



Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO)
Social Development Week 2020 and 29TH General Assembly
Theme: Covid-19 Road to Recovery: Solutions from the Communities

SocDev e-Talk Session: **Food Security: Impacts and Innovations in the Time of Pandemic**

Date/Platform: **September 23, 2020, 2PM via Zoom and Facebook Page**

Organizers: **CODE-NGO and Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhiIDHARRA)**

A. Introduction or Rationale:

Ensuring food security has always been a struggle of the Philippine's agricultural sector. This could be attributed to a multitude of factors, from aging farmers, climate change, to conversion or agricultural lands to residential areas. This year, the agricultural sector is facing yet again another stumbling block in achieving food security — the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the pandemic unfolds, so does the crisis on food security. When the Philippine Government enforced a lockdown on the whole country disruptions on food supply chains were felt by our food producers. Farmers and fisherfolk have also faced large losses on their goods; transportation of goods were affected thus affecting the supply of fresh and nutritious food to households in the country.

According to UN FAO, the four pillars of food security are availability, access, stability and utilization. Availability and access become extremely important in the present context, however these two are the most challenging to achieve in this pandemic.

Given these difficulties, the Department of Agriculture together with various farmer organizations have established innovative ways to address these concerns and ensure that a food secure Philippines is possible despite the COVID-19 Pandemic.

This forum Food Security: Impacts & Innovations in Times of a Pandemic deep-dived into the impacts and effects of COVID-19 on food security in the Philippines , as well as the ways to innovate agricultural practices during a pandemic, and family farmers are coping with the current situation.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand COVID-19 impacts and effects on food security in the Philippines
2. Learn innovations in ensuring food security in times of pandemic
3. Understand how family farmers cope with the pandemic
4. Appreciate government initiative in COVID response in agriculture



B. Presentations and Speakers:

Title of Presentation	Speaker
Food Security: Impacts and Innovations in the Time of Pandemic	Alberto Aduna FAO Philippines
Vegies 4 Good	Atty. Aison Garcia Office of the Vice President
Bukluran Market	Timothy Salomon Bukluran
Farmer Experience	Ka Rene Cerilla PAKISAMA
Rebooting Agriculture	USec. Rodolfo Vicerra Department of Agriculture

C. Total number of participants: _____

D. Highlights of the Forum

- Food Security: Impacts and Innovations in the Time of Pandemic
Alberto Aduna, UN FAO Philippines

Mr. Aduna provided a brief description of FAO. FAO is a specialized technical agency of the United Nations that leads the international efforts to defeat hunger. It aims to support countries to achieve food security for all, eliminate all forms food insecurity and ensure that people have stable access to adequate and high-quality foods.

The government imposition of different community quarantines due to the COVID-19 pandemic has not only limited the movement and mobility of the people but also movement of goods, especially food. Given the archipelagic nature of the country, the food system faced a great challenge since this is the first time that we experienced this kind of emergency.

His presentation revolves around how the pandemic and quarantine restrictions affected the food system of the country in general. He also emphasized that FAO recognizes the four (4) dimensions of food security – (1) availability or enough food, (2) accessibility – both physical and financial, (3) utilization – how food is being handled, and (4) stability – how resilient is the food system and stable is the food supply. Based on the 4 dimensions, the pandemic has greatly affected the country’s food system.

COVID-19: Implications on food security, farming systems and food supply chain

- Food supply chain is a complex web of interactions and of actors. Food supply chain actors: producers, inputs, transportation, processing plants, shipping, etc.
- Crisis is straining food systems and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future.
- Food is available. However, quarantine-imposed challenges to moving food where they are most needed.

Impacts of the COVID-19 on Supply and Demand



Mr.

Aduna

presentations is based on the studies of the technical experts of FAO headquarters and although it has a global perspective but it can be applicable to the country.

Supply	Demand
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food supply chains disrupted. • Processors don't receive timely and adequate inputs. • Less available quality perishables, especially for nutritious items like fresh fruits and vegetables, and dairy products. • Transport restrictions and quarantine measures impeded farmers' access to input and output markets, curbing productive capacities and denying points of sale for produce. • Product flow problems due to disconnect between national and local government policy (province, municipality, barangays). • Shortages of labour disrupt production and processing of food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food demand is generally inelastic and effect on overall consumption likely limited, although dietary patterns may alter. • Aversion behaviour (fear of contagion) exacerbate effect on food consumption through reduced visits to food markets; related to avoidance of some perishables. • Shift in purchasing modalities: lower restaurant traffic, increased e-commerce deliveries, and rise in consumption at home. • Challenges encountered in accessing nutritious food due to hampered livelihoods and incomes.

