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**Editor-in-Chief** Antonieta J. Arceo | **Managing Editor** Pamela MG. Mappala  
**Associate Editor** Erika Z. Vizcarra | **Contributors** Marianne B. Antonio, Iseult Kyllie T. Capacio, Marife B. De Torres, Franklin Bel T. Isip, Jayvee P. Masilang, Daniel S. Nilo, Vic Thor A. Palarca, Karl Louise M. Salibio, Catheryn M. Villorente, Erika Z. Vizcarra | **Layout and Design** Jayvee P. Masilang  
**Advisers** OIC-Dir Luz A. Taposok, PhD, Deputy Dir. Afredo S. Aton

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Felipa's Fight against the Big C and Other  
**Life Triumphs**

*Vic Thor A. Palarca*

“ SHE'S NOT YOUR AVERAGE JANE. WHEN I FIRST MET HER IN HER COZY HOME, SHE WAS ABOUT TO ATTEND A COMMUNITY MEETING ALONG WITH HER HUSBAND. THIS INTERVIEW WASN'T PART OF THE PLAN.



Known by her moniker as "Paping", Felipa Pontillas, 74, is a retired Bureau of Internal Revenue employee who worked as a collection agent. After we exchanged pleasantries, she casually asked, "How are you related to Atty. Felino Palarca? He used to be my colleague when our office was at Trinidad Building in Cagayan de Oro." I told her he's my father. Her face lit up and gushed over about their yesteryears as government employees.

Paping is currently undergoing chemotherapy and flies to Cebu City every 21 days to have her thyroid checked. She has been in therapy for a year already, through immunotherapy (a process intending to repair and boost the immune system) which is a study trial by American drug company giant Merrick. It is an all-expense paid treatment sans the plane fare.

She is married to Leo Pontillas, 72, who is a lung cancer survivor himself. The couple owns two hectares of residential farm located at Barangay 26, Purok 2 in Gingoog City. The area happens to be an integrated and diversified farm which included a rice field and an orchard teeming with fruit trees and other high value crops such as coffee, cacao, and mahogany managed by a stay-out farm worker. Also in the vicinity is their livestock area populated by pigs, cow, sheep, goat, and ducks.

"I have high hopes for my farming venture," Paping shared as she pointed out to me her Rice-Duck Technology area which is a pilot farm of a non-government entity. "Although my three kids are practically all professionals now, it is my farming activity that keeps me and Leo preoccupied since all of them have lives of their own already."

Her farming venture indeed shows strong promise since Paping profits from her home-made salted eggs; rice harvest every three months with which she earns Php60,000 pesos; Php5,000 to Php8,000 from coconut (whole nut) yield in every two months; and dried coffee bean produce which she sells for Php80 to Php90 per kilo to a big food and beverage company.

"I'm still able you know, it's not that I'm very sick to go around and do house chores and be involved with the community," she said, adding that she was still able to attend a seminar of the Agricultural Training Institute.

Seeing her beaming at her husband, I am at loss for words at how Paping stays positive and optimistic despite her malady. "Shall we go?" her well-plucked eyebrows rose as she motioned to her husband that she's good to go. I suddenly remembered they're running late for their meeting. I thanked Paping and Leo for the time. Gathering my pen and paper, something tells me I will be coming here again very soon.



ATI OIC Director Luz Taposok leads the oath-taking of two new employees in RTC VI during the SOA and FFS Graduation.

## Capacitating corn farmers through distance, group-based learning

Marianne B. Antonio

**BANGA, Aklan – In further promoting corn as staple food next to rice and one of the means towards self-sufficiency, Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) Officer-in-Charge (OIC) Director Luz Taposok commended the farmer graduates of the School-on-the-Air (SOA) and Farmers' Field School (FFS) on Corn Production.**

“For the participation, cooperation, and the willingness to take on the challenges laid before you, as well as the unending interest to learn new technologies, and for re-educating yourself—we thank you,” she told the farmers.

The OIC Director explained how the second most important crop in the Philippines or perhaps the combination, the rice corn blend, can help address problems on food security and malnutrition.

She stated, “Our intention of reshaping corn for health and wellness is an answer to the increased consumption and usage of corn as most of the food and things we use at home, in the office, and the things we see are mainly made out of corn products.”

