Background and Rationale

The project “Participatory Action Research on School and Community-Based Food and Nutrition Program for Literacy, Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development,” also known as School and Home Gardens Project (SHGP), was successfully implemented in 2016 to 2017 toward improved nutrition, education, and economic well-being of children in its six pilot schools. The pilot project established partnerships with five elementary and one secondary school in Laguna, Philippines through the collaboration of the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and the Department of Education (DepEd) Laguna Provincial Office.

Mechanisms for sustaining and scaling up the initial success of the SHGP were designed in a stepwise process where each of the six pilot schools has taken the lead to pay forward and share their knowledge to other schools, particularly those in remote areas so that no school shall be left behind.

Now moving on its own momentum after funding from SEAMEO and SEARCA has ceased, the project continues because of the strong commitment of pilot partner teachers, DepEd Laguna Provincial Office, parents, sister schools, and their respective Local Government Units (LGUs), particularly the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO), the Municipal Nutrition and Action Office (MNAO), the Local School Boards, and the Municipal Councils (local policy making body).

Learning Objectives

At the end of the Training of Trainers, the participants shall be able to:
1. Discuss experiences, initiatives, and good practices on school plus home gardens in the Southeast Asian region;
2. Explain key elements of food and nutrition, sustainable development goals, organic agriculture, agrobiodiversity, and edible landscaping for integration in the S+HGP;
3. Describe the process and requirements of designing, establishing, and maintaining edible organic school gardens; and
4. Prepare Re-entry Action Plans for engaging and strengthening the capacity of teachers, parents and local institutions to support, scale up, and disseminate information about schools-plus-home gardens.
The project also had pilots in Indonesia within the same period, led by the SEAMEO Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Tropical Biology (BIOTROP) with the SEAMEO Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Food and Nutrition (RECFON), and SEAMEO Southeast Asian Regional Open Learning Centre (SEAMOLEC).

Appreciating the project approach of improving children’s nutrition and food security at the grassroots level, the SEAMEO High Officials Meeting (HOM) in Bangkok on 28-29 November 2017 endorsed the project to the SEAMEO Council for region-wide dissemination. While the Philippines continues to build upon lessons learned and fine-tunes success strategies in implementing the SHGP, SEARCA, with three sister SEAMEO Centres and other partners including the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR), which also implements school garden programs, has conceived this Training of Trainers (TOT) for scaling out viable school garden models.

**Why school-plus-home gardens.** The SGHP deliberately emphasizes “plus home gardens” to draw attention to the “plus” factors that contributed to the key accomplishments of the project. “Plus” refers to the following:

1. The strategy to complement the short cycle school-based feeding program (120-days in the case of the Philippines) by promoting year-round production of nutritious food from the school and home gardens particularly during the remaining periods of the year not covered by the school-based feeding program;

2. The homes where parents took on the challenge, developed a greater sense of responsibility to be involved in the nutrition of their children, and actively participated in helping tend the school gardens and build their own home gardens;

3. The LGU’s committed support to the schools and homes by allocating funds for garden inputs, providing capacity building services, and directly assigning some personnel to assist teachers in maintaining the school gardens or helping parents establish home gardens; and

4. The multiple function of the school gardens in terms of being focal points as Food and Nutrition Gardens, Income-Generating Gardens, Learning Gardens, and as Inspirational Pocket Landscapes.

The TOT shall be a platform for exchanging knowledge, experiences, and success stories that shall strengthen implementation of similar School-plus-Home Garden Projects (S+HGP) already being undertaken or to be initiated in the SEAMEO member states.

**TOT Modules**

- Module 1 - Sharing Southeast Asian (SEA) Initiatives related to School and Home Gardens
- Module 2 - Learning Visit to SEARCA-UPLB-DepEd School-plus-home Garden (S-HGP) Sites
- Module 3 – School Gardens for Food and Nutrition
- Module 4 - Promoting SDGs, Agrobiodiversity, and Organic Agriculture in SEA through School Gardens
- Module 5 – School Gardens for Education
- Module 6 - Strengthening Local Institutional Support, Capacity Building, and Scaling Up the School-plus-gardens Project
- Module 7 - Information Dissemination and Networking for S+HGP
- Module 8 – Establishing and Sustaining School-plus-home Gardens
- Module 9 - Re-entry action planning

**Expected Output from Participants**

1. Brief report about initiatives or experiences related to school and/or home gardens in their home countries
2. Draft plan and design of organic school garden for a minimum area of 100 m² showing designated areas for food production and as learning area for teaching home economics, science, math, and English
3. Re-entry action plans

**Participants**

Participants will include SEAMEO Center representatives and three from each of the 11 SEAMEO member states, namely: (1) **One school head teacher** in charge of vocational, livelihood, gardening or home economics courses from a prospective pilot school identified to adopt the S+HGP model; (2) **One school principal** or equivalent from the same prospective pilot school; (3) **One representative from the provincial or district Ministry of Education** office directly responsible for the administration of the same prospective pilot school. They will form the core team for piloting S+GHP projects in their countries.

**Criteria for selecting pilot schools** are as follows: (1) Experience in implementing school garden initiatives; (2) **availability of land** for vegetable production (at least 100 m²); and (3) high **prevalence of impoverished and nutritionally deficient students** in the school and pupils’ households.

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