Long term Challenges Observed on Food Security Before COVID-19

Mr. Aduna shared that the country is already confronting serious short-term and long-term challenges. Despite these weaknesses, outlook was favorable leading up to COVID-19.

- Weak growth, low income of producers
- Declining labor supply
- Lack of inputs and finance – maybe available but not freely access by small farmers and fisherfolks
- High logistics cost, poor logistics infrastructure
- Disconnect between smallholders/SFF from value chain – e-commerce and digital innovations
- High cost of nutritious food
- Deteriorating resource basis, vulnerability to environmental stress
- Dependence on concentrated distribution points (urban centers)

Impact on agricultural livelihoods

- Reduced productive capacities especially of smallholders.
- Unemployment and underemployment for the sector.
- The livelihoods of especially the self-employed and wage workers are at risk.
- The reduction in wage employment opportunities risks limiting the ability of small-scale producers to diversify their incomes. Since the lockdowns and restrictions overlap with the planting and harvesting periods, a huge opportunity to complement household income for the farmer-households has been a challenge.



Rapid

Assessment Results

A study conducted by FAO together with IFAD.

- The COVID-19 pandemic hit an agri-food system already confronting serious short-term and long-term challenges.
- After an initial period of confusion, supply chain disruptions had been mostly addressed, partly due to resiliency measures already in place.
- The crisis has led to a limited market demand.
- Crisis response measures tend to meet the challenge of supply disruptions, but not those on the demand side.

NEDA – We Heal as One Report

Disruption of Agricultural Activity: 14%

- Losses incurred during the ECQ: 35%
- HVC farming: PHP 36.82 Million
- Rice farming: PHP18.63 million
- Corn farming: PHP18.63 million
- Livestock and Poultry Raising: PHP24.48 million
- Fisheries: PHP8.78 million

It is good to note that the Government implemented response measures to maintain agricultural supply chains and strengthen the market linkages for local producers, while promoting decent work. And also foster the expansion of social protection coverage.

Some Initiatives Noted from Government & Civil Society Organizations to Ensure Food Security

Government

- Food relief initiatives (CSOs also have their own food relief drives).
- Guidelines on health and safety of farmers, fisherfolk and other frontliners in the food value chain.
- Food supply chain responses (some private agencies have also started initiatives connecting farmers to consumers).
- Initiatives in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

FAO

- Rapid remote assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on food systems/markets.
- Emergency cash transfers.
- Technical support to DA to improve efficiency of service delivery.
- Inclusion of food security and agriculture lens in the humanitarian response plan.
- Information dissemination.

Food systems in the “new normal”

Mr. Aduna shared that food supply chains will likely need to have fewer links in them than they used to in the past. The more links you have the more places things can be cut off.

There is a need to re-orient and transform the food system to be more resilient and sustainable. FAO is also actively working on how the food systems should transform to be able to cope with pandemics like COVID-19 but also to accelerate the progress of SDG2 and 1 but assuring at the same time all trade-offs on nature are minimized.



supply chain

long term can be implemented

- More storage will be needed, especially for perishable goods.
- Food supply chain may also have fewer links in the future. It should be more flexible.
- Prioritize logistics to maintain and increase agricultural production and market access.
- Promote IT applications and social media as innovative ways to coordinate supplies of fresh produce from farm to consumers (dispersed distribution system).
- Strengthen efforts to improve food safety along agri-food chains.

will change. Incorporating social distancing in the

• Food

Ensuring sustainable food systems and increasing resilience of agricultural livelihoods

