SCHOOL NUTRITION CONFERENCE ACTIVITY REPORT

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IDRC Grant/ Subvention du CRDI: 108156-001-Improving food and nutrition security in the Philippines through school interventions
Activity Report

Title of Activity: School Nutrition Conference

Date: May 8, 2018

Venue: YBS Hall, James Yen Center, Silang, Cavite

164 attendees (109 Female; 55 Male)

Participant Departments and Organizations:
- Dept of Education:
  - Central Office: 4
  - Regional Offices: 5
- CALABARZON Lighthouse Schools (Supervisors, School heads and teachers): 142
- Dept of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) CALABARZON: 2
- Dept of Agriculture (DA):
  - Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI): 2
  - CALABARZON Regional Office: 2
- National Nutrition Council (NNC)-Central Office: 1
- Media:
  - Phil. Daily Inquirer: 1
  - Phil. News Agency: 3
- IIRR Board of Trustee: 1
- Food & Nutrition Research Institute- DOST: 4
- Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA): 1

Participants:

Objectives:
1. Provide a platform to share the research results to program planners of DepEd and other organizations with nutrition and related interventions such as DSWD and DA
2. Mainstream food, nutrition and agriculture issues and breakthroughs through media
3. Identify ways forward on scaling out the Integrated Nutrition Model

Outputs:
- ISNM Research results shared to 5 government agencies with representatives from national and regional level offices, the academe, and media
- Significant contribution of the 58 Lighthouse schools were recognized

Prepared by: Kirstein Itliong

Activity flow (program/process/content):

1. Preliminaries
   - Delegates had a tour of the IIRR Bio-Intensive Garden for experiential learning of BIG practices and its positive impacts on gardens.
   - Delegates also enjoyed going through the “School Nutrition Fair” which exhibited innovations of Lighthouse Schools (LS) such as new recipes using indigenous vegetables, and knowledge products developed thru the research project, i.e. nutrition education puzzles, posters, reference modules, and recipe booklets. Lighthouse schools also showcased and distributed indigenous vegetable seedlings and seeds.
   - IIRR Board of Trustee, Ms. Mary Racelis gave the opening remarks emphasizing that partnership with schools are strategic as the knowledge and practices are shared to a large population at the grass roots level; and that the integrated nutrition model also helps address larger issues such as climate change, poverty reduction and diminishing interest in the agriculture sector
   - Director Rizalino Jose Rosales from Bureau of Learner Support Services-Department of Education, Central Office gave the key note address highlighting that DepEd deems it important to integrate gardening and feeding programs and the positive research results to be presented show that the
integrated nutrition model “is poised to go a distance”

- Sisters of Mary Hand bell ringers performed a short intermission number

2. Context of the Research

- Dr. Mario Capanzana, Director of Food and Nutrition Research Institute-DOST, discussed Nutrition situation among Philippine School-aged children and highlighted that prevalence of underweight and stunting among school aged children increased, 3 out of 10 children are either underweight or stunted; prevalence of wasting and overweight decreased slightly; there is double burden of malnutrition in Philippines: undernutrition experienced by school aged children and overnutrition by adults

- Dr. Julian Gonsalves, IIRR Senior Global Adviser presented about the role of schools in conserving Philippine Agro-Biodiversity for Nutrition emphasizing that we need to save different local crops/varieties because they perform well under low input conditions; garden diversity translates to diet diversity; schools can serve as platforms to conserve these local crops/varieties; school crop museums are not only propagation centers but also avenues for children and the community to learn about plant diversity and its nutrition contribution; and Lighthouse schools demonstrate integration of gardening, feeding and nutrition education, showing evidence sustainability and influence of schools to neighboring schools and communities

3. Sharing of Research background, results and recommendations were done by Ms. Irish Baguilat, IIRR Program Manager on Food Security and Nutrition; and Primary investigators: Dr. Imelda Agdeppa, FNRI Assistant Scientist, and Ms. Emily Oro, IIRR Country Director

Project background:

- the model is anchored on existing DepEd programs- Gulayan sa Paaralan (GPP) & School Based feeding program (SBFP) and it aims to enhance the link among different interventions
- it also aims to sustain the nutrition gains from GPP & SBFP, especially after the school year

Research results:

