

The SEARCA DIARY



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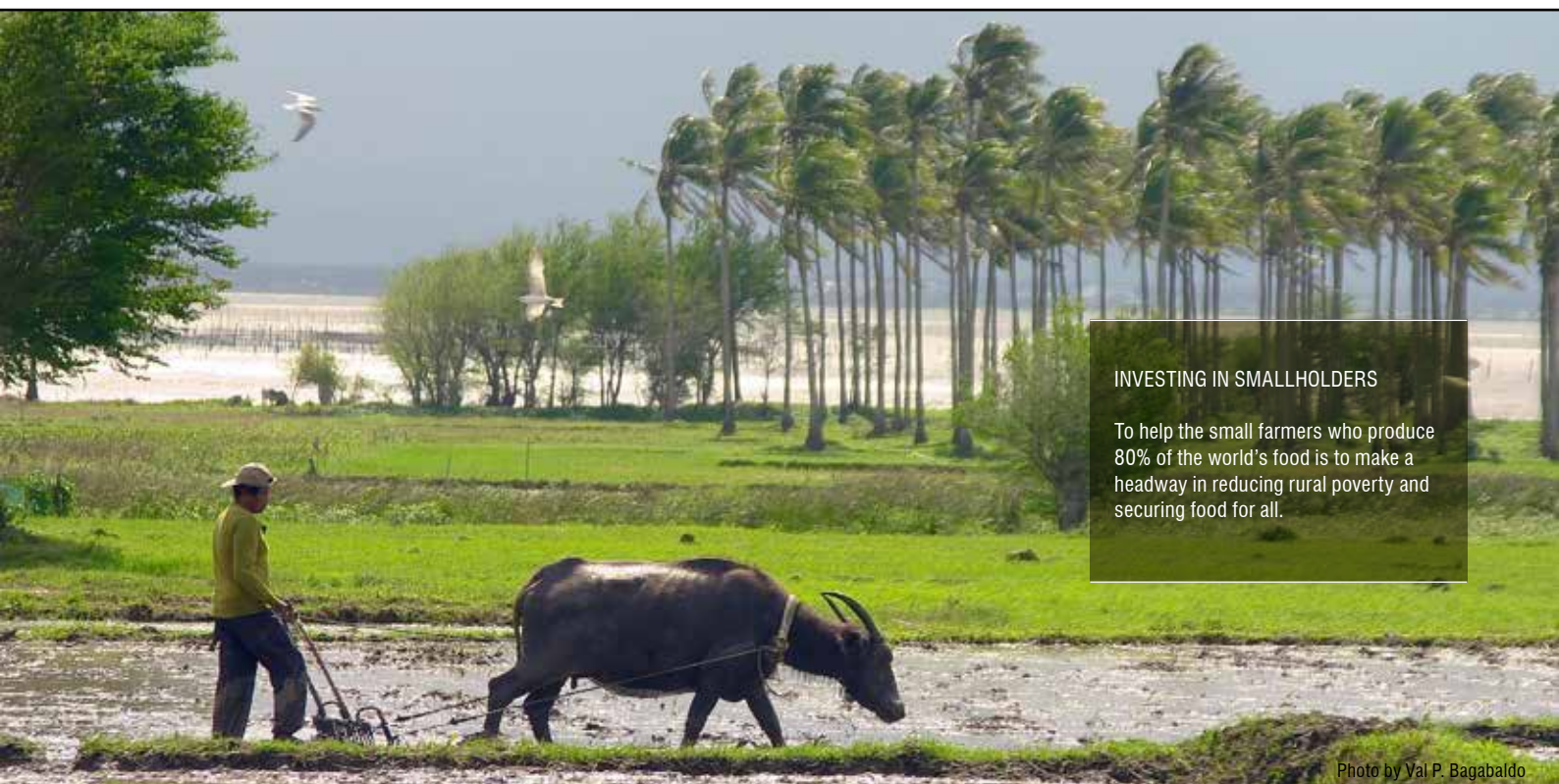


Photo by Val P. Bagabaldo

INVESTING IN SMALLHOLDERS

To help the small farmers who produce 80% of the world's food is to make a headway in reducing rural poverty and securing food for all.

IFAD taps SEARCA for project on agri advisory services in Asia-Pacific

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has tapped SEARCA to lead the implementation of a project titled *Supporting Smallholder Farmers in Asia and Pacific-Islands Region through Strengthened Agricultural Advisory Services* in cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services (APIRAS) and the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS).

IFAD is a specialized agency of the United Nations focused on eradicating rural poverty, hunger, and malnutrition in developing countries. It has recognized that poor rural populations "can join the mainstream of social and economic development, provided the causes of their poverty are understood and enabling conditions for development are created. IFAD is a co-founder of GFRAS and participates closely in its strategic and operational work.

GFRAS works to enhance the performance of advisory services to improve their assistance to farmers with the end view of improving livelihood in rural

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communities and reducing hunger and poverty. GFRAS reaches smallholder farmers through its regional rural advisory services networks—one of which is APIRAS. Said regional networks are composed of “national-level platforms” that work directly with smallholders and include actors in all sectors working in rural advisory services. According to GFRAS, the “national platforms help prioritize national-level issues and formulate demands to be taken to the regional and global levels.”

Targeting Asia-Pacific farmers

The goal of the 36-month project is to empower poor smallholder farmers in the Asia-Pacific region through access to effective and demand-driven agricultural advisory services (AAS).

The target stakeholders include AAS providers from public, private, nongovernmental, and civil society sectors that are serving poor smallholder farmers in the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Fiji.

Specifically, the project aims to strengthen individual and organizational capacities of agricultural advisory service stakeholders in target countries and at the regional and sub-regional levels to directly benefit poor farmers, indigenous communities, and producers' organizations.

The project will also help make appropriate and up-to-date knowledge and evidence on innovative advisory services available and accessible from a range of sources in the Asia-Pacific region via APIRAS country forums and extend worldwide through GFRAS.

Project kicks off

The project kicked off with an inception workshop hosted by SEARCA on 7-8 September 2016.

At the start of the meeting, Mr. Tawfiq El-Zabri, IFAD Senior Program Officer, said “this is an opportunity for us to work with you to identify some of the areas where we can improve the supply of advisory services in the participating



D. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, welcomes the inception workshop participants.



Mr. Tawfiq El-Zabri, IFAD Senior Program Officer, gives his opening message.



The participants and organizers of the inception workshop with Dr. Geronimo M. Collado (front row, rightmost), workshop facilitator.

countries; but ultimately I think this would be relevant even beyond the region.”

For his part, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, remarked that “SEARCA is most fortunate that IFAD has entrusted this project to us.”

He said SEARCA's focus on promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD) makes efforts to bring agriculture to a higher and sustainable plane as a key to food security and poverty alleviation a top priority. “And it is here,” he added, “where extension—otherwise known as rural advisory services—is seen to play a very important role. This is essentially why SEARCA is involved in this project.”

He told fellow workshop participants that “it is important that we leave this meeting with basic agreements and a general workplan that will be the basis of implementation activities as well as the release of the project budget and budgetary allocations both for national as well as regional activities. Up to this point, it is SEARCA that is bridging the required financial resources. I cannot overemphasize therefore how important this first step is to the project.”

In addition to Dr. Saguiguit and Mr. El-Zabri, the workshop participants included Mr. Eduardo E. Queblatin who serves as project coordinator; two participants each from Bangladesh, Fiji, and the Philippines; one participant each from APIRAS, Pacific Islands Rural Advisory Services (PIRAS), and Agricultural Extension in South Asia (AESAs). Dr. Geronimo M. Collado, SEARCA Senior Fellow who is a specialist in finance, agribusiness, and human resource development, facilitated the workshop.

The inception workshop was intended to build trust, ownership, and commitment of all involved in the project. It sought to ensure that there is a common understanding of the project's rationale, direction, and scope among the project's key leaders, partners, and stakeholders. They also discussed and agreed on the project deliverables, action plans, timetable, and indicative budget, as well as effective working modalities and collaborative relationships.