Taposok further classified some goods containing corn by-products such as gas, oil, hand soap, varnish, toothpaste,

matches, cornstarch, tires, spark plugs, molded plastics, and diapers. She indicated that utilization of these everyday items is the very reason why it is important to make sure that corn sources are safe and fresh.

“We, at the ATI, have been blending SOA and FFS to elaborately share knowledge and technologies on corn production, increase farmers' yield, and bring out all the goodness we can make out of corn,” she added.

At the end of her speech, Taposok inspired the graduates to teach and transfer these technologies “Passing on the knowledge means you are adding value to yourself and to your community.”

Simultaneous with the SOA and FFS culmination activity, Taposok also led

the awarding of two model farms on Integrated Diversified Organic Farming System from Negros Occidental (Peacepond) and Guimaras (Gamarcha) as ATI Learning Sites. She also administered the oath-taking of two new employees in ATI Regional Training Center (RTC) VI.

Among those who also graced the event were retired ATI Director Ambrosio Villoriente, Aklan State University President Dr. Danilo Abayon, Congressman Carlito Marquez's Representative Edilberto Macahilig, and DyYM Radyo Natin Kalibo Program Director Augusto Tolentino.

The graduation of some 535 farmers from different municipalities of Aklan was held on October 2, 2017 at the ATI-RTC VI Training Hall in Aklan State University.

## ATI's Directives for 2018

Consistent with the current administration's agricultural agenda to make food available and affordable for every Filipino family, and drawing on the present socio-economic situation of the country, we, at the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), are driven to create and sustain strong extension services to combat poverty and hunger.

For the year 2018, we will focus on devising strong extension and rural advisory service institutions through clear understanding of extension, serving as the overall manager and facilitator of extension activities in the agriculture and fisheries sector while also building a high sense of value for money and results in extension.

Intensive collaborations with national government agencies (NGAs) as well as other key organizations in the local and global arena will be undertaken to consequently solidify a sustainable and equitable development both in the urban areas and the countryside. With the goal to ensure agricultural progress, the Institute will build on its previous strategic, operational, and administrative policies to set continuity while also adopting relevant trends in the agriculture and fisheries sphere.

We envision 2018 to be a year of constant improvements in food productivity, high benefit-cost ratio, social equity, and the involvement of youth in agriculture driven by excellent public system of knowledge and technology transfer. We seek to establish a community by which farmers and fishers are well equipped with technical knowledge in agriculture and other extension support which will help them participate even in the international market.

Strategic and operational policies include tightening linkages with various NGAs, relevant network of non-government and private entities, rural-based organizations, local government units, state universities and colleges, and the ASEAN community for food security and rural advancement.

The mainstreaming of agriculture should be emphasized among in-school and out-of-school youth through tri-media; replication of good practices from other developed countries such as the production of wood vinegar or 'mukosaku', a longtime practice in Japan applied as soil conditioner that restores the normal soil component.

Through continued capability building, we are committed to recreate a new character of budding extensionists, and work for innovations geared towards development. Similarly, the New Year is dedicated to initiate discussions on how to make extension curricula relevant to the needs of the times and register ATI as Continuing Professional Development provider for professional agriculturists for the renewal of their licenses.

As for the professional development for agricultural extension workers, the ATI is continuously pushing for the realization of the Collaborative Provincial Agriculture and Fishery Extension System through the technical assistance of the Coalition for Agriculture Modernization in the Philippines, Inc. Preliminary discussions on the said project started last October 2017.



**LUZ A. TAPOSOK, PhD**  
ATI OIC Director

Administrative policies are likewise identified with emphasis on workforce development through conduct of lectures on extension and aiming for the 3rd level Prime Human Resource. The Institute recognizes the importance of a macro-level attention on human resource development for long-term growth as well as learning and performance in an organizational context. We will also ensure efficient management of financial resource and strict compliance with Republic Act 9184 or the Philippine Government Procurement Law.

With our utmost confidence to the thrust and commitment of the Department of Agriculture (DA), we support Secretary Emmanuel Piñol's plan to establish satellite training centers in Hadji Butu School of Arts and Trade and Lanao Agricultural College in Lumbatan, Lanao del Sur.

