



ATI-CAR Training and Extension

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Health Over Penny

Journeying the Path from a Risky Livelihood
to a Life-Giving Venture



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WEAVERS is the official semestral publication of the Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Training Institute-Regional Training Center-Cordillera Administrative Region (ATI-RTC-CAR).

This publication contains articles on the latest news relating to or about the training activities, technologies, updates, and success stories of the Institute and its clients.

WEAVERS welcomes comments and suggestions from readers.

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WEAVING THE DA'S 2021 Extension Interventions in CAR through Multi-Level Harmonization

"Complementation not competition", this has been the resounding slogan of both the DA-Agricultural Training Institute Regional Training Center (DA-ATI-RTC-CAR) and the DA-RFO-CAR in the planning and implementation of trainings and extension services in the Cordillera Administrative Region. Through the years, the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR and the DA-RFO-CAR jointly conduct commodity banner program harmonization meetings and consultative activities with stakeholders to ensure that this complementation is fulfilled and sustained.

This partnership of both Offices grew further this CY 2021 considering the

impending implementation of the Mandanas Ruling by 2022. Thus, for this year, the DA-RFO-CAR and DA-ATI-RTC-CAR went through multi-level consultations between and among stakeholders, giving emphasis on further preparing the Local Government Units in the delivery of direct extension services to farmers in their respective provinces and municipalities. This year's multi-level consultation aims at enabling the LGU agriculture offices to co-implement the identified/indicated training for farmers under the banner/priority programs including some extension interventions of the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR and the DA-RFO-CAR.

An online meeting of banner commodity focal persons of the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR and the DA-RFO-CAR on February 10, 2021 became the seedbed of this initiative. This activity was supposed to be part of the regular annual harmonization meeting between the two offices. However, current developments such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Mandanas Ruling led the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR and the DA-RFO-CAR banner commodities to aim for a more cohesive delivery of extension services with the LGUs taking the bigger role during implementation.



This jumpstarted the series of focal-to-focal harmonization meetings of each banner program to reconcile their respective ESETS for CY 2021 not just within their respective banner programs but also in conjunction with other banner programs and other support interventions. Said meeting were as follows: Rice Program on February 15, 2021; Corn, RBO, and Regular Programs on February 16, 2021; HVCDP on February 17, 2021; and Information Services on March 1, 2021. Other programs

needing further inputs from their counterparts at the LGU level also held online meetings as follows: 4-H program on February 17, 2021; RBO program on February 18, 2021; and livestock program on February 24, 2021.

As an output of these meetings, focal persons came up with synchronized set of activities and interventions ready to be presented to the partner LGUs. Moreover, commodity banner programs of the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR and the DA-RFO-CAR with their LGU counterparts also finalized the schedules of activities for CY 2021; presented

and validated training needs survey/ assessment results and accomplishment for CY 2020.

After sorting out issues and concerns within the level of the banner programs, the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR and DA-RFO-CAR convened on February 23, 2021 for a second meeting which facilitated the presentation, review, inputting and finalization of the consolidated 2021 ESETS ready for a unified plenary presentation with the LGU partners.

Finally, as an offshoot of the series of harmonization meetings, the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR and DA-RFO-CAR called for a harmonization meeting with partner LGUs on March 9 to 11, 2021. During this activity, the harmonized training and extensions services for CY 2021 and 2022 aligned with the

program thrusts and priorities of the DA, were presented to the LGUs. The meeting was conducted online with the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR as lead facilitator. The provinces were clustered for a more seamless delivery and interaction. These clusters and the schedules were as follows:

- Cluster 1 – Abra, Baguio, Benguet (March 9, 2021);
- Cluster 2 – Ifugao and Mt. Province (March 10, 2021); and
- Cluster 3 – Apayao and Kalinga (March 11, 2021).

The provincial agriculturists, municipal agriculturists, municipal agricultural officers, and focal persons of the concerned banner programs at the LGUs participated in the meeting. The said activity also served as venue for the

DA-RFO-CAR and the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR to provide program updates and gather feedbacks as additional inputs in the delivery of extension interventions with the LGUs. As a result, the joint multi-level DA-RFO, DA-ATI-RTC-CAR, and LGU commodity banner programs came up with a harmonized ESETS for 2021 with the LGUs as lead implementer and the DA-RFO-CAR and the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR taking the backstage as support system.