SEARCA's Project Development and Technical Services (PDTs) organized the workshop and serves as the Center's focal unit for the project. (LLDDomingo)

THE SEARCA DIARY

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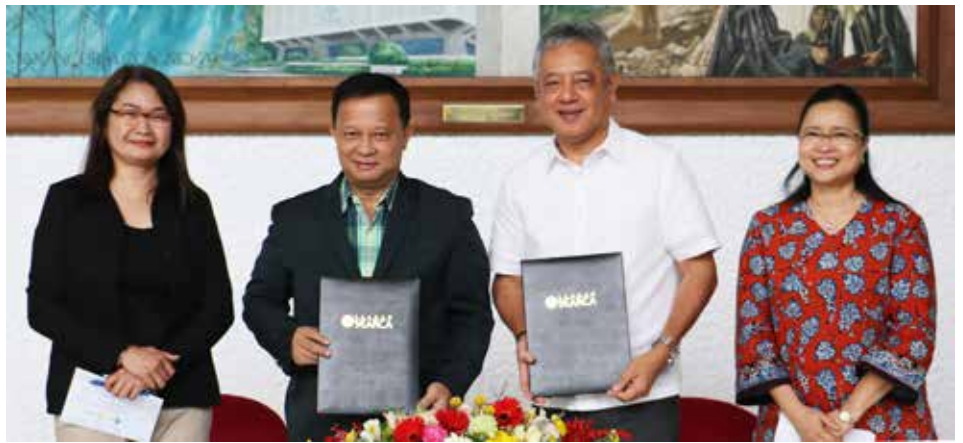
ACB, SEARCA sign MOU for sustainable agri and biodiversity

The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and SEARCA formalized their ties through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for institutional cooperation signed on 1 July 2016.

The three-year agreement binds them to pursue the common objective of building capacities of ASEAN Member States in conserving biodiversity as it relates to agriculture and food. They agreed cooperate in project development and implementation, information exchange, and capacity development in said areas.

Speaking before witnesses of the ceremonial signing, Atty. Roberto V. Oliva, ACB Executive Director, thanked SEARCA for its long-standing support to ACB and said the formal agreement will strengthen their role as champions of sustainable environment and agro-biodiversity not only in Southeast Asia, but also globally.

This was affirmed by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, noting that aside from serving



Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit Jr. (second from right), SEARCA Director, and Atty. Roberto V. Oliva (second from left), ACB Executive Director, show the signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) for institutional cooperation between the two centers signed on 1 July 2016. Also in the photo are Dr. Bessie M. Burgos (right) of SEARCA and Ms. Clarissa C. Arida of ACB.

the same countries, the focus areas of the two centers are interrelated.

SEARCA's program heads, ACB's Director for Programme Development and Implementation, and key staff of both centers set to work on

putting meat into the cooperation immediately after the signing rites. In the planning meeting, they identified and prioritized joint activities for the next three years, including a regional workshop on agro-biodiversity in ASEAN. (Report from MKRPunto)

IRRI and SEARCA to draft climate change policies

SEARCA and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) have agreed to implement a joint project focusing on climate change policies.

This was formalized in a letter of agreement (LOA) for the implementation of the project titled *National Action Plans for Mitigation in Rice: Comparative Assessment of Institutional Field Testing and Possible Entry Points for Intervention in the Philippines and Vietnam*.

Signatories to the LOA were Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, and Ms. Corinta Q. Guerta, IRRI Director for External Relations. Dr. Bjoern

Ole Sander, IRRI scientist specializing in climate change, leads the project.

The cooperating institutions noted that the Philippines and Vietnam have different policies, plans, and strategies to mitigate the effects of climate change through intervention in the agriculture sector.

Last December, both countries submitted their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) to the United Nations Framework of Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) within the framework of the Conference of the Parties (COP) in Paris, France. The INDCs outline what climate change action the countries intend to take.

The project foresees that future challenges will be “to translate these national commitments as

well as other national action plans for mitigation to action at local level.”

The project will analyze the institutional capacities of the Philippines and Vietnam with respect to effectively implementing national and local climate change policies focused on the rice sub-sector.

Moreover, the project will identify possible bottlenecks in the implementation process and entry points for international institutions to support implementation of national mitigation plans in the rice sub-sector.

The intention is to highlight the stakeholders and their roles as well as recommendations on how to involve them to successfully reduce the carbon footprint of rice production in the two countries. (LLDDomingo)

Research program builds up credibility of halal food processing in ASEAN

SERDANG, Malaysia—SEARCA has partnered with Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) based here to conduct a research program titled *Safeguarding and Sustaining the Integrity of Halal Food* to strengthen the credibility of halal food processing, services, and systems in member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and, at the same time, increase the awareness and understanding of halal issues in the global market.

“Halal” is Arabic for “permissible;” halal food is that which conforms to Islamic law as defined in the Koran. However, there are concerns on ascertaining the halal status of food products and the compliance of activities and processes along the supply chain to ensure halal authenticity.

The research program is under the auspices of the *Umbrella Program on Food and Nutrition Security for Southeast Asia 2014-2019* jointly

developed by SEARCA and the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC), of which UPM is a founding member.

Six projects comprise the research program: (1) Comparative study on the consumers' acceptance

[Research program/ to page 6](#)

Tracking outcome pathways of ISARD projects



The group working on the Mekong project includes participants from countries traversed by the Mekong River.

Partners of SEARCA in the two Philippine sites of its action research titled *Piloting and Upscaling Effective Models of Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD)* gathered at SEARCA to participate in a training-workshop on results-based monitoring and evaluation (RBME) for ISARD on 15-19 August 2016.

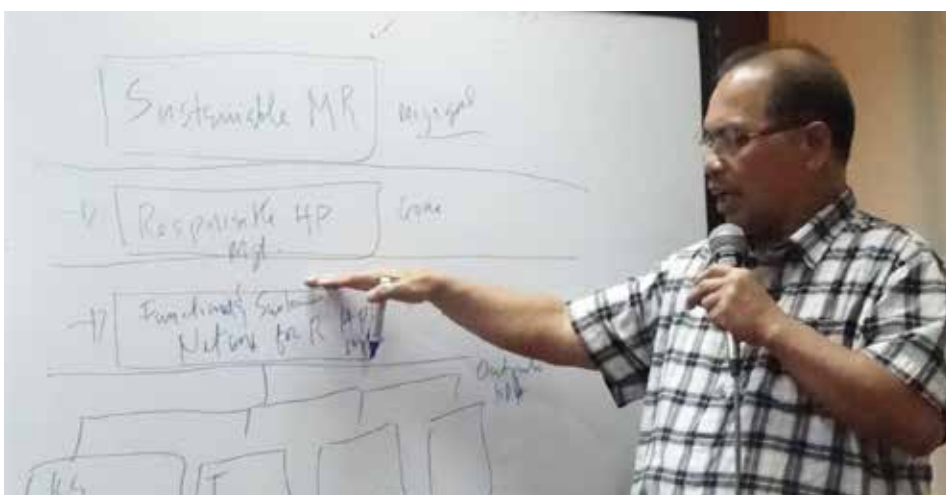
The participants also included SEARCA staff as well as university faculty members and development practitioners from national government agencies in Cambodia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

They were equipped with knowledge and skills to track whether the project's components are moving along their intended outcome pathways as planned. The aim is to enable them to monitor project resources use and timely implementation of project activities to ensure transparency, accountability, and integrity in the project.

Pushing ISARD

The training is the third in a series of learning events focused on piloting and upscaling effective models of ISARD. The first enabled participants to apply integrative systems-based research framework (particularly commodity system approach and trap analysis) in packaging ISARD project proposals. The second tackled emerging and best practices in innovation platforms, rural advisory services, and knowledge management as pathways toward RAS.

Through its Piloting Effective Models of ISARD project, SEARCA walks the talk to make a meaningful difference in the lives of farmers and rural communities, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, told the participants. He



Prof. Wilfredo B. Carada of the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Public Affairs and Development, technical coordinator and lead resource person, explains relationships between goals, impacts, and outcomes in ISARD.

reported that the project had been launched in Victoria, Oriental Mindoro and Inopacan, Leyte with calamansi and jackfruit as their respective flagship commodities.

He added that in earlier decades, SEARCA had engaged in similar action research projects, including the social laboratory, integrated area development, and pilot-testing of farm technologies.

Customized and targeted

The training-workshop was developed and coordinated by Prof. Wilfredo B. Carada of the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Public Affairs and Development (CPAf).

It had five modules: review of ISARD M&E; core purpose, scope, stakeholders, organization and management for ISARD RBME; ISARD results and logical framework; operationalization of the framework, data collection tools, data

management, reporting, learning and action, report utilization and dissemination; and sustainability of the ISARD system.

Tasked to immediately apply what they learned from the lectures and discussions, the participants presented RBME plans for their respective projects.

Takeaways

A veteran manager of R&D projects, Dr. Jose L. Bacusmo, former president of Visayas State University, found it extremely important in charting the project direction to lay out the output pathway prior to developing the plan of operations.

On the other hand, Dr. Mom Seng, Vice Rector of the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA), Cambodia, said this is her first time to learn about RBME, and she will use what she learned as inputs to RUA's strategic direction. (Report from IVDDomingo/MCHCadiz)

37 new SEARCA scholarships awarded

SEARCA has awarded 37 new graduate scholarships to Southeast Asians in academic year 2015/2016, 23 of which are for master's programs and the rest for PhD.