Harnessing development through brokering knowledge, that is within DA's framework for agriculture and fisheries extension, we will continue to serve as catalyst for agricultural productivity and sustainability by providing excellent extension services for the farmers and fishers.



Crafter's Joy Cornhusk Handicrafts owner and manager Jocelyn Ong-Perez welcomes DA Secretary Manny Piñol when he stopped by the ATI's exhibit booth.

## 13th National Corn Congress addresses food security, malnutrition

Catheryn M. Villoriente

**PASAY CITY, Metro Manila-** Corn is front and center once again as the **Philippine Maize Federation Inc., (PhilMAize) partners with the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) for the 13th Philippine National Corn Congress (PNCC) and the 5th National Quality Corn Achievers Awards (NQCAA).**

The 1st Cornucopia Awards and the 1st Cassava Cluster Management Excellence Awards (CCMEA) were also held in conjunction with these events. These efforts are aimed at recognizing the outstanding contribution of various individuals and groups in the development of the corn and cassava industries.

"I encourage everyone to look beyond corn as material for feeds only. We should innovate and come up with other products out of corn," DA Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said in his keynote speech. He went on to underscore the three things needed to

boost the agriculture sector, namely, technology use, financing for farmers, and marketing.

With the theme "Reshaping Corn as Staple, for Health and Wellness," the congress also gathered various corn industry stakeholders to discuss issues and disseminate information on the industry.

One of the highlights of the event was the promotion of the rice-corn blend to help combat malnutrition, where an acceptability test was conducted

by the National Food Authority. Lectures were likewise held about the nutrition and wellness benefits of eating corn grits.

ATI Officer-in-Charge Director Luz Taposok graced the event and stressed that it is now time to think and rethink of more suitable advocacies, policies, and regulations for the industry. She then acknowledged the part of the farmers and traders in the promotion of corn as a food staple, filling the gap in the aim for self-sufficiency. Finally, she encouraged everyone to think global and local in making the country well-known in agriculture, particularly in corn.

To recognize the ingenuity and resourcefulness of farmers' organizations, the 1st Cornucopia Awards were given to the following outstanding organizations: Cassava Growers and Processors Association-Dapitan City, Zamboanga Del Norte; The Tillers Multi-Purpose Cooperative-Moncada, Tarlac; San Dionisio Multi Sectoral Integrated Association-San Dionisio, Iloilo; Gabriela Women's Association-Pidigan, Abra; and San Jose Corn Handicraft Association-San Jose, Occidental Mindoro.

Meanwhile, the 1st CCMEA recognized the groups with remarkable contributions to the cassava industry. The awardees were Polo Samahang Nayon Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Polomolok, South Cotabato; Lambac Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Guagua, Pampanga; and Tuburan United Farmers Association in Cawayan, Masbate.

The NQCAA, on the other hand, was given to local government units with exceptional performance in the promotion and development of corn sector. Outstanding provinces, cities, and municipalities were awarded as well as the provincial, city, and municipal agriculturists, corn program coordinators, and agricultural extension workers.

The event culminated with the presentation of the 13th PNCC resolutions, the Market-Buyers Forum, and a raffle draw. The ATI also joined the exhibit, together with the members of the Crafter's Joy Cornhusk Handicrafts in Pangasinan, and distributed about 2,000 copies of information, education, and communication materials on corn and cassava.

These events were held last November 22-24, 2017 at Philippine International Convention Center, Forum Tent.

## BRIA-FARMERS Learning Event celebrates agriprenneurship, partnership

Erika Z. Vizcarra



Officials from the GIZ, together with partners from the private sector, officially turn over the knowledge products on BRIA-FARMERS to DA and ATI reps.

**MALATE, Manila - "We learned a lot about farming as a business. We now know that small farmers can be entrepreneurs in their own farms, no matter how big or small the area is," local farmer technician Nelia Sombiro from Oton, Iloilo said.**

Sombiro had this to say about her experience as part of the Better Rice Initiative Asia-Fostering Agriculture and Rice Marketing by improved Education and Rural advisory Services (BRIA-FARMERS) during the project's culminating activity, also dubbed as the National Learning Event.