The DA-ATI-RTC-CAR would like to sustain this effort; among others, it avoided duplication of interventions to clients, resources are maximized, it identified areas of convergence, developed efficient and harmonious relationships among partners, and it provided timely feedback from partners for possible consideration in future undertakings. (JSSagpa-ey/ APVelasco)



Trainees to trainers: LSA operators, reps undergo TOT

In continuous effort to help farmers improve their competitiveness, the fifth batch of the Training of Trainers (TOT) on Production of High-Quality Inbred Rice and Seeds, and Farm Mechanization in Cordillera was completed with a total of 25 new trained trainers. This 12-day capability building programmed under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund-Rice Extension Services Program (RCEF-RESP) was held at the Palaisdaan Hotel and Restaurant, Bagabag, Nueva Vizcaya on June 21-July 3, 2021.

The participants comprised two Learning Site for Agriculture (LSA) operators, 22 LSA representatives, and one TESDA representative. These individuals are expected to serve as trainers and facilitators of

the RCEF-Farmers Field School (FFS) designed to train farmers on the most current rice farming system.

The said TOT was focused on the concept and principles of the PalayCheck System. Topics on transformational leadership; basic operations of selected rice farm machineries; seed testing standards and procedures; farm planning and record keeping; and basic financial literacy among others were also included.

Moreover, the lecture-discussions were complemented with various hands-on activities such as the Agro-Ecosystem Analysis (AESA); grain yield determination through



crop cut and yield components; and farm machinery operations. The participants were further trained to become effective speakers through the micro-teaching. All presenters were collectively critiqued in terms of their communication skills, visual presentation and mastery of topic.

During the graduation, DA-ATI-RTC-CAR OIC-Training Center Director Charlie Sagudan challenged the participants to take on the responsibility of cascading the new technologies acquired to the farmers. "Through everyone's effort, we could help them improve their productivity and profitability and contribute to the attainment of a rice-secure Philippines," he added.

Anthony Baguilat, representative of the Lobong-Marcela Integrated Farm, then encouraged his co-participants to assume the responsibility. "Through this training, I developed a deeper appreciation of rice farming. Let us help other farmers shift from their old ways of farming to the recommended rice production practices we have learned so that they can also achieve higher production. I hope that we do our part as trained trainers," he said.

As of writing, the five batches of TOTs conducted in CAR since the RCEF implementation yielded a total of 139 trainers trained. Of the number, 73 are from Kalinga and 66 are from Ifugao. (DAESteban)



DA-ATI-CAR's Trainings on Fruit and Vegetable Processing, Preservation and Packaging with GMP Goes Online

Overcoming COVID-19 related restrictions and challenges and the limited internet connectivity among participants, the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR pushed through with its implementation of various extension interventions such as trainings on food processing and preservation for Rural Based Organizations (RBO). Said trainings were conducted online on May 5-7, 2021 and June 23-25, 2021 catering 44 participants from the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR).



The limited movement of people in compliance with COVID-19 related health protocols and guidelines became one of the factors leading to the oversupply of local agricultural produce in a certain community and the shortage or lack of supply of food products coming outside of said community. This scenario became evident specially during the earlier parts of the COVID-19 lockdowns, specifically fruits and vegetables produced in CAR. It is during these situations that innovations, such as food processing and preservation, become vital for families and communities.

While trainings on food processing and preservation has long been a part of the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR's training interventions under the RBO Program, the effects of the

COVID-19 pandemic gave RBOs a higher level of interest on these trainings. Banking from the increased demand for trainings on food processing and preservation among RBOs, the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR pushed through with the trainings using alternative means such as online learning platforms.

During the training it was pointed out that processing and preservation of fruits and vegetables can help provide additional source of food for farming households. Moreover, skillful execution, mastery and the sustained practice of food preservation can help address the issue of oversupply or lack of supply of fruits and vegetables in a community. Also, this can be an added income or livelihood to farming families, RBOs, and the community as a whole.

Aside from food processing and preservation, the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR also injected in the training the Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) standards towards food safety. GMP is a quality assurance system aimed at ensuring that products are consistently manufactured, packed, repacked or held to quality standards appropriate for the intended use.

