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Extension Mutation:

ATI-CAR Refocuses 2020 Programs towards
Urban Agriculture and Home Gardening in
Response to COVID-19



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Extension Mutation:

ATI-CAR Refocuses 2020 Programs towards Urban Agriculture and Home Gardening in Response to COVID-19

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET. The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it challenges not only in health but also in agriculture. The pandemic's economic impact especially in food security became as immediate and pressing as its effect to public health. Fully aware of these challenges, the Government, with the Department of Agriculture (DA) as the lead agency, to make food available, accessible, affordable, and safe embarked on implementing various coordinated efforts towards coping, adapting, and ultimately overcoming COVID-19.

One of these is the "Ahon Lahat, Pagkaing Sapat (ALPAS) Kontra sa COVID-19 or the Plant, Plant, Plant Program. Under this program, food production is to be intensified through various means including urban agriculture and home gardening. Urban agriculture and home gardening will give special attention to areas with high food consumption but have low or even no food production.

While the demand and subsequent consumption of agricultural products in urban areas is high, production is concentrated in rural areas. This often result to challenges in food supply during emergencies especially when production in the rural areas is decreased or when transport of agricultural goods is restricted.

In the case of COVID-19 pandemic, both the production and transport of agricultural products are negatively affected due to restrictions in the movement of goods and people. It is in these scenarios that urban agriculture is crucial in addressing the immediacy of food supply during times of emergency. Taking the cue from the DA's policy directions in response to COVID-19, the



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ATI-CAR management and staff sat down to plan and iron out interventions supportive to urban agriculture. After a series of small group meetings and discussions, the ATI-CAR came up with five components for the Urban Agriculture (UA) Program to be implemented in CAR in harmony with the DA's policy directions on urban agriculture in response to COVID-19. The ATI-CAR UA Program will be implemented from March to December, 2020.

The first component of the ATI-CAR's UA Program is a series of coaching session on urban agriculture and home gardening targeting 836 participants grouped into 51 batches. During the coaching activity participants will be taught with the basics of urban and home gardening. They will learn the various methods of urban gardening and the designs and techniques they can adopt depending on the resources they have. Sustainable farming technologies such as composting and soil fertility management, and other natural farming inputs is also part of the coaching lessons. Intensified

provision of knowledge products on urban agriculture technologies through print and online channels will also form part of the Program.

After attending the coaching activity participants will be given home garden starter kits which is another component of the ATI-CAR's UA Program. These starter kits are sets of vegetable seeds, seedling trays, watering can, trowel, and vermicompost which the coaching participants will use to start their home gardens. The ATI-CAR will then monitor how the participants fared in starting or sustaining their home gardens.

Another component of ATI-CAR's UA Program is the participation of the ATI-CAR certified Learning Sites for Agriculture (LSA) and Schools for Practical Agriculture (SPA) located within or near urban areas. These LSA and SPA will be mobilized to help in promoting urban agriculture. In addition to their regular function, the LSA and SPA will also

demonstrate urban agriculture technologies and will also serve as source of seedlings and other planting materials for their respective communities. The ATI-CAR's Center-based LSA on Urban Agriculture is also included among these LSA and SPA.

Aside from advocating home gardens, the establishment of community gardens is another component of the ATI-CAR's UA Program. These community gardens will showcase the community's technical capability in vegetable production as well as their creativity in designing their respective community gardens. This shall be implemented in partnership with the concerned local government units (LGU) after having qualified for the program. Finally, and following the DA's direction to incentivize food production, the ATI-CAR's UA Program include awards and incentives for participating households with outstanding home gardens. (ACP Velasco)



CAR's RCEF Info. Caravan Goes to RCEF Municipalities in Kalinga

TABUK CITY, KALINGA. Consistent with the DA's thrust to disseminate information on the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), the ATI-CAR, in coordination with the concerned LGUs in Kalinga and other RCEF implementing agencies, held a series of municipal-based information caravan on March 10 to 13, 2020.

The caravan series covered the municipalities of Rizal, Pinukpuk, Tanudan, and the city of Tabuk on March 10, 11, 12, and 13, 2020 respectively. There were 581 stakeholders, most of which are farmers, who participated in the activity: 180 of which are from Rizal, 172 from Pinukpuk, 157 from Tanudan, and 72 from Tabuk City.