- results showed that 12 out of the 14 BIG practices were adopted by LS after intervention; and BIG practices increased organic matter in soil, from baseline to end line
- 42 % of garden produce was used for school feeding, 17% was used in school canteens, 24 % are shared to others, and 17 % are sold
- School gardens served as learning venue for children and stakeholders in 89.66% of the LS
- Thru the integrated nutrition model, nutrition education had been done in different platforms:
  - For children, nutrition education was integrated in classroom lessons - done in 37 Lighthouse schools (LS) (67.27%), the school feeding program (41 LS or 74.55%), and garden-based learning activities (36 LS or 65.45%).
  - For parents, it was done during PTA/PTCs (37 LS or 67.27%), and during participatory activities for community and parents (46 LS or 83.64%).
- Funds for SBFP is downloaded to schools mostly during September or October which is late compared to the target, July.
- Less than 50% of the LS have the appropriate anthropometric tools to measure height and weight
- There was a significant increase in the mean weight and height of children, both males and females (p<0.05) after the 120-day feeding program using indigenous vegetables from the garden and iron-fortified rice. After the additional 80 days of feeding, there was a further significant increase in the mean weight and height of students at the end of the 80 feeding days in both age groups and gender.
- The SBFP implemented through the integrated model (GarNESupp) resulted to significant increase in mean weight and height among schoolchildren.
- Issues and concerns across the program components are additional manpower and support from the community stakeholders; and budget appropriation (for garden needs, correct nutrition assessment tools, nutrition education materials)
**General Recommendations:**

- Adoption of integrated approach in implementing school feeding, gardening and nutrition education
- Capacity building of program implementers coupled with regular monitoring and technical assistance from supervisors and school heads
- Allotment of additional human resources or dedicated personnel to execute program activities
- Budget allocation and partnership building with the local government unit & other stakeholders

The Project used a multi-scaler approach to scale out and scale up the model: through partnership with civil society organizations, local government units and the private sector, and through Lighthouse schools and crop museums, the integrated school nutrition model and Bio-Intensive Gardening technology is scaled out at the sub-national level; while partnership with relevant National agencies such as DepEd Central office help scale up and institutionalize and sustain the model.

4. Reactions

- Ms. Carol Mae Martinez of DSWD CALABRZON:
  - seed exchanges are also good platform for learning exchange; there are parent leaders in DSWD that talk to other parents and this is can be leveraged for advocacy
  - insufficiency in manpower is also a challenge in DSWD that needs to be addressed
  - DSWD is also interested in linking distributors of iron-fortified rice (IFR) to their Child Development Centers since National Food Authority has stopped producing IFR

- Ms. Marilou Enteria of NNC
  - There is a need to strengthen nutrition education; as of now, one of the nutrition specific programs under PPAN is nutrition promotion
  - Schools and child development centers may coordinate with the local nutrition office and barangay nutrition scholars if they need lecturers about nutrition
  - Local government units can also help fund the weighing scale

- Mr. Romeo Ayos of DA-BPI
  - DA-BPI is interested to include crop museums concept in their programs as it promotes sustainability
  - There is a need to clarify the role of Department of Agriculture in the GPP because in 2014, they started as the lead agency but now they are only partners for technical assistance
  - DA-BPI is willing to support the GPP for long term though they would need official partnership established at the National level DA with implementation guidelines

5. Together with School Health Division Chief Dr. Ma. Corazon Dumlao, and Bureau of Learner Support Services Director Rizalino Jose Rosales, Dr. Agdeppa and Ms. Oro awarded the certificates of recognition for their valuable contribution to the action research to the Schools heads, teachers and Education Program Supervisors of the 58 Ligshthouse schools of CALABARZON. The certificates were signed by DepEd Secretary, Leonor M. Briones, and Project Primary Investigators: Dr. Agdeppa and Ms. Oro.

6. Dr. Dumlao, gave a very quick closing remarks using the IIRR acronym:

- I stands for us, the people
- I spelled as “eye” means to see or observe what is the situation
- R for “reflect” and process what one has learned from the forum
- R means to “reach” for the goal of ending malnutrition among children
Figure 1. Garden Teacher of Tinabunan Elem School, Ms. Marie Ann Galas shared with delegates how BIG practices help sustain the garden even in low input conditions.

Figure 2. Garden Teacher of Sunnybrooke Elem School, Mr. Eric Orbon showed the delegates the different varieties of Amaranth that are nutritious and drought tolerant.
Figure 3. Forum delegates got indigenous vegetable seeds and seedlings and tasted various indigenous vegetable recipes prepared by the Lighthouse Schools.

Figure 4. Director Rizalino Jose Rosales from DepEd Bureau of Learner Support Services- DepEd Central Office affirmed that DepEd deems it important to integrate gardening and feeding programs and that the integrated school nutrition model can achieve more in the coming years.
Figure 5. Primary Investigators Dr. Imelda Agdeppa and Ms. Emily Oro presented the research results and recommendations.
Figure 6. (From top to bottom): Mr. Romeo Ayos from Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Plant Industry, Ms. Carol Martinez from Department of Social Welfare and Development, and Ms. Marilou Enteria of the National Nutrition Council each gave their reactions to the results and recommendations from the action research project, confirming various opportunities for partnership and collaboration with schools.