Twenty-two of the new scholars are studying at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB); seven at Kasetsart University (KU) in Thailand; four at Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) and one at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), both in Indonesia; and three at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM).

Of the new scholars, 28 are fully funded by SEARCA, while five are supported by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and one by the Philippine Carabao Center (PCC).

Three of the 28 regular SEARCA scholars are supported under the Center's Institutional Development Assistance (IDA) Program, one scholar each from Royal University of Agriculture (RUA), Cambodia; Savannakhet University (SKU), Lao PDR; and Yezin Agricultural University (YAU), Myanmar.

The new scholars, their nationality and degree program are as follows:

Regular SEARCA Scholars

- Mr. Heng Chou Long, Cambodian (MS, agricultural and resource economics)
- Mr. Meas Soborn, Cambodian (MS, agricultural resource and development)



- Mr. Phauk Ya, Cambodian (MS, agronomy)
- Mr. Sem Savuth, Cambodian (MS, agronomy)
- Ms. Sel Rechaney, Cambodian (MS, community development)
- Ms. Kendri Wahyuningsih, Indonesian (MS, agro-industrial technology)
- Ms. Rahmawaty Zulfiningrum, Indonesian (PhD, communication, agriculture and rural development)
- Ms. Fadhlani, Indonesian (PhD, water resources engineering)
- Mr. Kongmy Nongboudtalath, Laotian (MS, development management and governance)
- Mr. Phouthasone Khouangvichit, Laotian (MS, environmental science)
- Mr. Bounho Koulavong, Laotian (MS, forestry)
- Mr. Jason Choy Min Sheng, Malaysian (MS, aquaculture nutrition)
- Ms. Han Nwe Soe, Myanmar (MS, agricultural economics)
- Ms. Ei Ei Thein, Myanmar (MS, agronomy)
- Ms. May Soe Oo, Myanmar (MS, agronomy)
- Ms. Kay Thi Khaing, Myanmar (MS, extension education)
- Ms. Aye Thandar Cho, Myanmar (MS, tropical agriculture)
- Ms. Nge Htwe Su Han, Myanmar (MS, tropical agriculture)
- Mr. Teerapong Wongsathan, Thai (MS, extension education)
- Mr. Bordeesorn Phumringruang, Thai (PhD, agricultural extension)
- Ms. Wannasiri Wannasupchue, Thai (PhD, food management)
- Ms. Adelia Caetano Gonzaga Dos Santos, Timorese (MS, animal production and technology)

37 New SEARCA scholars/ to page 15

SEARCA helps YAU set up agri extension program

NAY PYI TAW, Myanmar— SEARCA conducted a workshop on developing the BS Agricultural Education curriculum of Yezin Agricultural University (YAU) towards establishing an Agricultural Extension Program.

The activity was carried out under SEARCA's Institutional Development Assistance (IDA) Program, which counts YAU among its partner-beneficiaries.

"When we went to SEARCA for the university's strategic planning in 2013, improving YAU's extension program was identified as a need, and today, this four-day workshop is a giant step toward realizing that goal," Dr. Nang Hseng Hom, YAU Pro-Rector (Admin), said during the opening of the workshop held on 26-29 July 2016.

She added that while the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is providing most of

the "hardware" needed to develop the university, the strategic plan of YAU developed through the assistance of SEARCA provided the "software" for its development. In fact, she said the strategic plan served as an important input to the crafting of JICA's five-year project at YAU.

Following the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) approach in curriculum planning and development, the goal of the workshop is to draft a specialization in agricultural extension for YAU's current Bachelor of Agricultural Science program. This workshop is the first of a series of activities toward this end.

The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Rowena DT. Bacongus, Professor and Director of the Institute of Governance and Rural Development at the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Public Affairs and Development. In attendance were YAU faculty members and graduate



Dr. Rowena DT. Bacongus (standing), Professor and Director of the Institute of Governance and Rural Development at the University of the Philippines Los Baños-College of Public Affairs and Development, facilitated the workshop attended by 30 YAU faculty members and graduate students, and four staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation-Department of Agriculture.

students, as well as four staff of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation-Department of Agriculture. (Report from JSLaranas)

M&E visits track SFRT projects in Indonesia

SEARCA conducted a series monitoring and evaluation (M&E) visits to the sites of three projects in Indonesia supported by its Seed Fund for Research and Training (SFRT) on 10-13 August 2016.

The SEARCA mission was composed of Ms. Julita G. Ventenilla, Unit Head for Internal Audit, and Ms. Carmen Nyhria G. Rogel, Program Specialist, and Ms. Maria Katrina R. Punto, Research Assistant, both of the Research and Development Department.

Integrating seaweed farming and fisheries

The project led by Dr. Nuva Nuva of Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB) focuses on the socioeconomic impact of integrating marine aquaculture with seaweed farming to support community livelihood in line with the government's Blue Economy program in Lombok, Indonesia. The project team found that sustainability, technology transfer, and continuity are key issues. Nonetheless, with access to technical and financial support, the team surmises that Lombok has the potential to



Seaweed cuttings are tied to improvised floating devices in preparation for the new planting season.

become a producer of high-value products from seaweeds.

While in Lombok, the SEARCA mission visited the National Seaweeds Center and Mataram Marine Technopark, both of which conduct studies on the symbiotic relationships that come into play when seaweed farming is integrated with fisheries or other types of marine aquaculture.

Pigmented rice development

Dr. Tri Rini Nuringtyas of Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) leads the SFRT project on the development of pigmented rice production and marketing for rural communities in the Yogyakarta districts of Kidul, Bantul, and Sleman. The SEARCA mission toured the greenhouse where the project



Tour of the greenhouse in which the experiments on resistance evaluation of pigmented rice cultivars are conducted.

experiments with the chemical and physical defense mechanisms of different pigmented rice cultivars and evaluates their resistance to pests and diseases.

Determining the most resistant cultivars is key to promoting sustainable production of pigmented rice in suitable areas in the country. Consumer preferences are also analyzed to help link the farmers to a wider market.

Bio-fungicide use

Phytophthora capsici is a fungus that attacks chili, an economically important crop in Indonesia. Fungicide residues, apart from causing environmental pollution, also promote the growth of this resistant fungus. On the other hand, nano-chitosan are nanoparticles from chitosan, the structural element found in the exoskeleton of crustaceans.

Led by Dr. Fenny Martha Dwivany of Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB), the SFRT project in Bandung is looking into the use of the biomaterial nano-chitosan as bio-fungicide against *Phytophthora capsici* on different chili cultivars in West Java Province for sustainable agro-industry applications and to help farmers adopt safer and environment-friendly cultivation methods in chili farming.

In collaboration with East West Seed Company Indonesia, the project studied the effect of using nano-chitosan on the resistance level of chili cultivars. The project conducted its experiments using the East West Plant Pathology Laboratory and greenhouses.

The SFRT is a grants facility through which SEARCA provides start-up funds to researchers and scientists in Southeast Asia who will work on projects along SEARCA's priority focus on inclusive and sustainable agricultural and rural development in the region. (Report from MKRPunto)

Partners affirm commitment to piloting ISARD models project

The SEARCA project team for the *Piloting Effective Models of Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD)* apprised the new Mayor of Victoria, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines on the completed activities and progress of the project on 3 August 2016. Mr. Rolando Bello, Overall Coordinator of the piloting project, Ms. Angelic M. Reglos, Research Assistant, briefed the Mayor Joselito Malabanan about the calamansi rehabilitation project, along with Mr. Elmer Cobarrubias, Municipal Agriculturist of Victoria; Mr. Ruel Sanchez, President, and Ms. Virginia dela Cruz, Secretary, both of the Victoria Kalamansi Farmers Federation; and Dr. Ma. Concepcion Mores, Vice President, Mindoro State College of Agriculture (MinSCAT) and on-site project coordinator. For his part, the local chief executive assured the project team of the municipal government's commitment to extend all assistance he can offer to the project.

Two days later, Dr. Bessie M. Burgos, SEARCA Program Head for Research and Development, joined the Mr. Bello and Ms. Reglos in a courtesy visit to Dr. Jesse T. Zamora, MinSCAT President. Dr. Zamora also reaffirmed his full support to the project, citing that more MinSCAT staff have been assigned to assist in the conduct of upcoming project activities. He added that the additional staff also comprises the technical assistance committee for the farmers. MinSCAT staff also present at the meeting were Dr. Mores, Dr. Lourdes Icalla, and Ms. Katherine Torres. (AMReglos)

Research program/ from page 3

and economic impact of verified and certified halal food in ASEAN countries; (2) Development of authentication and analytical tools for halal food product verifications; (3) Development of alternative ingredients and products for halal food processing application; (4) Welfare and meat quality of livestock slaughtered according to halal method using restraining mechanism and different knife sharpness; (5) Development of database and halal traceability system for halal food products; (6) Halal awareness and halal compliance training in food processing for ASEAN countries.