Thus, both of the trainings conducted jumpstarted from the topic on GMP with food processing and preservation, packaging, and labelling and costing following through. Another highlight of the activities are the demonstrations on fruits and vegetable processing and

preservation specifically salting and brining, pickling, drying, sugar concentrate, and fermentation. Actual demonstration on fruits and vegetable processing and preservation were shown through pre-recorded video presentations. These pre-recorded materials aim to make the activity more facilitative and to accommodate internet connectivity issues as the pre-recorded demonstrations can be sent online to the participants. They can access these materials later when their internet connection is more stable.

Said demonstration material covered pickled cabbage, Chinese cabbage kimchi, chili paste, home made fruit cocktail,

lemon preserve, mango kimchi, pickled mango and turnips, pineapple-papaya marmalade, strawberry jam, and strawberry preserve. The training also shared the procedures in making some of the indigenous food products in CAR such as buko and sabeng. Buko is made from camote tubers which were chipped, dried, and pulverized. The powder is then wrapped in banana leaves and then boiled or steamed. Sabeng, on the other hand, is a type of vinegar obtained from fermenting the broth of boiled camote tubers.

Finally, after listening to the lecture and watching the video presentations, participants went on to perform their return demonstrations. They were also requested to record their return demonstration in a video format and upload it online for the training management and other participants to see. All 44 participants were able to do their return demonstration and uploaded their videos online. (APVelasco/BLBuli-e)



Health Over Penny

Journeying the Path from a Risky Livelihood to a Life-Giving Venture: The Story of Felix Tan

Growing up in the highly urbanized and mostly congested city of Manila, Felix a city boy had practically no idea of farming. His family's source of income at that time was T-shirt printing. In the course of their printing business, he observed that the paints they used are very toxic posing a health risk to him and his family.

This risk which they face daily ignited the interest of Mr. Felix alternative medicine through herbal plant production and utilization. His first investment in this newly found endeavor is the accumulation of essential knowledge and skills thus, he took the initiative of doing thorough researches and attended various related trainings.

His growing curiosity and interest in alternative medicine introduced him to organic agriculture. This system, he believes, is the answer to improving their health because its products are safe and healthy. He then started to put into action his dream to provide safe and healthy food for his family. His first move was to secure a suitable area for his farm. He found and later bought a piece of land, with an area of about a hectare, at Pinsao, Baguio City.

Like any undertaking, there are challenges this city man has to overcome as he begins his journey. Even the land where his farm is located has a story of its own. It used to be a chayote farm and later remained idle for several years after Mr. Felix purchased it. The land's idleness attracted a group of squatters who, after a prolonged stay, even declared the land as their own. To make matters worse, the said group even enticed other people to join. This threat then came to his knowledge when his future mother-in-law cautioned him that the squatters were planning to take their claim to the land and are set to invade it.

Anticipating the incident, Mr. Felix moved ahead and asked help from the authorities. During the day of the invasion, the squatters marched towards the area and to their surprise, security guards and law enforcers were already stationed at the possible entry points. Eventually, the squatters gave up but Mr. Felix remained

anxious about the situation. He then hired a security guard for a year. Unfortunately, the security guard engaged in gambling leaving the land unattended. Mr. Felix realized that he is just paying the guard for nothing as there was no return on investment for almost a year.

It was at this point that his interest on organic farming began to finally bud and grow. He jumpstarted organic farming in 2006 turning his idle lot into his dream farm. Having his mind fixed at starting purely organic, only 1,500 square meters of the area was initially developed since he plans to expand the production gradually. Consequently, he brought his family and lived in Baguio City up to this date.