"Through BRIA and also the Central Philippine University, we were able to have market linkages with institutional buyers. We've also found out that we can earn more from marketing rice by-products to buyers instead of the usual trading of palay," Sombiro said.

Sombiro was among the farmers representing the three BRIA-FARMERS project sites, namely, Regions III, VI, and VIII. Aside from improved access to market, the other two partner farmers, who also spoke at the event, attested to how the project improved their access to extension services that led to better crop management and yield increase.

Agricultural extension workers from the concerned local government

units (LGUs) were also part of the panel discussion on the learning experiences on the implementation of BRIA-FARMERS in the Philippines. Amante Lagunay, Jr. from Ma. Aurora, Aurora shared how the project brought them deeper understanding on how agriculture can be enhanced by good partnership and how it became a more effective tool in the improvement of learning and organization of farmers.

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) Officer-in-Charge (OIC) Peter Hauschnik also talked about the project as a means for their organization to build bridges between public, private, and civil sectors, help foster learning, and "create some new ways of doing things."

He stressed that BRIA-FARMERS supports the peace and development efforts of the GIZ in the Philippines, saying that conflict and difficulties also arise when there is lack of opportunities, which is not limited to conflict areas in Mindanao. He also commended the people from the LGUs who have to implement several and different national policies which he said is not an easy task.

BRIA-FARMERS aims to contribute to the goals of the Department of Agriculture (DA) on ensuring food availability and affordability for all. This is through improving the market position of farmers in the rice value chains as well as increasing their yield and income through better rice production, market linkage, and policy dialogue and knowledge management.

The project started in 2013 and officially rolled out activities in 2015. This is in collaboration among the DA, Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), and German Development Cooperation through the GIZ. Private companies were also part of this effort, particularly Bayer and Yara Fertilizers Philippines, Incorporated.

Sombiro further spoke of how this collaboration strengthened support mechanisms for farmers from the government and private sector, "They are building bridges for us, farmers, with buyers and this lessens the difficulties for us."

Following the panel discussion was the ceremonial turnover of the knowledge products generated from the project to DA and ATI officials led by Undersecretary for Operations Ariel Cayanan and OIC Director Luz Taposok, respectively. Cayanan stressed the importance of these products, which include training modules, in the institutionalization of learning.

PhilRice Board of Trustees Secretary Constante Briones also spoke at the event on behalf of Executive Director Sailila Abdula, saying how their participation in the project has allowed them to expand their reach in diffusing rice production technologies and raising the quality of rice and the lives of farmers.

The National Learning Event between the partner farmers and officials from implementing government agencies, private groups, and other partner organizations of the BRIA-FARMERS project was held on October 26 at the New World Manila Bay Hotel.

## ATI fosters support network for Learning Site establishment in El Nido

Marianne B. Antonio

**EL NIDO, Palawan – Program convergence for the pursuit of food sufficiency continues as the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) partners with the local government unit (LGU) of El Nido in Palawan and other government agencies in MIMAROPA.**

Officer-in-Charge Director Luz Taposok, along with ATI MIMAROPA Center Director Pat Andrew Barrientos, recently met with El Nido Mayor Nieves Rosento for possible development programs to be done in the municipality. This is through ATI's intervention in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office in MIMAROPA and key stakeholders like the Ayala Foundation Inc. represented by Chiara Cruza.

Highlights of their meeting include the conversion of an 8.4-hectare land to be established as a Learning Site (LS) and demonstration area for agriculture and fisheries. Mayor Nieves vowed to help fast-

track the acquisition of the pertinent and legal documents needed for the transformation plan.

Taking advantage of the opportunity to link with partner agencies for agricultural development in Palawan, Taposok also scheduled a dialogue with Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) Provincial Director Renato Pantaleon and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Provincial Director Ismael Jerry Fermo in Puerto Princesa City for possible coordination in for the establishment of the local LS.

BFAR agreed to help develop the area with fish ponds to demonstrate good practices for inland fisheries. Likewise, TESDA committed to provide training on farm tractors/truck engines and other machineries under the National Certification II program.