Projects 1-3 and 6 are ongoing with funding from the UC, SEARCA, and Tokyo University of Agriculture (Tokyo NODAI), Japan, while Projects 4 and 5 are still for implementation. (LLDDomingo)

55 young researchers polish proposals for IFS-SEARCA grants

Early-career researchers and scientists from eight Southeast Asian countries improved their proposals and learned more about collaborative research in a workshop co-organized by SEARCA and the Stockholm-based International Foundation for Science (IFS).

The workshop gathered 55 out of 64 eligible participants from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. They are proponents of the proposals for IFS-SEARCA Collaborative Research Grants who passed the first screening.

Dr. Nighisty Ghezze, IFS Director, said the workshop is intended to give the participants an opportunity to improve their proposals and learn about collaborative research.

Reinforcing collaboration

From 30 August to 1 September 2016, the participants worked with other members of their respective collaborative research team to improve their proposals on climate change adaptation and mitigation in agriculture. Most of them met in person for the first time as they had worked on the initial proposal submitted only via the digital platform called Chatter.

Collaboration is key to enabling the participants to meet the scientific standards of the research grant. To reinforce this, Mr. William E. Savage, workshop facilitator, said the first day was intended to familiarize the participants with each other. At the end of the workshop, he shared his observation that the participating teams had evolved and gelled. He added that “most of the comments were about people learning how to work together, not only about science or research.”

Comprising 18 teams in all, the participants reviewed and refined their proposals together with six mentors from the first and second pilots of the collaborative research grants program in Africa.

The mentors were from Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda. They shared their practical experiences and insights as successful grantees of the IFS collaborative research grants in their region. They helped the Southeast Asian research teams scrutinize the concepts and science inputs discussed and the refined proposals for submission to the IFS-SEARCA grants program for Southeast Asia.

Mentoring

Dr. Ghezze and Ms. Annika Eriksson of IFS served as resource persons. During the mentoring sessions, Ms. Eriksson assisted participants with concerns on technical issues like using online application systems. Dr. Ghezze and other resource persons tackled research issues as well as project budget and work planning.

The key resource speakers were Dr. Julian Gonzalves, research leader and adviser of the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) and Senior Adviser at the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR), and Dr. Rodel Lasco,



Participants distill their questions on climate change adaptation and mitigation in agriculture for the two experts, Dr. Rodel D. Lasco and Dr. Julian Gonzalves.

Philippine Coordinator, World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) and Scientific Director of the Oscar M. Lopez Center for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management Foundation, Inc. (OML Center), provided in-depth analyses and recommendations.

They both stressed in their presentations the need for further collaboration and analysis to provide “tailor-made” solutions that would enable better adaptation and mitigation policies per locality.

Full support

Dr. Ghezze assured the participants that IFS and SEARCA will always be available to help, because “your success is our success.” She reiterated that regardless of knowledge and position, participants, mentors, and advisers should look at each other as equals because “we are here together for a common cause – to solve critical global problems.”



The workshop participants with the resource persons and organizers.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, emphasized the role of the workshop and grants program in his Center’s commitment to build research capacity in agricultural and rural development in Southeast Asia. He expressed hope to further its collaboration with IFS in this quest, which Dr. Ghezze of IFS affirmed.

The IFS-SEARCA Collaborative Research Grants program was launched in August 2015 and will run until December 2019. (Reports from DRGSantiago/MCHCadiz)

SEARCA marshals top academic execs in study visit to China

GUIYANG, People's Republic of China—SEARCA assembled top executives of six premier agricultural universities in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and the Philippines, among them partner-beneficiaries of its Institutional Development Assistance (IDA) Program, for a study visit to selected Chinese agricultural universities and participation in the *9th China-ASEAN Education Cooperation Week (CAECW)* on 1-3 August 2016 in the capital city of China's Guizhou Province.

The event, which took place from 1 to 7 August, was jointly organized by the Guizho Provincial's Foreign Affairs Office and Department of Education, the ASEAN-China Centre, and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), SEARCA's mother organization.

The CAECW served as a platform for cooperation and exchanges to enhance the mutual understanding and communication among the youth, deepen intercollegiate cooperation, and push forward the common development of economy among ASEAN countries and China.

The SEARCA delegation included the President of Savannakhet University (SKU) in Lao PDR, Rector of Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) in Cambodia, and an Associate Professor at Yezin Agricultural University (YAU) in Myanmar, all IDA Program partner-beneficiaries; the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and Kasetsart University (KU) Assistant to the President, both members of the SEARCA-initiated Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC); as well as the Officer-in-Charge of Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) and Professor and former president of Visayas



Dr. Liu Zuoyi (left) of the Guizho Academy of Agricultural Sciences receives tokens from Dr. Saguiguit.



The SEARCA delegation led by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (right row, fourth from bottom), SEARCA Director, visited Guizhou University on 3 August 2016.

State University who leads the SEARCA project on Piloting and Upscaling Effective Models of Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (ISARD).

The delegation was led by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, who brought with him key Center staff, namely: Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, Program Head for Graduate

Education and Institutional Development; Ms. Adoracion T. Robles, Unit Head for Management Services and Executive Coordinator, Office of the Director; and Mr. Henry M. Custodio, Program Specialist, Research and Development Department.

The group visited Guizhou Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Guizhou University, and four technical-vocational colleges. The study visit provided an opportunity for the academic leaders to exchange information and experiences on teaching, research, and extension activities with Chinese agricultural universities. They also discussed possible areas of cooperation with the officials they met at the universities visited. (LLDDomingo)

SEARCA joins SEAMEO workshop on managing data

JAKARTA, Indonesia—Five SEARCA staff joined 26 other participants from 12 SEAMEO centers at the *SEAMEO Regional Workshop on Managing and Integrating Data* held on 11-13 August 2016 at the SEAMEO Regional Open Learning Centre (SEAMOLEC) in this city.

The SEARCA staff who participated in the workshop were Ms. Adoracion T. Robles, Unit Head for Management Services and Executive Coordinator, Office of the Director; Ms. Mina G. Talatala, Library and Archives Administrator under the Knowledge Resources Unit (KRU); Mr. Jaymark Warren T. Dia, Information Systems

Specialist and Mr. Eduardo D. Rodriguez, Jr., Information Systems Associate, both of the Information and Technology Services Unit (ITSU); and Mr. Elmer G. Pandanan, Communications Associate, Office of the Director.

Organized by SEAMOLEC for the SEAMEO Secretariat, the workshop aimed to set up a strategy and mechanism to effectively manage the rich data in 21 SEAMEO regional centers and network. During the hands-on sessions, the participants also practiced using the OpenKM platform. (EGPandanan)



In a workshop session with representatives of other SEAMEO centers are members of the SEARCA delegation: (from bottom left to top left) Ms. Mina G. Talatala, Library and Archives Administrator, Knowledge Resources Unit; Mr. Elmer G. Pandanan, Communications Associate, Office of the Director; Ms. Adoracion T. Robles, Unit Head, Management Services, and Executive Coordinator, Office of the Director; and Mr. Jaymark Warren T. Dia, Information Systems Specialist and Mr. Eduardo D. Rodriguez, Jr., Information Systems Associate, both of the Information and Technology Services Unit.

2016 Summer School attract students from 15 countries

BANGKOK, Thailand—Graduate students and young faculty members from 15 countries in Asia, Latin America, and Africa joined the *2016 Summer School on Climate Change and Food Security* hosted by Kasetsart University (KU) from 25 July to 11 August 2016.

Among the participants of the summer school are eight graduate students from four other UC member universities, namely, Institut Pertanian Bogor (IPB), Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), and the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). SEARCA, through its Institutional Development Assistance (IDA) Program, is supporting six participants from Yezin Agricultural University (YAU) in Myanmar, Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) in Cambodia, and Savannakhet University (SKU) in Lao PDR.

As the Summer School is an accredited postgraduate course participants can earn three credit units upon completion of the summer program.

This postgraduate course was one of SEARCA's new initiatives under its Tenth Five-Year Plan, and was eventually taken in by the Southeast Asian University Consortium for Graduate Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC), a network of top agricultural universities in Southeast Asia, Japan, Canada, and Germany that are committed to share academic expertise and information. KU is one of the five founding members of the UC.

The 2016 Summer School is extraordinary because, for the first time, the summer school supported by the Food Security Center (FSC) of University of Hohenheim (UHOH), Germany was merged with the summer school implemented by the UC.