Having limited knowledge and practical skills on organic farming, he befriended nearby organic farmers with advanced

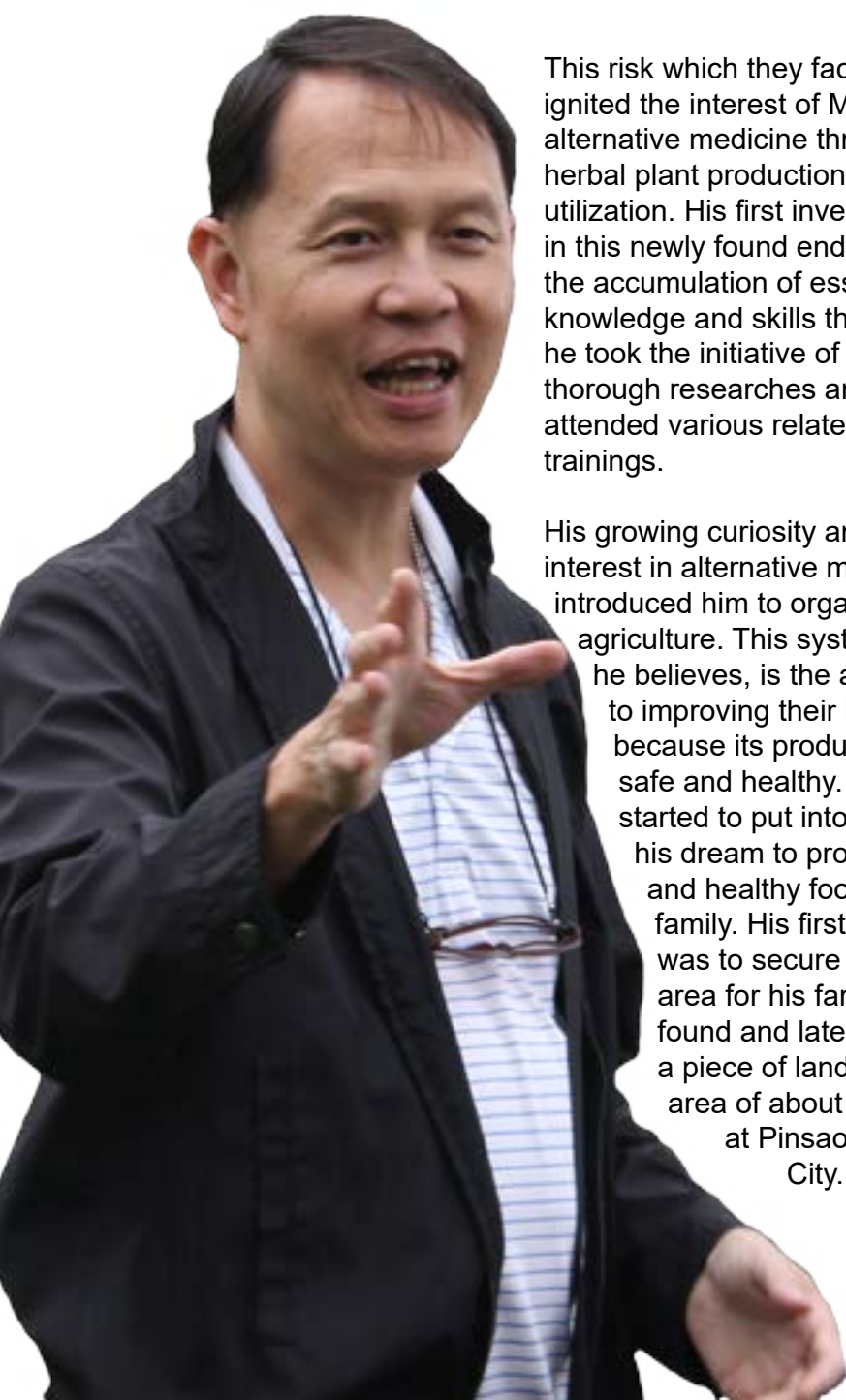
farming practices. He aimed at adopting their practices since he believes that their practices are seasoned and well-adopted to the environmental condition of his new home. Moreover, with his initial researches on alternative medicine, he integrated herbal plants into his newly established farm. All of these labors are worth it as he sees his family the first beneficiary of the farm produce.

Aside from personal and family reasons, Mr. Felix remained true to his passion for alternative medicine using herbs. He envisions his farm as a source of medicinal herbs to be used as medicine for cancer patients. It is for this reason that he dubbed the crops planted in his farm "life-giver plants" thus the farm name "Garden of Life".