The one-day activity introduced the participants to the RCEF tracing back its history in the Rice Tarification Law. The RCEF implementing agencies then presented the programs and services under the component which the agency is handling such as Land Bank of the Philippines – Tabuk City for the Credit Component, Philippine Rice Research Center – Isabela for the Seed Component, Philippine Center for Postharvest Mechanization for the Mechanization Component, and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority – Kalinga and ATI-CAR for the Extension Component. Representatives from the DA-Regional Field Office-CAR also informed the participants of the guidelines and processes in the accreditation of Farmers Cooperatives and Associations (FCAs) which is an essential requirement for FCAs to be able to avail of the RCEF programs and services.

The gathering is a sequel of the RCEF information caravan on October 23 and 24, 2020 at Tabuk City, Kalinga where 407 farmers attended. Due to the extreme location and distance of the RCEF municipalities from Tabuk City and the relatively high number of farmers who are yet to attend any RCEF orientation, the LGUs requested that the caravan be held in their respective municipalities. (ACP Velasco)



Making Pluralistic Extension an Edge through Harmonization: MPSPC Launches Knowledge Products after Undergoing ATI Funded Trainings

BONTOC, MT. PROVINCE. The Mountain Province State Polytechnic College (MPSPC), through its Research Development and Extension Services, staged its “First Knowledge Products for Extension Launching” on February 12, 2020 at the MPSPC Main Campus in Bontoc, Mt. Province. The knowledge products (KP) are outputs of the MPSPC’s extension group after undergoing four ATI-CAR funded trainings.

Prior to the trainings, the Benguet State University (BSU) invited the MPSPC, as well as the ATI-CAR, for the Benguet State University Extension Sector Knowledge Products Launching on September 27, 2018. Afterwards the MPSPC underwent the ATI-CAR funded training “Empowering the Extension Capabilities of MPSPC

Extension Workers” on October 1-4, 2018. These two events led the MPSPC extension group to conceptualize the MPSPC’s KP for extension. Acknowledging the value of partnership in extension, the MPSPC then submitted to the ATI-CAR, through the Agriculture and Fisheries Extension Network-CAR (AFEN-CAR), training proposals on KP development. In turn, the ATI-CAR, after evaluating the proposals, funded three MPSPC KP trainings implemented on June 20-29, 2019 which are the: (1) Training-Workshop on Knowledge Management for Research, Development, and Extension; (2) Knowledge Products Audit, Development and Management for Extension; and (3) Training-Workshop on KP Monitoring and Evaluation.

In launching their outputs, the MPSPC committed that the

knowledge products are for the MPSPC’s diverse client. MPSPC Vice President for Research Development and Extension Annie Grail F. Ekid also lauded the ever flourishing partnership of the MPSPC with other agencies and stakeholders. She added that, through the KP initiative, the MPSPC finally has extension frameworks it can claim as homegrown. Ms. Ekid also pointed out that the policy briefs are intended for the local legislators to enable them to formulate policies based on research. MPSPC President Rexton F. Chakas then branded the KPs as products “for the college extension, for our extension stakeholders and for the community.”

ATI-CAR Center Director Arlene L. Flores, in her message as guest speaker for the KP launching, commended the

MPSPC extension group for coming up with tangible outputs of extension. She emphasized that the Philippines’ pluralistic extension “is not really a problem, rather it is an advantage if we are harmonized.” Dir. Flores then recalled how the partnership between the ATI-CAR and the MPSPC grew through the AFEN as an avenue where the ATI-CAR and other AFEN members can help and complement each other in extension. She also pointed out that the Department of Agriculture (DA) cannot do agricultural extension alone. Thus, she emphasized that stakeholders need to further “harmonize, work together, increase coordination, and cooperation.” She acknowledged that while “this is difficult but if we want it, we have to sacrifice, we have to share.”

Dir. Flores also relayed the “Eight Paradigms of Agriculture” of DA Secretary William D. Dar and stressed Sec. Dar’s trust that “the role of extension is very crucial” in agricultural development. She went on to inform the group about the Secretary’s initiatives in bringing back the youth to agriculture through agripreneurship. She then added that the State Colleges and Universities, such as the MPSPC, will be partners of the DA in this endeavor. Dir. Flores also took the opportunity to recognize the MPSPC’s active role in promoting

the ATI’s e-extension program as she awarded a certificate of appreciation for MPSPC in connection with the ATI’s 33rd Anniversary on January 30, 2020. President Rexton F. Chakas received the certificate in behalf of the MPSPC.