- Transformation towards dispersed food distribution: Shift to e-commerce solutions for the marketing of food producers; ensure an enabling business climate for the e-commerce revolution.
- Ensuring inclusion of SFF in the e-commerce revolution: Apply policy actions to prevent the emergence of another digital divide and exacerbate already deep inequities; Engagement, capacity building, and empowerment of formal organizations of SFF
- A strong partnership between public and private sector action: with a larger role of the public sector in the initial phase. Public sector programs (e.g., input and credit support) must have a phase-out stage as recovery progresses.
- **Quality data planning:** the need for quality planning is highly dependent on updated, disaggregated, and reliable data. Planning should also be directed to anticipate possible unintended consequences of public sector action such as crowding out of counterpart initiatives in the private and SFF sector.
- **Preparations for the next crisis**
 - *Advance monitoring for disaster preparedness.*
 - *Feedback and information mechanism*
 - *Institutionalized linkages between national and local governments*
 - *Fast-track reforms of the extension system*
 - *Invest in nutrition-sensitive agriculture programs.*
- Have business continuity plans.
- Adopt evidence-based planning such as Early Warning Systems.
- Encourage multi-stakeholder collaboration and investments
- Keep international trade open and take measures that protect the food supply chain.
- Focus on the needs of the most vulnerable and scale up social protection programs.
- Keep domestic food supply value chains alive and functioning. Engage the private sector in the food supply value chains.
- Keep alive agricultural supply chains by any means compatible with health safety protocols.
- Maintain agricultural activities. Enhance local crop diversification and mechanized farming.
- Innovate to strengthen production, marketing, and other components of the supply chain.
- Recognize the food heroes – Buy local food to support their livelihoods in these difficult times.
- Share excess food or support the food banks, community groups or charities that provide free food to vulnerable people.
- Urban/Peri-Urban agriculture or backyard farming.
- Responsible food purchase behavior and reducing food waste.
- Do not deny nutrition to yourself or your families. It is important to keep healthy.



Mr. Aduna further encouraged the participants to start within oneself and family. He suggested the following:

- Keep in mind that the people who produce your food, like smallholder farmers and fishers, and those that bring it to market and the staff at markets and supermarkets are our food heroes during this pandemic.
- Buy food from local small farmers, fisherfolk, small businesses and shops to support their livelihoods in these difficult times.
- Share your excess food or support the food banks, community groups or charities that provide free food to vulnerable people.

▪ **Vegies 4 Good Initiative**

Atty. Aison Garcia, Office of the President

Atty. Aison presented the Vegies 4 Good as one of the initiatives undertaken by the Office of the Vice President to address the COVID-19 pandemic. He said that it is related to FAO's presentation on improving food security in poor communities and sustainability of the producers of the food.

The initiative started when a mother of six (6) named Dorina from Masinag, Antipolo availed of the free transportation provided by the OVP to frontliners. Dorina claimed that she did not received any assistance from the LGU from where is currently residing since she is not a registered voter of that community. She was displaced because her family is living near the riverbank.

Upon hearing Dorina's story, the OVP provided rice and food assistance to her family but learned that there are more families living where Dorina's family live. It was then that they realize that food relief is not sustainable and must think of a way to help poor communities more sustainably.

On another hand, a group of Dumagat farmers contacted the OVP to help them in marketing their produce because of the lockdowns. The OVP provided logistical support for the products of the Dumagat community and was brought to Marikina. From there, the OVP organized weekly village market using the covered courts in partnership with the homeowner's association sold at a cheaper price. Unsold vegetables and fruits were distributed to the beggars on the streets to avoid food wastage.

Because of the positive feedback from the community, the OVP decided to expand the initiative through the use of social media to reach more communities. Dorina and some mothers were employed as vegetable sorters while fathers and unemployed drivers (jeepney, tricycle drivers) even construction workers deliver the purchased fruits and vegetables.

Emerging impacts observed:

- Employment and income to unemployed due to COVID (10 nanays, 7 tatays, 3 OSYs)
- Affordable and nutritious food at the community
- Dumagats gained income from the initiative – gross sales of 1M
- Dumagats were also able to provide relief assistance (rice, salt, oil, flour) to their respective community from the income earned

Ways forward

- Expansion to posh villages and condo markets
- Development and marketing of Anti-COVID packs (ginger, coconut, lemon, etc.)
- Value adding thru simple processing for other products



- V4G is all about food security. Making sure there is accessibility, sustainability and empowerment among communities being assisted.

▪ **Bukluran Market**

Timothy Salomon, Bukluran ng mga Katutubo para sa Pangangalaga ng Kalikasan

The Philippine Indigenous Peoples Community Conserved Territories and Areas Consortium or Bukluran is a national network of indigenous people's organizations combining indigenous knowledge and science technology to defend their sacred territories against threats to rights and nature.

Mr. Salomon presented that 80% biodiversity areas and 60% of forests coincide with ancestral domains. Bukluran was able to establish 16 Indigenous Communities Conserved Areas (ICCA) since 2012. Bukluran extends mapping of sacred lands services, resource inventory and other support services such as livelihood.

He also reported that they measure carbon absorption of these areas is at 10.5 million tons of carbon.

Bukluran Market

- response to economic threats during the time of pandemic
- Links were cut with the market because of the lockdown
- Volume of sales decreased – from sale of 150 kls of avocado to 50 kls
- Suffered plummeting prices – Php 2 for small, Php 4 for medium and Php 7 for large coconuts that could not cover the logistical requirements of transporting produce
- IP farmers takes loan
- Tempted to sell land – prohibited by the law; learning for Bukluran is that it is not enough to establish ICCA but address the problem of poverty.