Taposok visited the target agricultural land situated in Sitio Calampinay in Brgy. Pasadeña, with Municipal Agricultural Officer Virgie Balderas, Barrientos, and Cruza.

The Memorandum of Agreement for the project is expected to be signed in 2018.

## Mushroom products take center stage in free seminar

Jayvee P. Masilang

**DILIMAN, Quezon City – Mushroom products were on showcase during the Free Seminar on Mushroom Production and Processing held by the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI).**

Participants of all ages watched and learned how to produce and process mushroom with the help of the Rural Improvement Club (RIC) of Burgos in Sto. Domingo, Nueva Ecija.

Led by its president, Virginia Smith, members of the RIC of Burgos talked about how to produce mushroom in the backyard. Also, they demonstrated how to prepare and cook mushroom-based products such as noodles, sisig, tempura, and mushroom pao.

"We started producing mushroom as a group in 2015. We continued production since then and ventured into processing for additional source of income and for variation of our products. Through this, our members are able to earn consistently," Smith shared.

The RIC of Burgos now regularly sells fresh and processed mushroom within their community and other clients. The

organization wants to expand in terms of production so that they will be able to provide livelihood to the community as well.

Rolando Santiago came all the way from San Jose del Monte, Bulacan to attend the seminar. He grows backyard vegetables such as peppers, radish, eggplants, and others for consumption.

The 59-year-old farmer produces mushroom, too, and has his own mushroom house. Through this seminar, he learned a different way of selling his produce. "Producing mushroom is a hobby for me and I learned how to process them through this seminar. I will try it by tomorrow. Through this, I hope to eventually sell them in my neighborhood in the near future," Santiago said.

The Free Seminar on Mushroom Production and Processing was conducted last November 24 at ATI's central office.

## South Australian R&D scientist challenges farmers to be responsible, adaptive

Karl Louise M. Salibio

**CALAPAN CITY, Oriental Mindoro— With the increasingly destructive effects of climate change in the Philippine farming industry, South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) Principal Scientist Dr. Peter Hayman challenged the farmers of Oriental Mindoro to be responsible, adaptive, and knowledgeable when it comes to issues related to weather.**

The challenge was forwarded to 150 farmers of Oriental Mindoro during the Action Ready Climate Knowledge Project Kickoff and Provincial Climate Outlook Forum, held last October 18, 2017 at the Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology-Calapan City Campus.

Smallholder farmers in the Philippines are mainly vulnerable to extreme weather events and year-to-year climate variability because of the country's geography and the impacts of the El Niño Southern Oscillation cycle. With this, the activity seeks to provide reliable and timely climate information to farmers and ensure the appropriate use of climate knowledge to reduce vulnerability and enhance the resilience of the agriculture and fisheries sector.

A wide range of climate risks including drought and dry spells, heat events, advance or delay in the onset of rainy season, typhoons, and long-term changes in rainfall and temperature patterns also put farmers at a disadvantage. To address this, experts deem the need to improve the exchange of information between the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) and key decision-makers involved in managing climate and weather risks.

To further understand the Philippine weather condition, representatives from PAGASA discussed how typhoons are projected as well as some major trends related to climate change. They also mentioned that farmers should consider climate information in

choosing their crop, its variety, and time of harvest based on location-specific weather projection.

Dr. Hayman also emphasized how climate condition affects farmers' yield. With efficient weather prediction, he said that lead agencies can help lessen the adverse impacts of weather, particularly heavy rain and drought. Experts from the University of the Philippines-Los Baños (UPLB) also mentioned the possible contribution of each agency in the project.

The activity is a part of the "Action Ready Climate Knowledge to Improve Disaster Risk Management for Smallholder Farmers in the Philippines Project." The project is initiated by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, SARDI, Philippine Institute for Development Studies, PAGASA, UPLB, and

Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), together with Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology as regional partner and implementer.

**"With efficient weather prediction, agencies can help lessen the adverse impacts of weather, particularly heavy rain and drought."**



Farmers map typhoon trajectory as this will guide them in planning their crops and scheduling their harvest to avoid or minimize loss in their yield.