Ms. Betty C. Listino, the MPSPC’s KP Editorial Consultant guided the MPSPC extension group during the trainings, the KP production process, until the KP are ready for launching. In recalling the MPSPC’s KP for Extension journey she revealed some of the insights that the extension group realized during the process. She shared that “developing a knowledge product requires not only one expertise.” She then pressed that “group functionality and good communication are important so that diverse knowledge will become complementary and additive.” In this light, Ms. Listino believes that MPSPC has an edge in delivering extension through its diverse academic programs coming from various disciplines. Finally, Ms. Listino recapped that the KPs developed are “part of the larger organizational knowledge that MPSPC is building.” Thus, these are “meant to set an example on knowledge accountability of academic institutions.”

According to Ms. Lestino, it took the MPSPC extension group seven months to complete the knowledge products after undergoing the trainings. The KPs include 14 extension program briefers covering the whole MPSPC, one for each department, and one for the MPSPC MIS. The group also produced two policy briefs for research-based policy recommendations. Moreover, a catalogue of heirloom rice in Mt. Province, and two audio-visual techno-guide in managing fusarium wilt in camote were also prepared. Finally, an institutional video of the MPSPC, and an extension magazine dubbed as Gameng di Sumyaan completed the knowledge products. The authors presented the knowledge products they produced highlighting the purpose and content of each product. MPSPC President Chakas handed the knowledge products to the MPSPC library for use of the College, the community, and stakeholders. Bontoc Mayor Franklin C. Odsey, Ifugao State University Extension Director Mara Joy Nanglegan, and Ms. Esper Feliciano of the Benguet State University Office of Extension Services also attended the MPSPC KP launching. (ACP Velasco)



“Outsmarting Climate Change” is Center Piece of ATI-CAR’s 33rd Anniversary



Director Gregorio (inset) of SEARCA, emphasizes Climate Change and the Fourth Industrial Revolution Readiness Through Extension and Innovations on Farming Technologies to various stakeholders of ATI-CAR.

BAGUIO CITY. “Today we need more than a hero, we need the connivance of the Avengers and the Justice League.”

This is how Director Glenn B. Gregorio paralleled the needed convergence and partnership of stakeholders in addressing the impacts of climate change in agriculture. Director Gregorio heads the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA). He is the keynote speaker during the 33rd anniversary celebration of the Agriculture Training Institute-

Cordillera Administrative Region at the Hotel Supreme in Baguio City on January 30, 2020.

Director Gregorio emphasized that climate change posts one of the most serious threats to agriculture. He cited the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization findings that crop yields in the world will decrease by 25 per cent come 2050 if climate change is not addressed. There are many interventions towards addressing climate change but these remain scattered and

divided among the stakeholders says Gregorio. This is where the agricultural extension workers come in to fill the gaps between the stakeholders and connect the scattered climate change adaptation interventions to benefit the farmers.

The overall goal of connecting and pooling the scattered climate change adaptation initiatives, according to Gregorio, is to capacitate the vulnerable agriculture stakeholders to outsmart climate change. He emphasized that the

first step in this endeavor is “to change our mindsets” towards climate change. Afterwards, stakeholders must know and understand the problem because “knowing the problem is half the solution.” Director Gregorio then challenged the agricultural extension workers as they “have to touch all of these things to bring a solution.” The resulting actions should aim to “decrease the risk in agriculture to increase investments in rural development” adds Gregorio.

Director Gregorio pointed out that it is sustaining the capacity of the agriculture stakeholders to cope up with and adapt to the adverse effect of climate change that matters in addressing climate change. He then shared the endeavors that SEARCA is undertaking in partnership with the government, private, farmers, and other stakeholders in response to climate change. Moreover, he underscored that since agriculture is knowledge intensive partnership must come in to help in the transfer of knowledge. Further, Gregorio reminded that scientists alone cannot do knowledge and technology generation, popularization, and commercialization. He also added that the youth must be given special emphasis particularly in valuing and venturing into agriculture. Finally, Gregorio urged the stakeholders to remain open to “crazy ideas” or innovations in responding to climate change in agriculture.

Director Gregorio’s keynote message ended with a short question and answer with the audience.

There were 150 individuals composed of representatives, and agricultural extension workers from government regional line agencies, local government units, state colleges and universities, ATI accredited private extension service provider, and certified learning sites, farmers and farmer organizations attended the ATI-CAR’s 33rd anniversary program. This year’s anniversary theme is “Vibrant Agriculture towards Masaganang Ani at Mataas na Kita.” (ACP Velasco)



ATI-CAR family says *Salamat* for your invaluable service to the Institute

(one retired and 2 staff transferred to other Institutions)



Mr. Cristion Balancio, former Sr. Agriculturist and Head of Partnership and Accreditation Services Section retired from the government service after 36 years of dedicated service effective December 2019.