Bukluran realized to the need of helping the communities deal with poverty. And there is great connection of the addressing poverty in the protection of indigenous lands.

Bukluran Market started with the story of the Mangyans. The Mangyan was ravaged by two typhoons, eruption of Taal volcano, COVID-19 and local conflicts. Bukluran was able to distribute rice and seeds. But was not enough since they were only able to cover 2 communities out of the 5 communities that were affected.

Bukluran shifted to marketing after discovering that the Mangyans had a surplus supply of avocados. In partnership with Cordillera Landing on You, NTFP EP, MAD Market and DTI, Bukluran Market was able to sell 1,400 kgs in two weeks.

The expansion of the Bukluran Market came upon the realization that there are other products from other ICCAs. All profits from the Market is used for the purchase of the distance learning requirements of the 200 IP scholars.

Facilitating factors for Bukluran Market Success

- IP stories included in the products
- Links with cooperatives and other organizations



Challenges:

- Hauling – supply was affected because of logistics problems
- Product handling – 75kls lost of products (avocados) due to improper handling
- Online sales decreased because in the ease of mobility
- Harvest of produce without prior confirmation of order

Next steps:

- Establishing a partnership with OVP for hauling of products
- Engage in live markets
- Ongoing formulation of an operations manual as reference materials for replicability
- Purchase of tablets for 6 Mangyan scholars and is for FGD
- Expand suppliers – Kalinga, Nueva Vizcaya, Antipolo
- Expansion of products – wines (arabica, strawberry)
- Conversation with funders
- Establishing IP registry
- Establish local social protection – crop insurance, Philhealth, etc.
- Promotion of cash vouchers for Market products

▪ **Effects & Impacts of COVID-19 to Farmers**

Ka Rene Cerilla, PAKISAMA

Ka Rene shared his experience prior, during and after the lockdown. He shared that he was in Metro Manila before the announced lockdown. Luckily, he was able to go home but was placed under strict quarantine together with his family. What kept him and his family going is that he was able to bond with his family, did some gardening and farming.

He also shared that food was available like banana, casava and vegetables. But still people are still looking for rice. That is why some were forced to harvest and mill their own rice produce for food.

Challenges met:

- Access to food and markets
- Realization of having a basic processing at the community level (basic bayuhan)
- Minimal observance of health protocols since it is a challenge to work with masks
- Marketing and hauling of farm produce
- Landless farmers experience hunger
- Families are forced to eat one product per day (e.g. banana or casava all day)
- Copra farmers experienced decreased income

Observed advantages of the lockdown:

- Bonding with the family and community
- Bayanihan – farmers were organized to work together thus no money/financial resources was used during harvesting
- Barter system – people were exchanging their food with other food products



Learnings/recommendations:

- Lessen the margin of profit of the middleman
- Policy support – passage of agrarian reform for farmers, same with the IP and fisherfolks agenda and advocacy.
- Passage of national land use act and stop the conversion of farmlands.
- No to commercial fishing in municipal waters
- Buy local – as result of their municipal LGU initiative which is bulk buying of farm produce (squash, rice, chicken) as food relief of the whole community. For example, the Brazil model of allocating 30% of its budget for bulk buying of farm produce to feed malnourished children
- Social amelioration aided the 4P's beneficiaries – was able to purchase 1 sack of rice from the assistance
- Shift to nutritious food from junk foods
- Encourage diversified farming

▪ **Rebooting Agriculture**

Usec. Rodolfo Vicerra, Department of Agriculture

Usec. Vicerra shared and recalled the study they conducted 3 years ago regarding the reach of DA in terms of programs for farmers and fisherfolks. He shared that in the study, they found out that the Department's programs only reach approximately 1M beneficiaries in contrast to the 10-11 M farmers and fisherfolks as per PSA data.

Farmers compete in times ani

Effects of COVID-19 (refer to slides)

- Pre-production
- Supply of inputs
- Production
- Transportation
- Processing
- Marketing

DA Initiatives

- Continuous and avoid disruption of food supply
- Task force to watch and guard the prices of basic food commodities in the market

Effects to Economy (refer to slides)

- Industry – decreased by 1/5
- Services – decreased by 1/6 output
- Agriculture – maintained at 1.6% performance

Usec. Vicerra shared DA's framework for socioeconomic recovery and resiliency during this pandemic – Survive, Reboot and Grow. The main objective of the framework are food production and food availability, accessibility, affordability, price stability, sustainability and food safety. He also puts emphasis on modernization and systems for production and consolidation.