After years of patience and persistent labor, Mr. Felix obtained a third-party

certification as an organic agriculture farm from the Organic Certification Center of the Philippines (OCCP) through a group certification under the La Trinidad Organic Practitioners (LATOP) Multi-Purpose Cooperative. LATOP is the first organic agriculture farmers' group in the Cordillera Administrative Region founded by pioneers of organic farming in Benguet with Mr. Felix as one of its founding members. In 2012, the Learning Site for Agriculture- extension modality of the ATI was institutionalized. Garden of Life was then certified as one of the pioneering learning sites on organic agriculture in CAR.

Part of his organic farming and health advocacy is the promotion of raw-food diet which according to him is way better than processed or cooked food diet. Believing in the principle that only life



begets life, he is convinced that consuming raw vegetables, means eating “living food.” He always emphasizes in his lectures and farm briefings that food, particularly vegetables, cooked at 40 degrees Celsius and up is considered dead food due to the breaking down of enzymes at high temperature. However, he clarified that this does not necessarily regard cooked food as a poor source of nutrition rather it lacks the enzymes that cancer patients need so badly. He cited the case of the spinach, which is one of the vegetables planted in his garden. He explained that spinach is better eaten raw because cooking it produces a chemical compound called oxalates that hinders the absorption of calcium in the body.

Consistent with his advocacy, for alternative medicine, he integrated medicinal herbs and culinary plants along with vegetables. Dora for example is used as supplementary food for liver patients. Wheatgrass is also one of his farm’s signature plant because it is considered a

superfood, a detoxifier, and is also a good source of protein. Moreover, its pH level is within the alkaline range thus it is highly recommended for cancer patients since cancer cells thrive better in an acidic environment and eating alkaline-based foods will help hinder the growth of cancer cells.

His persistence in practicing and advocating organic agriculture bridged him to various partnerships with several government agencies like the Municipal Agriculture Office of La Trinidad, Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Training Institute, Benguet State University, Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office Cordillera Administrative Region, and private organic farms. Out of these partnerships he was able to gather support, in various forms, triangulating the development of the Garden of Life.

Garden of Life, as an organic agriculture learning site, practices OA technologies that are worth emulating. Before becoming an LSA,

there are already pre-existing OA technologies that he practices in the farm. In the pre-production phase, he produces his own seeds and employs seed treatment. He then uses seedling trays and sows 1 to 2 seeds per hole giving allowance for seeds which will not sprout or seedlings will not eventually grow. Some of the crops are also directly planted in the soil.

While farming, Mr. Felix is also open to adopting new OA technologies. Composting is one of these technologies which he believes as the heart of organic agriculture. It is bringing back what belongs to the farm and while producing it may be a tedious task, he firmly believes that it is still the safest input in his farm. He said that compost provides the bulk of the macro-elements needed by the plants. In addition to fertilizer, compost is also applied as mulch to his crops during vegetative stage. He also employs the double dig trench by digging a one-foot deep trench and putting layers of compost which in turn serves as the plant bed for the crops. He does this once a year before

he starts cultivating the plant boxes and planting a new set of crops. Aside from compost, he also produces vermicompost which he mixes with the soil media for seedling production. Finally, charcoal is also added as a farm input because not all minerals are found in his farm. The introduction of charcoal in his farm reveals a better outcome and yield.

Mr. Felix also uses bricks to create plant boxes that contain the topsoil mixed with organic compost and vermicompost. The topsoil from the pathways is scraped off and is then added in the plant beds. The pathway is now unfavorable for any plant, including weeds, to grow. This has been his practice to control the growth of weeds in the production area. The bricks also serve as a dwelling place for farm lizards which serve as natural pest control.

His production practices also include crop rotation and companion planting. He believes that in organic agriculture, diverse crops are encouraged to be intercropped. In practicing this, he observed that some crops do not get along with other crops as some disturb or distress the growth of other crops. There are also crops like herbs that ward off insects of other crops. Benchmarking from these lessons and experiences, the farm was able to program what crops are to be planted in a year. This has been his practice and serves



as one of the standard farm operations. The farmworkers are made aware of these standards hence, they work with minimal supervision.