SEARCA and KU are the Asian partners of the FSC since its first phase started in 2009. The project is now on its second phase.

“KU and SEARCA has had a long and strong partnership both at the level of the UC and as strategic partners of FSC. KU initially hosted the FSC Summer School in 2012, while SEARCA hosted the 2013 offering. Recognizing the value of bringing together students from different countries to learn from experts, share experiences, and develop networks, SEARCA conducted its own Summer School in 2014. This was eventually adopted by the UC as another venue to collaborate among its members,” said Dr. Maria Cristeta N. Cuaresma, SEARCA Program Head for Graduate Education and Institutional Development.

KU Acting President Chongrak Wachrinrat said as Thailand's leading university in agriculture and natural resources, we understand how important climate change and food security is, and everyone in this university need to take that into consideration, especially in support of the sufficiency economy, which is now the priority of His Majesty.”

For its first week, the summer school focused on climate change and aquaculture with Dr. Sukkrit

Nimitkulat from KU's Faculty of Fisheries as resource person.

On the other hand, Dr. Jean Rust from Dohne Agricultural Development Institute, South Africa discussed how climate change affects livestock production on the second week. The final week covered climate smart agriculture facilitated by Dr. David Reiser of UHOH. (Report from MCNCuaresma)

Canadian officials briefed about SEARCA



Dr. Anindya Chatterjee (top right), Regional Director for Asia of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, and Mr. Stephen Weaver (top left), Head of Cooperation of the Canadian Embassy in the Philippines, visited SEARCA on 10 August 2016. They were briefed by Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr. (bottom left); Dr. Bessie M. Burgos (bottom right), SEARCA Program Head for Research and Development; and other program heads on SEARCA's current programs and activities, including updates on the IDRC-SEARCA Scholarship for Upland Agriculture and Food Security which is nearing completion.

Started in 2013, the joint scholarship was offered to establish a critical mass of agriculture professionals from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam who could develop sustainable agricultural programs for upland communities. Altogether, 53 master's and PhD scholarships were awarded to 11 Cambodians, 21 Laotians, 10 Myanmar, and 11 Vietnamese. Of this number, 26 had been completed. The scholarships were tenable at three Thai universities, namely: Chiang Mai University (CMU), Khon Kaen University (KKU), and Kasetsart University (KU), and at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

The Canadian officials were also apprised of SEARCA's long history of collaboration with IDRC, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and other Canadian institutions, dating as far back as 1971.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, elaborated on the Center's Institutional Development Assistance (IDA) Program, which benefits strategic universities in Southeast Asia, including Yezin Agricultural University (YAU) in Myanmar, the country's only institution of higher learning in agriculture. He put forward areas of possible collaboration with IDRC along this initiative. He also expressed interest in the development priorities of the Canadian government to which SEARCA may be able to contribute as Canada's window to Southeast Asia.

Indonesian SEARCA alumni association hold int'l confab

BANDAR LAMPUNG, Indonesia—More than a hundred students and experts from seven countries flocked to the southern tip of Sumatra island for an international seminar titled *Improving Food Security: The Challenges for Enhancing Resilience to Climate Change* held on 23-24 August 2016 at Emersia Hotel. The event was jointly organized by the Indonesian SEARCA Fellows Association (ISFA) and the University of Lampung with support from SEARCA.

Dr. Percy E. Sajise, SEARCA Senior Fellow and Honorary Research Fellow at Bioversity International and Adjunct Professor at the University of the Philippines Los Baños-School of Environmental Science and Management (UPLB-SESAM), was a keynote speaker. He discussed the relationship between climate change, agriculture, and food and nutrition security.

The roster of speakers included the Senior Advisor for Food to the Minister of Environment and Forestry, the Assistant FAO Country Representative in Indonesia, the Director of SEAMEO Regional Centre for Tropical Biology



Dr. Percy E. Sajise, SEARCA Senior Fellow, delivers his keynote message at the international conference.

(BIOTROP), and the Chief Scientist of World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF). Their messages were complemented by 123 scientific paper presentations delivered in four parallel sessions. Among the presenters were SEARCA scholars and alumni from Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam who talked about their research on different dimensions of food security.

Coinciding with the international seminar was the first in a series of public forums featuring the Outstanding SEARCA Scholarship Alumni (OSSA) awardees. Said forum was held in the evening of 23 August 2016 with OSSA awardees Dr. Phan Hieu Hien of Vietnam and Prof. Dr. Mochammad Maksum of Indonesia as speakers. The event was attended by faculty members, students, and researchers from Indonesia and neighboring countries. (Report from JSLaranas)

IBM specialists render pro bono consulting at SEARCA, IRRI

LOS BAÑOS, Philippines—PYXERA Global launched here on 28 June 2016 the IBM Corporate Service Corps (CSC) Program in partnership with the Peace Corps Response Program.

The tie-up brings together IBM's multinational reach with Peace Corps' grassroots network, said Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet.

PYXERA Global, on the other hand, is an international nongovernmental organization that specializes in pro bono programs and one of IBM's global implementing partners for its CSC.

IBM started the CSC as its pro bono consulting program to help solve some of the most challenging problems in communities worldwide while providing leadership development to its highly skilled corporate professionals.

The IBM CSC Program fielded three IBM specialists at SEARCA and 12 at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

The IBM specialists who worked with SEARCA were Ms. Adrian Mitchell and Ms. Melissa Greco, both Americans; and Mr. Pedro Cos, a Spaniard. They helped the Center improve its outreach and engagement with the public via social media and use of information and communication technology (ICT). On 18 July 2016, the team conducted an *Advanced Social Media Workshop* for selected SEARCA staff to introduce a new concepts and best practices in social media and recommended social media protocol for the Center.

In a ceremonial handover of outputs held last 20 July 2016, the IBM consultants presented their accomplishments and recommendations to SEARCA management and staff. They shared the same at the IBM CSC closing program held at IRRI on 21 July 2016 where the other IBM teams also presented the executive summaries of their respective work at IRRI.



The month-long IBM CSC-Peace Corps program culminated in an outreach for the Philippine High School for the Arts conducted by the IBM volunteers on 22 July 2016. The activity consisted of simultaneous workshops on Training for Teachers and Trainors (T3) and Design Thinking. The learning event enabled three SEARCA staff under the Knowledge Management Department to explore the potential and protocols of the Internet. (LLDDomingo)

OUTSTANDING SEARCA SCHOLARSHIP ALUMNI (OSSA) AWARDS AND EMERGING LEADERS IN TRANSITION ECONOMIES (ELITE) AWARDS

SEARCA names 11 outstanding alumni

At the cusp of its golden anniversary, SEARCA has named 11 Outstanding SEARCA Scholarship Alumni (OSSA) to honor them for their having personified SEARCA's values and philosophy and distinguished themselves through their professional accomplishments, public service, personal achievements, and other meritorious endeavors.

This is the first time since its establishment that SEARCA will give such prestigious recognition to its alumni who it considers as ambassadors for agricultural and rural development in the region.

The laureates are individually acknowledged for creating positive impact in four categories, namely: Teaching, Research, Public Policy and Governance, and Advocacy.

CHYA SUTHIWANITH



In 1973, when Dr. Chya Suthiwanith was offered the job of setting up the Faculty of Natural Resources of Prince of Songkla University (PSU) in southern Thailand, he felt he was not ready.

He had just earned his PhD in Agricultural Education from the University of the Philippines Los Baños in 1972 through a SEARCA scholarship, so he asked a more senior *Ajahn* (professor) to take on the task. However, the senior professor had confidence in Dr. Chya's capabilities and encouraged him to accept the challenge.

In October 1975, PSU's Faculty of Natural Resources was formally established with Dr. Chya as its first dean. On the other hand, his senior *Ajahn*—Dr. Sam-Arng Srinilta—went on to become a Visiting Professor at SEARCA and later its Deputy Director for Programs.

The PSU Faculty of Natural Resources was established to develop a body of knowledge in agriculture and natural resources appropriate to local conditions. Dr. Chya's vision was to produce graduates who can effectively use natural resources with little impact, if any, on the environment and the community. This concept was ahead of its time and still remains the Faculty's calling to this day.

Dr. Chya's skills in human relations and staff selection were instrumental in attracting good, capable, and committed professionals in what was then a remote academic outpost where very few people based in Bangkok would want to work.

The Faculty started accepting students in 1977, with about 60 undergraduates. By 2007, when Dr. Chya retired, the Faculty had a population of close to 4,000 undergraduate and 600 graduate students. Each year, the Faculty admits an average of 400 students. Many of its graduates are well-recognized both in government and the private sector. But one distinct characteristic of these graduates is their inclination toward integrated farming and practicing sustainable agriculture through agroforestry and mixed farming.