He also discussed DA's program on Plant, Plant, Plant such as the

- Productivity Enhancement projects
- Social Protection & Amelioration Projects
- Income Enhancement
- Cash for Work

Key Programs and Projects of DA under Bayanihan 2

- Urban agriculture
- Inclusive markets
- Support to MSME
- Agro-industrial business corridors (medium – long term plan)
 - New Clark City Agro Industrial Hub FS 2020 that includes processing and packaging
- Farm & Fisheries Clustering and Consolidation F2C2 Program
 - Organizing of farmers/fishers with the help of professional farm managers
 - Organized value-chain approach
 - Potential for unified management of production activities

DA's current slogan – "Pataasin ang ani at palaguin ang kita ng mga magsasaka at mangingisda."

Open forum:

Question 1 from Registration: Are Credit facilities always available for farmers that has been affected by this pandemic?

Answer from USec. Vicerra

- DA's existing credit facility is thru the ACPC
- Landbank has a range of credit program for farmers and fishers but are discouraged of the requirements needed. He again emphasized the importance of organizing and consolidation of farmers

Question 2 from Deannie Ocampo: Ano po ang ibig sabihin ng "nutrition-sensitive agriculture"?

Answer from Mr. Aduna

- The conscious effort of the producers of considering the nutritional value and contribution of their products once consumed. It starts in planning their farm systems to the actual production process.

Question 3 from Dodo Macasaet: Paano planong gawin ng DA ang land consolidation? Sino o anong grupo ang mangunguna rito (agri business, corporations)?

Answer from USec. Vicerra

- DA emphasized that what they intend to consolidate is the production activities to achieve economies of scale.
- It is the locals who should take the lead in consolidating production activities. DA has budget to aid in the consolidation of these local organizations. F2C2 program also looks into the provision of financial aid to farmers while awaiting harvesting to avoid farmers to go into debts.



Question 4 from Registration: What policies are needed to be enacted, amended or improved in a post-pandemic period to ensure food security in the country?

Answers from

OVP

- Passage of NLUA to secure land for food production
- Immediate issuance of Notices of Coverage to ARBs,
- Access to capital, credit, storage facilities and logistics

Bukluran

- Passage of NLUA. Currently CLUP at the LGU is at 30% consequently no standards in the use of land, no baseline that paving way to ease in land conversion.
- Legislation on framework for agribusiness ventures agreements (AVA) – no monitoring of fairness in the arrangements between small farmers and corporations. Case in point in Mindanao, farmers are forced to enter into AVA for palm oil, banana, pineapple plantations after which if quotas are not reached, farmers are left to sell their land or in debt or they have no control over their lands. In AVA, farmers have bondage that equates to modern day slavery in agriculture sector
- Indigenous Communities Conserve Areas Bill – provides a legal system to recognize conserved areas of the indigenous peoples at par with the protected areas system of the government (NIPAS) and to incentivize the ICCAs

FAO

- Strengthen the extension system as this is the bloodline for farmers and fishers to understand DA strategies on organization/consolidation and shift from a producer to entrepreneur thinking, for commonality between all actors of the value-chain in the enterprise

PAKISAMA

- Passage of a legislation for the implementation of Coco Levy
- Passage of Magna Carta of Young Farmers
- Policies on the use of harmful chemicals (Glyphosate)
- Laws on watershed
- Implementation of IPRA law
- Devolution of DA

Question 5 from Registration: How do you foresee the landscape of the country's agri-food system post-pandemic?

Answers from:

PAKISAMA

- The State should ensure the availability of food in times of emergencies. Food is important and all stakeholders must work together to ensure that food is available and accessible.

Bukluran

- Post pandemic - save our environment, save our waters and save our forests. No land means no area for food production and should not be business as usual.

OVP

- Renewed realization of the country on the importance of farmers and resources must be allocated for the support of small farmers and fisher. People should be empowered to take on food security issues.



FAO

- Seen as a starting point to forge partnership between all stakeholders along the value chain and recognition of the big role of the government plays in food security

DA

- Go beyond the provision of relief, systematize and organization of farmers/fishers in the whole country. DA's program is pushing towards helping and caring for the welfare of the farmers and fishers.

E. Recommended Actions or Initiatives for CODE-NGO and CSOs

1. PhilDHRRA, PAKISAMA and CODE-NGO and others follow up DA re their plans for 'consolidation'. It is too important to be left to DA and LGUs – NGOs and POs plays a key role in this initiative.
2. Policy support – passage of NLUA