Aside from crops, he discovered that rabbit production is more feasible and brings more profit. Aside from the health benefits of its meat product, he considers the ease of its management. Feeds for the rabbits are readily available in the farm like native forages. He believes that rabbits can be organically raised as their food is available within the farm thus, there is need for commercial feeds. He even recommends “lapan” (rabbit meat) as an alternative meat diet for cancer patients. His family is consuming a rabbit per week as they prefer lapan over chicken meat.

He added that rabbit manure is categorized as cold manure. Therefore, it may be applied directly as fertilizer but under the Philippine National Standards for organic agriculture, it has to be composted before

application, thus he has to stick to said standards. After several years of raising rabbits, he learned by himself various behaviors of the stocks. He isolates pregnant rabbits and those who have just given birth because they are so sensitive to noise which can cause them stress. A stressed doe can act cannibalistically and eat its bunnies.

Mr. Felix believes that, “learning respects no one, not age nor timing.” While he is implementing the pre-existing and adopted technologies, he realized that OA technologies continue to emerge. This fueled more his interest to further improve his production practices and continued attending training and other capacity-building activities related to organic agriculture. Thus, his attendance to trainings and seminars became the technology adoption-diffusion mechanism observed in his OA journey. He even watches agricultural vlogs on organic agriculture farming practices locally and internationally. If he

finds any problem in the course of his farm operations, he also consults with an advanced OA practitioner.

His farm workers are a practical example of the fruits of his OA advocacy. The farmworkers used to be conventional cut flower producers but when they were engaged in organic farming at the Garden of Life, they also adopted some principles they learned in the farm. Hence, they are grateful because their experiences from the farm made them start and maintain a healthier lifestyle. Aside from farming technologies and practices, he was also able to share to his farmworkers one of his guiding principle in farming which is “if a farmer is financially motivated in farming, he will tend to cheat in the future.”

He also considers the support from his family and the different organizations and government agencies as facilitating factors in the implementation of the LSA as an extension modality. His family is very supportive of him in his organic agriculture endeavors. His family members

help him in packaging the vegetables harvested from the farm. His children are also delivering the products directly to the clients within Baguio City. He also recognizes the financial and technical supports from DA-ATI and LGU La Trinidad that helped in the development of the farm.

Mr. Felix also encountered challenges in his farm operations. One of which is related to human resource management. He once hired a fresh graduate and licensed agriculturist but to his surprise, the agriculturist does not follow the OA standards. Other farmworkers are difficult to convince towards improving and changing their conventional farming practices towards organic farming. As a measure, he patiently guided the farmworkers in the implementation of the principles of organic agriculture. He works with his farmworkers until he had the peace of mind that they are applying what is imparted to them. However, another

problem arose when the farmworkers have imbibed the principle of organic farming. They irregularly report to the farm as they also started their small-scale organic production in their own farms. Since they have built interest in OA farming, he agreed with the farmworkers that they will work on their farms after their working hours at the Garden of Life.

Despite Mr. Felix’s experiences, with all the ups and downs, alongside organic agriculture farming, he continues to be an advocate of safe and healthy food to his family, his farm workers, and fellow farmers. He managed to maintain being a learning site for five years. With his advocacy to expand his influence on other people, he decided to renew his certification as a learning site in

2020 and was granted another five years. Since Mr. Felix focuses on health and nutrition, he steadily dwells on his belief that feeding the soil with full-packed nutrients will in return feed the plants. Crops grown with full-packed nutrients will eventually give consumers the full-packed nutrients they need as they eat safe and living food. All of these in his heart and mind, Mr. Felix and his Garden of Life continues to provide extension services by diffusing practical OA technologies and providing farm advisory services to interested individuals. (JBDizon)



All Organic to the Top:

ALTOPA's Organic

Journey towards Farm Sustainability and Food Secured Community

Nestled at the eastern valley walls of La Trinidad in the province of Benguet, Barangay Ambiong is home to a rapidly spreading community venture with the Ambiong La Trinidad Organic Practitioners Association (ALTOPA) as its outbreak origin. Barangay Ambiong finds a unique feature in its geography for being located at the outskirts of La Trinidad but bordering the City of Baguio. Thus, the barangay have to thread through the tricky balancing act of adopting to a fast paced urbanization, and preserving its treasured rural assets, one of which, is its agriculture sector.