# Direct market access of meat products through KISS ME program

Marianne B. Antonio

**TAGUIG CITY, Metro Manila – With the aim to provide sustainable livelihood and more economic opportunities for farmers, fishers, and wounded Filipino soldiers of the Marawi crisis, the Department of Agriculture (DA), in collaboration with the Department of National Defense (DND), launched the “Karne, Isda Supply Suporta sa Masa at Ekonomiya” (KISS ME) program.**

The launching was led by President Rodrigo Duterte, Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food Chairperson Cynthia Villar, Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol, and Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) Officer-in-Charge Director Luz Taposok, together with DA bureau and attached agency directors, as well as the DND officials attended the launching in support to the DA’s initiative to cut down multiple layers of middlemen and the producers’ dependence on traders for market access for meat, poultry, and fish products.

Five wounded-in-action (WIA) soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines are the initial beneficiaries of the program. They were awarded with freezer units

from Sanden Philippines, a Japanese company that pledged to support the program by initially lending out cold storage equipment.

President Duterte assured WIA soldiers that the government will provide them with livelihood assistance as well as housing and hospitalization aid. “There is life after Marawi,” he guaranteed.

Speaking for the agriculture and fisheries sector, Piñol emphasized that the best way to motivate food producers is to help them generate good income.

This will be achieved by opening doors for them for community market outlets. In conjunction with the TienDA marketing strategy, KISS ME has three

phases, the launching and awarding of the first batch of beneficiaries, setting up of outlets in military camps across the country to be operated by wounded and disabled soldiers, and replication in housing subdivisions and highly populated areas.

The launching ceremony of KISS ME was held on November 7, 2017 at the Philippine Navy Officers Club, Bonifacio Naval Station in this city.

**“There is life after Marawi.”**

**- President Duterte**



Key agriculture and defense officials in full support of KISS ME project launching held at the Philippine Navy Officers Club, Bonifacio Naval Station.

According to a report of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration in 2011, there is a possibility that the temperature in our country rises from 0.9°C to 1.1°C in 2020 and from 1.80°C to 2.2°C in 2050. If this transpires, we will experience hotter seasons especially during the summer. There’s also a possibility of less rainfall during the summer but more of it during the rainy season including times where our county will experience rain brought by the southwest monsoon. It is being assessed that in 2050, the rainy season will be shorter which may pose a threat to the health and welfare of everyone.

As an agriculture-rich country, frequent change in climate will have a direct effect on the production of agriculture and fisheries due to longer summer days from January to June and heavy rainfall from July to December. This will result in agricultural fields being flooded and water levels rising. This is evident in Region IV-A or CaLaBaRZon, mostly in areas in the province of Quezon like General Nakar.

General Nakar is the largest municipality in Quezon as it covers 19% of the province’s total land area. Being a rural area, most of the residents here rely on farming and fishing as their source of living. Some of them have ventured into the organic form of farming nowadays to adapt to the negative effects of climate change in their production. But this strategy solely is not enough to brush off the effects of climate change. Barangay Magsikap is one of the areas which are critical in their efforts in terms of coping up with climate change. Most of the barangay’s six-hectare land area, which is being used for farming and fishing, are prone to earthquakes, landslides, and drought. Since these areas are also near the seaside, it can also be hit by storm surge, flooding, liquefaction, and rising of sea level. All of these calamities are results of frequent change in climate.

To answer this, the Agricultural Training Institute Regional Training Center (ATI-RTC) IV-A, being at the forefront of the Department of Agriculture in terms of extension and training, introduced a program to help Barangay Magsikap learn

more about the effects and threats that climate change pose to the health and livelihood of its residents. The Climate Resilient Agriculture (CRA) Community Program intends to select 30 beneficiaries who will become models which will improve the community in terms of its efforts in coping with climate change.

To ensure the sustainability of the program, a study was conducted using Benchmarking, Ground Thruting and Community Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA) last April.

**“We should not let our farmers and fishers handle climate change by themselves as this is a concern for everyone.”**

This aims to have a clear background of the community including their specific needs before implementing the program. The study was significant as it allows ATI-RTC IV-A to not only have the program about agriculture but also include fisheries. Alongside the Provincial Agriculture Office of Quezon, CRVA serves as a catalyst for programs from other government agencies like the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office (DA-RFO) IV-A to reach Barangay Magsikap. State colleges and universities like the Cavite State University and the Southern Luzon State University also expressed their support by conducting training programs which will enhance the capabilities of residents of Barangay Magsikap on coping with climate change and community organizing.

