

YOUNG FARMERS PROGRAM (PAMANAKA, PAKISAMA)

By Melissa Alamo, Coordinator

...I am Melissa Alamo from PAKISAMA and I am going to share the game changing solutions for the young farmers' agenda. To start off my presentation, I would like to share some excerpts from the statement of the ILC National Engagement Strategy on the 33rd anniversary of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program here in the Philippines.

" We cannot afford the youth to abandon farming – this is the single greatest threat to our food security. We emphasize that we can encourage the youth to take up farming if only we are able to provide 'land to the tiller' and to make farming dignified and decent work."

(from the statement of ILC NES on the 33rd anniversary of CARP)

It sums up the current situation and struggles of our youth, young farmers in the Philippines.

(The following are the details of the talk on PAKISAMA's young farmers' program)

Situation of Youth in the Philippines

- Lack of access to and control over land and other resources (land and resource security)
- Lack of support to access government programs and services (organizational development, farm production, financing schemes, and marketing)
- Continued dropping of the price of palay and high price of farm inputs resulting in production loss
- Lack of sociocultural activities and youth organizations
- Lack of supportive government policies for young farmers
- Climate change and onslaught of natural phenomena, such as typhoons, that damage crops/livestock
- Challenges brought about by the COVID 19 affecting mobility and transport of goods.
- Threat to land rights defenders.

Main Strategy: Organize the youth

PAMANAKA (Pambansang Samahan ng mga Nagkakaisang Kabataang Magsasaka) is the national federation of young farmers' organizations from different parts of the country. It is the official young farmers' arm of PAKISAM which was established and recognized in 2019.

Formulated 3-year strategic plan anchored on the ORGANIC Strategies (Organizing, Resilient and Adaptive Approches, Advocacy/Lobbying, Resource and Fund Generation)

VISION

Empowered, sustainable and resilient young Filipino farmers' generation.

MISSION

We, the young farmers of PAKISAMA, are committed to capacitate ourselves and to act collectively in order to influence duty bearers in policy and program development for food sufficiency and sovereignty.

GOALS

1. Organize, capacitate, and sustain young farmers' organizations.
2. Mainstream IDOFs in the rural communities
3. Engage and participate in the local or national policy and decision making processes
4. Mobilize resources to sustain the programs and services of young farmers.
5. Sustain activities on the ground (respective community and organization)

Innovation 1: Baseline and Profiling Activity

Processes and Key Strategies

- Conducted last December 2020 (whole month activity)
- Developed profiling form in local language (both for print and distribution, editable word file)
- Conducted online orientation meetings for enumerators (12 young farmers) and data encoder (1 young farmer)
- Utilized mixed methods of data gathering (face-to-face/guided questionnair, phone calls/texts, facebook messenger, messenger group chat)

Results

- Profiled 288 young farmers from 8 participating organizations (Luzon: BANASI, GPAC, PERAC, BWFA; Visayas: PATANOM; Mindanao: PANAW SUMILAO, APCO, ARFEDACO)

Impact

- Developed database for PAMANAKA young farmers subject to updating
- Developed profiling form that contains socio-demographic profile, crops produced and tenurial status; information about their respective organization and membership, issues and challenges faced, proposed solutions and training needs assessment.
- Baseline data to be used for proposal development and resource mobilization for advocacy and economic activities of young farmers.

Innovation 2: Engagement and collaboration with academic institutions

Processes and Key Strategies

- Collaborated virtually with the Communication, Development Studies (DS) and Communication Technology (CommTech) students of the Ateneo de Manila University from October 2020 to May 2021
- Facilitated orientation meetings and linked with their local community partners (active member organizations of PAMANAKA)
- Utilized data platforms/social media for communication and interaction (email exchanges, Zoom/Google Meet, Facebook Messenger Group, phone calls/texts SMS)
- Strengthened participatory content creation (stories and narratives from the field)

Results

- Communication students developed AV Script and storyboard, produced documentary video highlighting the struggles of young rural farmers
- DS students conducted training needs of young farmers, initiated the advocacy campaign entitled Lupa ng Araw Campaign to tackle the political and socioeconomic injustices young farmers experience in the Philippines, improved logo and brand book, created social media accounts.
- CommTech students produced two sets of video materials for the promotion of the UN Decade of Family Farming, completion and implementation of the Philippine Action Plan for Family Farming (PAP4FF); interviewed sectoral leaders to share the challenges, needs and proposed solutions of family farmers in the Philippines.

Innovation 3: Lobby for supportive policies: Magna Carta of Young Farmers

Processes and Strategies

- Pre-pandemic: attendance in Congressional hearings and submission of position papers (February 2020)
- Attendance in online dialogues and core group meetings (Responsible Agriculture Investment – RAI Core Group, Office of Sen. Kiko Pangilinan, academe)
- Conducted study sessions to review proposed bills and provide recommendations/key provisions anchored on the needs of young farmers.
- Conducted a series of consultation meetings with young farmers (consultative and participatory process)

Results

- Consolidated recommendations from young farmers to develop policy paper on the crafting of the Senate version of the Magna Carta of Young Farmers
 - Initial stage of drafting policy paper (Senate version of the Magna Carta of Young Farmers)
- Conducted 2 assemblies, research presentation and policy workshop attended by 56 young farmers (June 8-9)

Impacts

- Strengthened advocacy campaign for the enactment of the proposed bill that will recognize the strategic role of young farmers and promoting a series of pride for the youth in agriculture and aims to establish National Young Farmers Roadmap which contains information on food security, registry of young farmers, viable food security systems and an index of program available for young farmers.
- Strengthened collaboration with development partners, policymakers, and academe for collective efforts in advocacy and lobbying.

Lessons Learned

- We can execute our plans despite limitations in this pandemic. Need to develop adjustment measures and think of creative and innovative ideas to enjoin our intended stakeholders.
- Capacity building activities must be sustained and there should be follow-up, application, monitoring, and evaluation.
 - Re-echoing of learnings/takeaways, applications for farm improvement
- We need to work together to provide advocacy and economic interventions to better engage and address the needs of young farmers.
- Utilize available platforms and develop knowledge products both for print, social and community distribution. We have many stories to tell and share.
- Scale up strategies – what works best and what needs to be improved.

Recommendations

- Strengthen young farmers' organization in the country through continued organizing efforts
 - Rethink community organizing strategies in this pandemic/use of digital platforms
 - We need community champions and leaders
- Capacitate and hone skills of young farmers
 - Organizational development (core values: good governance and management)
 - Skills to enrich knowledge in framing-related activities (IDOFs, climate smart agriculture, digital farming-mentoring, transfer of knowledge)
- Continued collaboration with development partners (multi-stakeholder network with consultative and participatory processes)
- Inclusion of youth in governance and decision making (resolutions/mandate creating young farmers' committee within their mother organization with concrete plan and support mechanisms)
- Synergize efforts to empower youth agrofisery-forestry (AFF) and develop concrete development plan/framework
 - Farmers and fishers agenda consultations
 - Independent national and regional dialogues
 - Food Systems Summit

Connect with us!

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