goal is an inclusive digital transformation process in the Philippine agri-sector. Truly, it embodies what GOEden stands for, "agriculture for everyone".