This is just the beginning for Barangay Magsikap as ATI-RTC IV-A offers other services aside from training. For additional source of income, farmers in the barangay will have an intensive training on organic farming and animal raising. They will also be given a start-up for their livestock like

goats and worms (African nightcrawler) which will be put in a community vermicomposting facility. Farmers will then take care of these as they multiply and eventually aid them in their agricultural production and additional income. Aside from training in the production of cacao and root crops, fishers will also be trained on how to process their own produce to have additional value when dealing with the market. Through the following strategies, there will be additional source of income for the beneficiaries when they apply the learning they had.

The program has been a collaboration of members of the Regional Agriculture and Fishery Extension Network. As for PCA, they will form a Coco Coir Processing Community Production Area. This will enable them to earn from coconut husks which are oftentimes being disposed by farmers. PCA will also provide a decorticating machine and training on coconut production to the beneficiaries which ATI-RTC IV-A will supply the capital for the program. Last July 13, DA-RFO IV-A visited Barangay Magsikap to look for other avenues on how to help the community. Since some of the areas do not have water supply, the office will provide solar water pump for rice and vegetable growers. There have been several talks between ATI-RTC IV-A and BFAR, as well, on programs for fishers.

The CRA Community Program is set to run for six months. There will be a thorough monitoring and evaluation plan to help the program achieve its goal of making the beneficiaries and the entire Barangay Magsikap “climate-resilient.”

Changing climate is already here and even we can’t stop it. We should not let our farmers and fishers handle these only by themselves as this is a concern for everyone. ATI-RTC IV-A—in cooperation with other government agencies, state colleges and universities, and the private sector—will continue to spearhead the efforts in terms of extension and training about climate change and how to cope with it. Why are we doing this? Because it is not only us who are affected but also the future generations.

# ATI IV-A Climate Resilient Agriculture Community Program:

## Coping up with the effect of climate change on agriculture in CaLaBaRZon

Franklin Bel T. Isip

*(This article was first published in the January to June 2017 issue of SIKLAB, the official newsletter of Agricultural Training Institute Regional Training Center IV-A.)*

*Global warming is considered to be the primary component in climate change. Based on the study conducted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, climate change occurs with the spread of greenhouse gases which include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone. These gases come from energy sources like gasoline and other waste materials. Most of these are from China, USA, and Europe but it still has a great effect in countries like the Philippines.*



# ATI thanks e-Extension partners thru 'InTENSity' Summit

Iseult Kyllie T. Capacio

**MALVAR, Batangas** - From when it was launched in 2007, the electronic extension (e-Extension) Program has undergone rigorous refining processes through years of trying and testing as it continued to cleave to its purpose: to bring agriculture and fisheries extension to new heights through information and communications technology (ICT).

To celebrate what transpired throughout a decade of delivering electronic extension, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), the program's lead implementer, brought together partners from different government agencies and academic institutions, along with the course and content developers from the Institute, in a one-day knowledge-sharing affair dubbed as the "e-Extension InTENSity Summit."

With the theme "Recognizing the Movers and Shakers of e-Extension in the Philippines," the summit became one big reunion for those whose contributions paved the way for milestones reached in the past 10 years of implementing the three components of the e-Extension Program, namely, e-Farming, e-Learning, and e-Trading.

In recognition of the work and support from the partner agencies in the development, deployment, and promotion of the e-Learning courses, the ATI awarded plaques of appreciation to Laguna State Polytechnic University; Xavier University - Sustainable Agriculture Center; Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic, and Natural Resources Research and Development; Philippine Trade Training Center; Bureau of Agricultural Research; and Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization.

The e-Learning Handbook was also presented to the Department of



DA and ATI officials unveil a replica of the e-Learning Handbook in lieu of the presentation of the document to Dir. Clarito Barron (third from left) during the e-Extension summit.