When he retired, Dr. Chya introduced an innovative way of extracting latex from rubber trees and established his rubber plantation. To this day, his plantation is frequented by students, extension workers, and farmers from all over Thailand to learn, train on, and experience what is now called his Rubber Plantation College.

MUSLIAR KASIM



Indonesia has more than 4,000 higher education institutions. This puts pressure on him who is entrusted the executive post of a university to lead and transform it into one of the most reputable universities in the country. For Dr. Musliar Kasim, it is all in a day's work. To this day, Dr. Musliar is one of Indonesia's prominent personalities when it comes to education.

Dr. Musliar graduated at the top of his class at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Andalas (UnAnd) in 1983. Prior to being entrusted the position of Rector, Dr. Musliar occupied a number of key positions in the university right after he

finished his PhD in Agronomy at the University of the Philippines Los Baños through the SEARCA scholarship in 1991. This included being the Secretary of the UnAnd Research Institute (1994-2000), Chairman of the Institute of Community Services (2000-2002), and Vice Rector for Administration and Finance (2002-2005). He also served as Chairman of the High Council of the Rector of State University (MTRPTN) and Deputy Permanent Committee on Quality Development and Industry Education, Kadin Indonesia.

Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit, Jr., SEARCA Director, said the remarkable achievements of the SEARCA graduate scholarship alumni are an affirmation that SEARCA has been achieving its goal of producing high-quality human resources for agricultural and rural development.

The OSSA and ELITE awardees will be honored on 25 November 2016 during the 50th anniversary celebration of SEARCA. A grand alumni homecoming is also slated on said occasion.

In 2006, Dr. Musliar was elected Rector of UnAnd. He focused on upgrading the infrastructure of the university, as well as continuously developing its faculty and staff through graduate studies, improving teaching methods, and opening new programs. He is noted for the innovative changes that he instituted in the university, particularly in promoting entrepreneurship among its graduates and molding of students' character. He spearheaded the development of new elective courses on entrepreneurship and exposed the students to local and international entrepreneurs they can emulate. Moreover, this program of UnAnd eventually became one of the national programs under the Ministry of National Education (MONE). In terms of character building, Dr. Musliar required all students living on campus to routinely perform Fajr prayer in congregation in the mosque. After prayer, the students are required to listen to lectures from successful people who may serve as models to help build the students' religious character.

UnAnd is now considered as one of the leading universities in character building and entrepreneurship. It was therefore no surprise

SEARCA names 11/ to page 12

when President Susilo Bambang Yudhono appointed Dr. Musliar as Deputy Minister for Education in 2004, while he was still serving his second term as UnAnd Rector. His mission then was to help in developing national education to produce intelligent people with distinct character, competitive, and highly employable.

Among his many contributions as Vice Minister, was the revision and development of Curriculum 2013 (C-13), which focuses on developing character and empathy for others. The program covers the requisite competency knowledge, skills, and attitudes in an integrated manner so that the students will be capable of contributing to society, the nation, and world civilization. Teachers facilitate the learning process by asking guided questions that encourage students to discover content for themselves and stir curiosity among students to build their critical thinking and communication skills.

Aside from developing C-13, Dr. Kasim was able to motivate people and communicate with the heads of the education office. Under his leadership, the ministry has renovated tens of thousands of schools. The ministry also conducted census and surveys to map the conditions of schools nationwide, which helped local administrations improve education facilities in their regions.

While he has relinquished said ministerial post when President Joko Widodo assumed office in 2014 and returned to UnAnd, Dr. Kasim is still involved in many of the ministry's initiatives, particularly with the implementation of C-13, proving his vital role in shaping the future of Indonesia.

DELFIN J. GANAPIN, JR.



Tracing the footprints of Dr. Delfin J. Ganapin, Jr. would show how the environmental activist made his mark in the national, regional, and global arena.

Even while still a student, he was a staunch advocate of the environment. He led the *Samahang Ekolohiya* (Ecological Organization) at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in the early 1970s during the Martial Law era. As one of the first to teach forest ecology at UPLB, he introduced the “barefoot forestry” concept, which evolved into the community-based forest management program in the Philippines.

When Dr. Ganapin joined the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural

Resources (DENR), his passion for the environment and the marginal sector translated into concrete actions with lifelong impacts. At DENR, he strengthened environmental impact assessment by introducing the social acceptability requirement for the Philippines' environmental compliance certificate (ECC). This became the pattern for the “prior informed consent,” which is now enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Dr. Ganapin also conceptualized and set the precedent for setting up environment and social guarantee funds, which is an innovative insurance system for stakeholder monitoring of impacts as well as providing immediate funds for affected communities to solve problems, for compensation, and for rehabilitation should the need arise.

He led an internal advocacy within government to empower indigenous peoples and took the lead in conceptualizing and implementing an innovative ancestral domain claims program. The program allows IPs to have security of tenure for their conservation-oriented practices even as the law does not allow them yet the ownership of their traditional lands. These laid the ground work for the passage of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act, which until now serves as a model and inspiration for those wanting to empower indigenous peoples in other parts of the world.

He also helped conceptualize and set up the Foundation for the Philippine Environment (FPE), which managed an endowment fund for the environment and sustainable development—something unheard of in the country and in the region at the time. Dr. Ganapin became FPE's first executive director and provided the exemplary track record for effective and efficient grant-making organizations. Given FPE's novel set up, Dr. Ganapin was invited to help conceptualize a similar endowment fund for Indonesia. He also became an organizing member of a global core group, which include the McArthur Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), helping other countries and their civil society groups to set up similar endowment or environmental trust funds.

These regional activities ultimately accelerated to a global scale with his appointment as the Global Manager for the UNDP-implemented Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) where Dr. Ganapin was able to transform the program into a global platform by adding 79 countries to its portfolio of 54 participating countries. Now SGP is GEF's biggest program for community and civil society engagement.

KLANARONG SRIROTH



From a lowly crop thriving on marginal soils and later a mere supplement exported for livestock feed in Europe, cassava is now one of the most important crops in Thailand. Much of this

growth started in a one-room laboratory at Kasetsart University (KU) run by visionary researcher Dr. Klanarong Sriroth back in the early 1990s.

Early on, Dr. Klanarong recognized the many different uses of cassava and the varied and unique properties of cassava starch, which has great potential for adding value to its products. He attributes his success in cassava starch technology to his graduate education way back in the 1970s. Under a SEARCA scholarship, Dr. Klanarong took his master's degree in food science and technology at the University of the Philippines Los Baños where he met professors and experts in cassava production and technology and did his thesis on cassava processing. All these experiences he carried back to his one-room laboratory in his home country.

His humble lab gave birth to KU's Cassava and Starch Technology Research Unit, the only laboratory in Thailand recognized by both the academe and the private industry and is part of the National Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology of the Ministry of Science and Technology of Thailand. With Dr. Klanarong at the helm, the research facility developed valuable innovations in starch modification technology that immensely contributed to Thailand's cassava starch industry. The research facility is now a source of certification for maintaining standards for cassava export from Thailand to the global market as attested by the Thai Tapioca Starch Association of Thailand. Aside from quality assurance, the research facility plays a key role in human resource development by honing future scientists and scholars who will sustain the positive gains under Dr. Klanarong's innovative and visionary leadership.

As a well-known scientist, Dr. Klanarong was able to serve as an effective “bridge” between science and its stakeholders—the academe, government policymakers, the private sector, farmers, and the scientific community. Such role effectively channeled and utilized his research results in policymaking and overall development of the sugar and starch industry. With more than half of the global market share, Thailand is the largest exporter of starch products today.

The impact of Dr. Klanarong's research also extends to Thailand's sugar industry, which can be traced to his doctoral degree in 1986. One of his research outputs that the Ministry of Industry implemented was the pricing system of sugarcane and sugar in Thailand. This improvement in the pricing system, from sugarcane weight to the commercial cane sugar (CCS) system, was more beneficial to all partners and stakeholders of the sugarcane and sugar industry in Thailand.

PHAN HIEU HIEN



Much of Vietnam's success story in rice production has been attributed mainly to hybrid rice varieties and increase in production area. But in the Mekong River Delta, the country's largest granary, agricultural mechanization is also perceived as a key. Amid all these was Dr. Phan Hieu Hien and his team of dedicated engineers from Nong Lam University in Ho Chi Minh City.

Dr. Hien had worked on developing agricultural machineries to boost rice production as far back as the early 1970s. His thesis research for his master's degree, which he completed under the SEARCA scholarship in 1974 at the University of the Philippines Los Baños, was evaluating a rice stripper harvester technology. He also designed and introduced an adaptation of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) axial-flow thresher in 1974, a mechanical reaper developed through an IRRI-China collaboration in 1984, and the PhilRice mini-combine harvester in 2004. All of these have been adopted and improved by the farmer-mechanics in the Mekong Delta, which Dr. Hien considers as part of a "research-extension cycle."