Ms. Cherry Sinong, Project Evaluation Officer



Mr. Abdiel Chapap, Network Controller

Thank you very much for your selfless service.

The REAPER's mission for sustainable farming while becoming a farmer entrepreneur

Nu panpanunutek ti istorya ti biyag ko, makasangit ak. (It brings me to tears when I think of those memories in my life.)

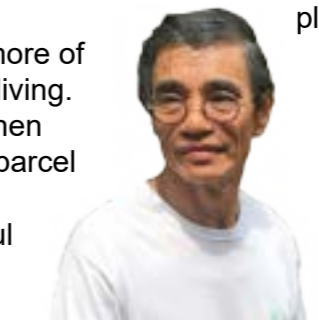
A resounding statement from a man tested by life's experiences – a father, a brother, a farmer leader, and an advocate of natural and sustainable farming, Mr. Ashley Lamaton, a Magsasaka Siyentista (MS) and a learning site on agriculture (LSA) owner at Kadaclan, Barlig, Mt. Province.

which they followed seeing his farm slowly being developed. Later, he became an advanced farmer and a farmer leader in the community.

A jolly old fellow as we see him now, yet his life was filled with challenges, who then in return, embrace farming as his life.

While starting his own family, he managed to do his own business and helped facilitated their farmer cooperative to grow. It was then an ideal life for him but his life was shattered when one night, a life changing tragedy took place.

Ashley was born in Barlig but spent more of his younger years in Paracelis to earn a living. He first worked as a farm/ranch worker then and with his saving he bought parcel by parcel of land in the area. Buying lands was his former boss's advice, which he is thankful until these days.



Filled with pain and anger for what happened that night and the chance to seek revenge, he did not chose to. Instead, he sold all his properties in the area and bought lands in Barlig. He returned to his hometown to have a new life all over again.

Starting a farm was not that easy as he thought it would because he needed fund to develop the farm. He did start with what he have that time, and establish his linkages with agencies like the Department of Agriculture (DA) and Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI). The BPI partnered with him in the implementation of the RP-German program in the area. Partnering with other agencies provided him additional knowledge, skills and inputs to his farm activities.

He was articulate to advise fellow resident in the area to also plant fruit and cash crops,



Definitely, starting all over again was not an easy process for him. He also tried to venture into construction activity just to ease the pain.

But at the end of it, farming was the best resort and his strong faith that God is able to restore what have been lost to something better.

Slowly, he developed the land he acquired and inherited into productive farms-mostly into heirloom rice and coffee production. Farming became easier for him, as he loves reading publication related to/with agriculture and attending trainings and seminars thus putting these information and knowledge into practice.

He again rose to become a farmer leader in the municipality serving as MAFC for years. In 2010, he was designated as the Magsasaka Siyentista (MS) on heirloom rice, the One-Town-One-Product (OTOP), of the Farmers Information and Technology Services (FITS) Center based at the Office of the Municipal Agriculturist of MLGU Barlig.

He was chosen as the MS mainly because he practices more advance farming activities in the community. Specifically, for heirloom rice production, he applied composted sunflower leaves to his rice field as fertilizer to increase yield.

With that practice, the PCARRD thru HARRDEC funded the implementation of the Science and Technology-Based Farm (STBF). This certain project aims to apply science-based technologies while sustaining the indigenous way of rice farming to increase the yield. Instead of just adding the weeds removed from dikes of the field and wait for these to decompose in the rice field, he shredded alnus leaves and sunflower and compost these for 60 days and used as

“He developed the land he acquired and inherited into productive farms-mostly into heirloom rice.”

basal fertilizer. He also applies uniform planting distance of the rice. As a result of the project, this provided his 250-square meter demonstration farm with a yield of 60.25 kilograms of heirloom rice compared with the 40.25 kilograms of rice from the demonstration farm where traditional farming practices were applied.

Unfortunately, at present, he stopped his heirloom rice production and concentrated more into coffee, nursery and integrated farming. The heirloom rice production nevertheless was sustained by his fellow rice farmers in the area producing heirloom rice for international market.

In June 2017, he was certified by the ATI-CAR as LSA as partner of providing extension services in the area. The fund support was used to construct a training hall and improve lodging rooms being used now as training venue by different agencies.

As MS and LS owner, he keeps on innovating his farm activities. Coupled with knowledge and skills from seminars and trainings, he applies what he deemed applicable to his farm. Aiming both for sustainable farming and financial stability, Ashley needed to innovate on his farming activities while sustaining the linkages he had made.