Agriculture, represented by the Special Technical Assistance Office Director Clarito Barron. The handbook serves as a guide for the implementation of e-Learning by the e-Extension offices based at the ATI network of training centers. It provides a record of the guidelines, procedures, and expectations in the administration of e-Learning.

"You have reached this far, however, much more has to be done. Let's make e-Extension more relevant to our ultimate clients - the farmers and fishers. We hope that through this program, we will be able to contribute to the goal of making food more available and accessible to all Filipinos," Dir. Barron said.

In the afternoon, small group sessions were conducted for the poster presentations on the best practices and researches related to e-Learning from Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Regions IV-A, VII, VIII, X, and XIII. The participants gave their insights on how to replicate the presenters' best practices and on what measures and

future studies can be done in support to the findings and recommendations gathered from the researches.

A plenary session was also held, with some representatives from partner agencies and e-Learning experts who shared highlights in their e-Learning experiences.

To cap off the event, the participants recited a pact of commitment to continue to innovate extension services, enhance access to agriculture and fisheries information, and embrace change as extensionists.

In the evening, recognition was also given to the achievements of ATI training centers in relation to e-Extension including the number of e-Learning enrollees and graduates, social media followers, website visits, Rice Crop Manager recommendations, among others.

The 10th e-Extension anniversary event was held on December 11, 2017 at the Lima Park Hotel in this town.

# WATER CONSERVATION AND NATURAL FARMING

## A WIN-WIN COMBINATION

Marife B. De Torres

*(This article was first published in "Compendium: Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies and Practices in Central Luzon" by the Agricultural Training Institute Regional Training Center III in May 2017.)*

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If it worked for my  
ancestors, it should  
also work for me.

-Artem

With climate change, water scarcity seems a formidable challenge that is hitting the core of many of our farming communities.

When water is scarce, the need to conserve it is high. This is what Artemio "Artem" Castillo, 59, shows in his farm in Lupang Pangako, Iba, Zambales.

Artem has eggplant, string beans, watermelon, squash, bitter melon, and peanuts in his one-hectare (ha) farm.

### GIFT FROM THE ANCESTORS

In 2014, when the Philippines experienced prolonged dry season, Artem recalled the farming practice of his ancestors on retaining soil moisture. The practice requires furrowing until the soil gets pulverized. This must be done after every harvest or upon raining, ideally in September or October.

Artem has been applying this practice for three consecutive years. He shares that he has, thus far, been getting good harvest even as he's not been watering his plants. He has been earning Php1,000 to Php1,500 for each harvest of his eggplants.

"If it worked for my ancestors, it should also work for me," says Artem.

For rice, which is a water-loving crop, Artem is trying to develop another water conservation intervention. He has started digging a well, about five-foot deep and with a one-meter radius. The farm lot should be sloping so that water coming from the well will be

free-flowing. He, however, has decided to postpone its completion owing to the rather expensive construction costs of Php5,000 just for digging the hole.

### NATURAL FARMING

Aside from practicing integrated and diversified farming, Artem has also shifted to natural farming.

"Resource poor farmers will spend much on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, making it difficult for them to get decent income," says Artem.

He holds a national training certificate (NC II) from the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) for his training on organic agriculture production.

### FARMING CHAMPION

Farming is Artem's main source of livelihood. Through it, he was able to send his four children to school—three of them are now licensed school teachers while the other one finished a vocational course in TESDA.

Artem sits as the chairperson of the Aeta Belbel Multipurpose Cooperative (ABMC). Through his leadership, World Vision International Foundation, Inc (WVIFI) has awarded the 235-ha land in the mountainous area of Lupang Pangako to the 23 founding members of ABMC. Each member was given rights to a 1-ha farm lot and a 900-square-meter residential area.

Additionally, he also serves as a pastor in the Lupang Pangako Christian Church, which helps finance the education of their youth members. His unwavering and unfaltering efforts for the Aeta Belbel community in Lupang Pangako have been recognized by several organizations such as the WVIFI, the Sangguniang Barangay of Lupang Pangako, the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office III, and Agricultural Training Institute Regional Training Center (ATI-RTC) III.

The WVIFI funded his participation to the training programs conducted by ATI-RTC III. Additionally, ATI-RTC III has given him a trainer certificate and accredited his farm as a Learning Site.