"What I enjoy most about local farmers is that they adopt [the machine] and they modify and improve it," Dr. Hien said. He added that without these local farmer mechanics using, improving, and promoting their machines, extension would be limited.

But Dr. Hien's most outstanding innovation is his flat-bed dryer that uses rice husks as fuel. The first-generation dryer, introduced in the mid-1980s in Soc-Trang province, was able to process hundreds of tons of wet paddy for the first time in the Mekong Delta. It enabled farmers to dry their harvests in a mechanical dryer and not sun-dried in open areas on the grounds.

The technology had been continuously improved by his colleagues and farmer-mechanics based on the previous models and can now dry 10-50

tons of rice per batch. Even during dry season, more farmers prefer using the flat-bed dryer because there is less grain breakage.

It is worthwhile to note that while the agricultural machineries that Dr. Hien and his team developed are now widespread in the Mekong Delta and other countries, profit was not the bottom line. According to his colleagues, what Dr. Hien received for his hard work was the respect and trust of the people.

In his 33 years of teaching and research at Nong Lam University, he became the head of the Department of Agricultural Machinery, and co-holder of four patents on dryers, and was able to publish about 30 articles and six books in Vietnamese. He also mentored many undergraduate and graduate students, some of whom are now his colleagues in his research and extension work. And while he has retired from the university, he is still very much engaged in the promotion of the laser-controlled land leveling technology in Vietnam, which he and his colleagues developed in 2005. In 2008, he received the much coveted "People's Teacher" bestowed by no less than the President of Vietnam.

SEGFREDO R. SERRANO



Eighteen years as undersecretary for policy and planning under 12 agriculture ministers—or department secretaries in the case of the Philippines—and four Philippine Presidents is a feat in itself. This is the sterling track record of Dr. Segfredo R. Serrano at his country's Department of Agriculture (DA).

His critical post has enabled him to provide the agriculture ministry vital institutional memory and expertise in crafting national agricultural policies and programs geared toward the long-term welfare of Filipino farmers. His inclusiveness, which extended to civil society, in making informed decisions has made him an effective policymaker. His legacy as an inclusive and innovative leader—a reformist technocrat—benefitted not just his country, but also the Southeast Asian region.

Dr. Serrano served as the country's chief negotiator for agriculture and fisheries in all international trade negotiations, including the World Trade Organization (WTO), ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA), Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), Philippines-Japan Economic Partnership

Agreement (PJEPA), and Trade and Investment Facilitation Agreement (TIFA) with the United States of America.

The Philippines rallied with other developing countries and took a pragmatic and defensive strategy, which eventually prevented developed countries from imposing their trade negotiating position which may adversely affect most of the region's farmers and other agricultural stakeholders. As WTO Negotiator and Chair of the Task Force on WTO Agriculture Agreement (Re) negotiations (TF-WAR), Dr. Serrano brought in farmer groups, industry associations, business federations, nongovernmental organizations, people's organizations and other relevant government institutions and agencies to improve the technical and policy work to support the TF-WAR and enable a quick response to developments in the negotiations. This bottom-up approach involving a wider constituency strengthened their negotiating position in the WTO.

Meanwhile, Dr. Serrano was able to mainstream the issue of climate change in the country's agriculture and fisheries sector, leading the Philippine delegation at negotiating sessions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). He also took the lead in crafting the unified developmental policy framework for DA's programs, particularly the Agriculture and Fisheries chapter of the Philippine Development Plan and its accompanying Medium Term Public Investment Plan. This important piece of work serves as the Philippines' development agenda in the next five years.

Dr. Serrano earned his doctoral degree in agricultural economics through the SEARCA scholarship in 1992 at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) where he specialized in agricultural marketing with economics and policy as his field of sub-specialization. After completing his PhD, he assumed the position of Chief Science Research Specialist of the Social Science and Policy Research Program of DA-Philippine Rice Research Institute until 1998. His dedication opened doors to new challenges when he was appointed Assistant Secretary at DA, a position he held until 2004 when he assumed his post as Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, Research and Development and Regulations.

MOHAMMAD MAKSUM



A genuine passion to support the underprivileged is needed for development to happen. This passion is personified by Prof. Dr. Ir. Mochammad

Maksum who wears a number of important hats in Indonesia: Professor at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Vice General Chairman of the Central Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and Rector of Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama which was recently established by NU, the largest religious organization in Indonesia.

Prof. Maksum's passion for his religion and his drive to help the rural poor has been the strongest foundation in his development work. As one of the revered leaders of NU, Prof. Maksum strictly adheres to the concept of Islam Nusantara, which he described as "100 percent faith, 100 percent tolerance." He believes that through this principle, Islam could be an instrument of peace and equality through its inter-faith and intra-faith dialogues.

A two-time SEARCA scholar, Prof. Maksum earned his MS and PhD at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). His genius and breadth of passions are evident in the very different specializations he pursued: MS in Agricultural Engineering and PhD in Agricultural Economics.

Armed with his PhD, Prof. Maksum returned to UGM as lecturer at the Faculty of Agricultural Technology, rose through the ranks, and was eventually appointed as Professor, a testament to his academic excellence. His involvement in the Center for Rural and Regional Development Studies enabled him to work closely with the rural poor for their development and empowerment. His campaign is centered on access to justice; inclusive development at the local level; and an understanding of a socio-cultural system that appreciates different religions, social practices, and indigenous technology. He also advocated these in his column in a local newspaper in Yogyakarta.

It was not long before local and national authorities took notice of Prof. Maksum's development initiatives. Appreciation and prestige being the least of his priorities, he turned down two high-level ministry positions so that he can focus on his role in agricultural development unflinchingly.

NAOMI G. TANGONAN



The passion of Dr. Naomi G. Tangonan for teaching and academic excellence is not only confined to the four corners of the classrooms at the University of Southern Mindanao (USM) where

she was a professor of Plant Pathology; it extends to the field and the farmers, out-of-school youth, and women.

To teach effectively, one must become an expert on the subject with a continuous search for and sharing of knowledge through research, extension, and knowledge management. For her part, Dr. Tangonan has written manuals, brochures, and laboratory guides for her classes and other clients. She was among the few professors at USM to publish research findings in ISI/international journals. She is known for the reference book in Plant Pathology "Host Index of Plant Diseases in the Philippines" published in 1992, which she co-authored with Dr. Florendo C. Quebral of the University of the Philippines Los Baños and funded by the Department of Science and Technology. In 1999, through the support of the Philippine Rice Research Institute, she revised and updated the book by adding newly discovered plant diseases. To this day, these books are considered main references among crop protection students, agriculturists, and technicians all over the Philippines.

Another landmark achievement is her leadership in the rubber industry where she led 17 experts/authors to produce the book titled "Rubber Production and Management in the Philippines" with the financial support of the Philippine Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR).

Dr. Tangonan's passion translated into many milestones in her life, including being appointed as first woman dean of the USM College of Agriculture, first USM faculty to attain the rank of Professor, and national honors in teaching and research including the Metrobank Foundation's Outstanding Teachers Award and Award for Continuing Excellence and Services, and appointment as Department of Science and Technology Lifetime Scientist.

But what Dr. Tangonan primarily considers as the "fruits of her labors" are the students that she has mentored through the years, who are now successful in their chosen professions: agriculturists, entrepreneur-farmers, teachers, doctors, engineers, businessmen and women, even priests, pastors, and nuns.

While she has already retired from USM in North Cotabato, she has been appointed by the President of the university as head of the Plant Pathology Research Laboratory where she continues to mentor high school, college, and graduate students.

Dr. Tangonan obtained her PhD in Plant Pathology from the University of the Philippines Los Baños

in 1984, which she completed through a SEARCA scholarship.

LUCRECIO L. REBUGIO



A straight path with crooked lines. That was how Dr. Lucrecio L. Rebugio described his journey along his illustrious career in social forestry. It was with a SEARCA scholarship that he earned his PhD in Community Development from the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in 1977.

Now Professor Emeritus of Social Forestry and Forest Governance at UPLB, Dr. Rebugio has been deemed as the prime mover in advancing social forestry education in the Philippines and in other Asian countries. The touchstones of his service at UPLB that spanned more than 37 years are his students who went on to become leaders, academicians, and scientists in the Philippines and abroad, and his numerous scholarly publications.

As a pioneer of human resource economics in forestry, Dr. Rebugio's papers titled "Social Forestry: For What and For Whom," "Social Forestry as a Resource System," and "Social Forestry as a Development Program" continue to be the foremost references on social forestry in the Philippines.