Responding to this challenge, the idea of sustainable farming and healthy living, through organic agriculture, in the face of a highly infectious urbanization became ALTOPA's top goal. Formally established on May 10, 2012, ALTOPA started with just a handful of organic farming enthusiasts, there were only 15 of them at that time. Through thick and thin the organization persisted and were able to grow their numbers with 32 strong and active members at present from barangay Ambiong.

ALTOPA was also able to secure third party organic agriculture certificates for most of its members. In terms of market and product outlets, the organization as a whole stayed true to its call to produce safe, quality, and healthy food for the community. Moreover, it tapped its fellow organic agriculture groups in the locality such as the La Trinidad Organic Practitioners (LaTOP) Multi-Purpose Cooperative and the La Organica as partners in marketing their products. Aside from highland vegetables such as pechay, lettuce, cherry tomato, beans, and others, ALTOPA members also produce lowland vegetables such eggplant, and ampalaya.

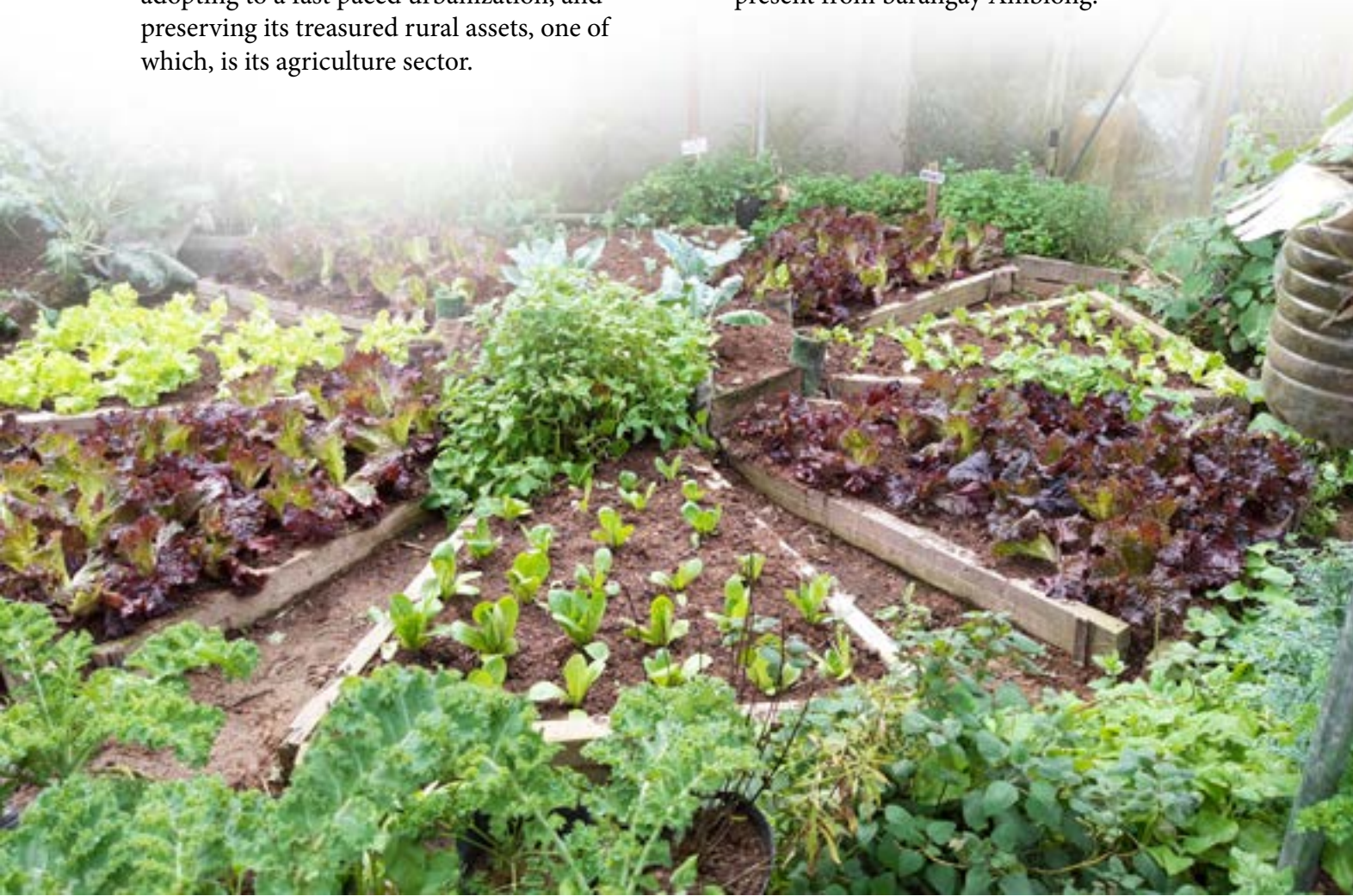
While ALTOPA has been successful in establishing and expanding its activities at present, it remains rooted on the lessons it harvested and kept through the years. Mr. Anthony Anniban, one of ALTOPA's founding members

