

## The plight of a security-guard-turned-farmer



Victor Reyes was one a proud security guard. For 24 years, he had shown exemplary service while on duty in exchange for a decent wage and a regular overtime pay, along with other fringe benefits entitled to a private security guard by his employer.

His only concern was that he spent only seven to eight hours with with his family, even if his wife says he was a good provider.

But like most daily wage earners, he suffered the brunt of being displaced as the country reeled from a global COVID-19 pandemic in 2019.

Luckily, one of his employers asked him to oversee his properties in Jaen's Barangay Imbunya. He was given a house near a livestock compound that was abandoned by Chinese Filipino trader.

Reyes then managed to lease from his employer two hectares of rice farm. He says that it was advisable to plant hybrid varieties during the dry months, but local farmers concede they preferred inbred varieties during the rainy season to minimize the risks from typhoons and flooding.

*“Pwede naman akong magtrabaho uli sa Manila pero idedestino naman ako sa malayo. Nagsaka na lang ako para di malayo sa pamilya ko,”* he says. *“Sa kita di naman nagkakalayo ang security guard sa magsasaksa. Maganda rin ang kinikita ‘pag ikaw ay hindi dinaanann ng kalamidad.”*

According to Reyes, his fellow security guards should really look at farming as an option, particularly now that there were spate of lay-offs among security agencies. *“Kung kayo ay mabagal o mag-iba ng hanapbuhay, tingnan nyo naman ang pagasasaka para makita n’yo ang income sa pagsasasaka at para makasama nyo yung pamilya n’yo. Mas masayang sama -sama,”* he says.