Prior to becoming an MS, he was able to establish his linkages with various agencies-both government and non-government especially on coffee.

Between 2007 and 2008 that he learned about the Cordillera Green Network (CGN), an environmental NGO based in Baguio to help transform communities in the Cordillera mountain region into models of sustainable resource management. The initial activity was that the CGN bought his 28,000 pieces of coffee seedling provided that he will distribute the coffee seedlings for free to fellow farmers. CGN provided trainings on nursery establishments, coffee production, composting, and mukosako among others.

In August 2016, along with other coffee farmers in the region, the Peace Wind Japan thru CGN facilitated their visit to East Timor. During the visit, they were able to learn personally the coffee harvesting techniques and post-harvest processing of the country. One learning he got from the travel is that the use of post-harvest machineries made from iron such as depulper and huller is not encouraged. As an output and requirement from the travel, he was able to devise a depulper made of wood that he is presently using in his coffee processing.

The sustained partnership with CGN provided him market link of his produce. He maintains to supply coffee green bean (CGB) to CGN. His broom making production, which requires a specific size, already established an exclusive Japanese market link.

With the partnership, he was able to endorse three scholars sponsored by the NGO. A regular visit by the CGN partners, mostly Japanese, conduct regular visit to him and his farm.

His nursery, located near his house, is one of the few accredited private seed nurseries in the region by the BPI to produce coffee - Arabica (Red and Yellow Bourbon) seedlings. Further, he was able to establish as well partnership to DA CAR that provided him coffee/cacao dryer. ATI CAR becomes a family to him especially the MS federation in CAR.



Believing in land stewardship, Ashley needed to adopt the best applicable and innovative practices to his farm. He basically believes in natural farming applying integrated and multiple cropping in the farm in his three farms located in different sites; two of which are planted with coffee trees while the certified LSA farm is located near his residential house.

In his coffee farms, he integrated alnus and ipil-ipil as shade trees. Serving as a wind breaker, these trees as researches proved, help improve the stability of slopes liable to erosion and being nitrogen-fixing trees they can improve degraded lands.

Encouraging sustainable farming, he slowly developed the adjacent area near his house into integrated farm to become the show window of his farming practices. The sloping 8,000 square meter area, is planted with various crops like coffee, tiger grass, rattan, bamboo, banana, trichanthera, gabi, and other fruit bearing trees. He added fishponds for tilapia production and is also raising native pigs in the area.

Aiming both for sustainable farming and financial stability, he even incorporated this advocacy in the name of the farm- The REAPER Farm which means Reduce Emission Activities Prepare Economic Results.

Essentially, in natural farming, he says that space and depth for planting coffee and

other crop trees do not require a certain space and depth. Accordingly, the nutrients are found on the top most part of the soil thus the roots will compete nutrients on this part. As such, there is no need to follow a certain depth for planting crops. Every now and then, he just adds soil or mulch to cover the roots. For cases that the crops will be planted in dug parts, there is a need to supplement with fertilizers, and obviously to him, he applies compost as fertilizers.

He practice multiple cropping so that the crops will supplement each other, but be sure that they will not be overcrowded. For example, the alnus, trichantera and caliandra are nitrogen-fixing plants, the banana is a phosphorus producing crop, while the tiger grass and betel nuts are planted to supplement calcium needs within the area. In the starting years of his farm, he just planted different crops mainly to supplement nutrients



for each other. Fortunately, these crops eventually provided additional income to his family. The tiger grass are the source of his for broom production. Unexpectedly, the betel gave him bigger income for a certain time especially that betel nuts are in demand in the area and nearby locality.

Additionally, to his farming practices, he prefer to remove crops that do not allow other plants to survive in its surrounding. These plants only compete with nutrients but do not supplement the needed nutrients for other crops to grow. Further, he reiterated the common knowledge to the farmers that one will be able to know if the soil is good if there are six or more different kinds of plants (to include weeds) living.

Getting older in number, still, Ashley is active in his farm activities. Definitely, he can now enjoy the fruits of his labors and

take a break from farming – because his children; two of which are now working while the other is still studying. He chose to do farming until these days and continue advocate sustainable farming thru the REAPER's farm.

Ashley, recalling his past experiences, now can also laugh while sharing his story. If possible, he doesn't want to remember that night, yet he needs to because that event served as the major turning point of his life. Lastly, he says, God will able to restore what you have lost but chose to commit your thoughts to Him. (JSSagpa-ey)





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