and who is currently the Barangay Chairman of Ambiong, recalled how they started. He noted "we attended a lot of trainings before, my first training with the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR was way back in 1998, and from then on we kept attending any farming related training." Aside from being a community leader, Mr. Anniban sustains his farm through the production of various vegetables including chia seeds, which is one of his specialized products. Moreover, he produces and sells compost-based organic fertilizers and other related organic agriculture inputs such as concoctions.

Ms. Agustina Paguiyen, ALTOPA's current chairperson, also recalled how they started to institutionalize their organization's organic farming undertaking. Just a year after their organization's official government recognition, ALTOPA went through the formation of their Internal Control System

(ICS) under the guidance of the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR. She shared their challenging experience in crafting their internal rules and standards based on the Philippine National Standard for Organic Agriculture. After a lot of lengthy discussions and series of field validations, ALTOPA was able to finally complete its ICS becoming one of the first organic agriculture farmers organization do so in CAR.

ALTOPA also recognized its partnership with government agencies from its beginning until the present. Ms. Paguiyen noted their partnership with the Ambiong Barangay Local Government Unit, the Municipal Agriculture Office of the Municipal Local Government Unit (MLGU) of La Trinidad, the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office-CAR (DA-RFO-CAR), the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR, and other government and private



organizations. These partnership, as she describes it, were bridges towards the sustainability of their organization.

The ALTOPA and the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR, undertook another partnership in 2018 when the Municipal Agriculture Office of the MLGU La Trinidad recommended ALTOPA as a recipient of the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR's Community Urban Garden

Project. The said Project aims to establish urban agriculture model farms (UAMF) which will serve as a showcase for urban dwellers to increase their capabilities and capacities on urban and home gardening both as an additional source of food and income. ALTOPA combined the organic agriculture technologies it adopted and developed in their community with the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR's UAMF production support, and further capability building to sustain the said initiative.

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic made its disastrous effect felt among many sectors including the farming industry. ALTOPA had its share in these struggles, but instead of succumbing, they made and found their way to sustain their organization and their farms. As the pandemic rages particularly during its onset in the locality, ALTOPA members, while acknowledging production and marketing challenges in the beginning, continued their farming activities with the aim of securing their home and community food sources.



These became another avenue for another partnership where ALTOPA members underwent trainings on urban agriculture with the DA-ATI-RTC-CAR. Thus, aside from vegetable gardens, potted vegetables and herbs are a common sight these days in barangay Ambiong.

Recognizing their potential as a showcase for urban agriculture the DA-CAR family, composed of the DA-RFO-CAR, DA-ATI-RTC-CAR, DA-Bureau of Plant Industry-Baguio National Crop Research and Production Support Center, and the DA-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-

CAR, tapped ALTOPA as the first recipient of the "adopt-a-town or barangay" program in CAR. The "Adopt-a-Town" Project is one of the DA's interventions under the Plant, Plant, Plant Program aimed at promoting food production in communities to enable them to produce their own food or at least portion of their food requirement especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amidst the high trust and regard attributed to their organization, ALTOPA still aims to further

develop their organization towards the fulfillment of their goals towards sustainable community self-reliance. Like their crops which are fertilized and enriched by their organic composts and concoctions, ALTOPA remains on top of its vision for a verdant community. That is, a healthy community nourished from its self-sustaining farms and food secure households. (APVelasco)







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