The social forestry champion's lecture on paradigms and their relationship to forestry and the environment inspired major policy and program reforms in forestry towards a more holistic and integrated approach on the technical and social aspects of natural resources management.

As a research fellow at the East-West Center Environment and Policy Institute in Hawaii in 1984, Dr. Rebugio's pioneering research advanced the discipline and practice of social forestry. He also served as visiting associate professor of tropical forest sociology at Yale University where he developed and taught the maiden offering of the graduate course on Comparative Social Forestry during the spring semester of 1984. Most of his students went on to serve as social forestry consultants in Asia and Africa. To this day, the course is still one of the most popular graduate courses at Yale, drawing both local and foreign graduate students.

Also worth noting is Dr. Rebugio's role as Chief Technical Adviser in establishing the Bachelor of Science in Forestry curriculum of Chittagong University in Bangladesh and laying the groundwork for the development of its Institute of Forestry into the Institute of Forestry and Environmental Science (IFES).

As one of the key personalities in the foundation of social forestry in the country, it was under his leadership that the UPLB College of Forestry was transformed into the College of Forestry and Natural Resources (CFNR), preparing the college to be more responsive to the forestry education challenges of the 21st century.

AGUSTINHO DA COSTA XIMENES



A young nation's growth and development are boosted by its young leaders and intellectuals with the passion to serve. Mr. Agostinho Da Costa Ximenes is one of these passionate young servant-leaders steeped in the science of farming.

Having earned his MS in Agronomy at the University of the Philippines Los Baños in 2010 under SEARCA scholarship, Mr. Ximenes had the strong desire to help share knowledge with his country's future leaders and help find solutions to the food security woes plaguing Timor-Leste. He began by immersing in development work, managing projects on livelihood for nongovernmental organizations and international donor agencies, including the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

As the National Food Security Officer of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UN-FAO) in Timor-Leste, he helped improve

the government's capacity to collect, analyze, and disseminate information from the National Information and Early Warning System on Food Security. This enabled stakeholders to make informed decisions to address food security and nutrition issues in vulnerable communities. As a direct result of his efforts, the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy, the Zero Hunger National Action Plan, and the policy on the proper management of rice imports in Timor-Leste were developed.

His involvement in the Agricultural Science Institute of Timor-Leste—a youth organization that promotes knowledge and learning through research and evidence-based interventions—is just one of the many ways he pays it forward. Wanting to curb food insecurity and malnutrition in his country, he continues to contribute to the scientific research on maize to increase food crop productivity and diversification. He has made it his personal responsibility to get his younger counterparts interested in farming and agriculture.

SEARCA's ELITE award is a testament to Mr. Ximenes' transformative leadership through his continuous contributions toward nation-building, policy formulation, and program delivery.

SENG MOM



Dr. Seng Mom's life and career has been all about linking her university and her country to the global village. As Vice Rector for Planning and International Cooperation at the

Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) in Cambodia, Dr. Seng Mom has pushed forward the university's internationalization by forging partnerships with European and Asian institutions.

After earning her master's degree at the Georg-August University of Göttingen in 2001 under a SEARCA-Centre for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture and Forestry (CeTSAF) scholarship, Dr. Mom helped paved the way for RUA's student and faculty exchanges as well as collaborative researches and other initiatives with other academic institutions.

While Dr. Mom acknowledges that she did not do it alone, RUA's exchange program grew from two outbound students to 200 exchange students under her watch. More than the formal degrees and academic credit, it offered the program fostered networks and lifelong friendships for the students and the teachers.

In addition to the exchanges, collaborative researches have been initiated yearly, bringing in technical and financial resources that contribute to building and strengthening RUA. Affirming the significance of all these initiatives in helping Cambodia transition from a "least developed country" to a middle income country, Dr. Mom considers the exchanges as long-lasting commitments and not simply as one-time events.

Dr. Mom also contributed to the discussion on the challenges and opportunities faced in agricultural and rural development by organizing a number of international conferences such as the *7th International Conference on Environmental and Rural Development (ICERD)* and the *National Conference on Agriculture and Rural Development (NCARD)*. In addition, she was active in the "Annual Conference on Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery: Achievement of 2015-2016 and Direction for 2016-2017" convened by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and RUA. By organizing these conferences on agriculture and by collaborating with international partners, Dr. Mom helped establish platforms for knowledge sharing and networking for the students and her colleagues.

37 New SEARCA scholars/ from page 5

- Mr. Jose Da Costa Ronal Freygen, Timorese (MS, plant breeding and biotechnology)
- Mr. Luis Manuel Branco, Timorese (PhD, agronomy and horticulture)
- Mr. Afonso Candido, Timorese (PhD, community development)
- Mr. Nguyen Manh Hieu, Vietnamese (MS, agricultural economics)
- Mr. Phap Ngoc Hoang Tran, Vietnamese (MS, bio-veterinary science)
- Mr. Ho Ngoc Cuong, Vietnamese (PhD, agricultural economics)
- Mr. Tran Manh Hai, Vietnamese (PhD, agricultural economics)

- Ms. Nguyen Thi Huyen, Vietnamese (PhD, environmental science)
- Mr. Nguyen Thanh Trung, Vietnamese (PhD, tropical agriculture)

DAAD-SEARCA Scholars

- Mr. Jan Lorenzo G. Alegado, Filipino (MS, agricultural economics)
- Mr. Hector Bryan P. Grama, Filipino (MS, agricultural economics)
- Ms. Deasy Fitriati Nasution, Indonesian (PhD, agricultural engineering)
- Mr. Yarzar Hein, Myanmar (PhD, agricultural and resource economics)

- Mr. Ong Quoc Cuong, Vietnamese (PhD, agricultural economics)

Mr. Ericson N. Dela Cruz, Filipino (PhD, community development) is supported by the PCC-SEARCA Scholarship Project.

SEARCA's graduate scholarship program is administered and managed by its Graduate Education and Institutional Development Department (GEIDD). (Report from JSLaranas)

Garden-based education, nutrition project launched

MAJAYJAY, Philippines—A garden-based education and nutrition project targeting malnourished children in five elementary schools and one high school in Laguna was launched during the ceremonial signing of the memorandum of agreement among the project partners held at Majayjay Elementary School on 22 July 2016.

The project titled *Participatory Action Research on School- and Community-based Food and Nutrition Program for Literacy, Poverty Reduction, and Sustainable Development* is a joint undertaking of SEARCA, the Philippine Department of Education–Division of Laguna (DepEd Laguna), and the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

The school and home gardens are learning sites and source of nutritious food and savings or income for the school children, their families, and the participating schools.

During the launch, Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit Jr., SEARCA Director, underscored the importance of school gardens to meet the nutritional needs of school children; heighten appreciation for agriculture among the youth; protect the environment; and serve as “an alternative source of food and income for rural families to address the looming problems of rural poverty and hunger, which



Representatives of institutions jointly implementing the school gardens project sign the formal agreement for the project during rites held on 22 July 2016 in Majayjay Elementary School. In the photo are (seated from left) Dr. Neil G. Angeles, Assistant Schools Division Superintendent of Department of Education-Laguna (DepEd Laguna); Dr. Gil C. Saguiguit Jr., SEARCA Director; and Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez Jr., University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) Chancellor. Witnesses to the ceremonial signing (standing from left) are Dr. Orlando Valverde of DepEd Laguna, Dr. Bessie Burgos of SEARCA, Dr. Pearl Sanchez of UPLB, and DepEd Laguna District Supervisor Flora Rondilla.

prevent access of many school children to quality education.”

Dr. Fernando C. Sanchez, Jr., UPLB Chancellor, cited the significance of the school and home gardens project in translating UPLB’s commitment “to reach out to the Filipino people through knowledge and technology sharing.”

He explained that participating schools and communities will greatly benefit from the technical training and information on edible landscaping, nutrition, and organic seed production that UPLB staff will provide.

On behalf of Dr. Josilyn S. Solana, Schools Division Superintendent of DepEd Laguna, Dr. Neil G. Angeles, Assistant Schools Division Superintendent, and Dr. Orlando T. Valverde, Curriculum Implementation Division Chief, affirmed their strong support to the project as it aligns with the *Gulayan sa Paaralan* advocacy of DepEd. They thanked SEARCA and UPLB for helping better equip selected teachers in

training students, other teachers, and members of the community on the best practices in small-scale gardening, organic agriculture, and innovative gardening techniques and methods.

Present at the launch were officials and staff of SEARCA, UPLB, DepEd Laguna, the local government of Majayjay, and provincial government of Laguna, as well as principals and teachers from the participating schools. Majayjay Mayor Carlo Invinzor B. Clado formally closed the event.

The project launch included a tour of the Majayjay Elementary School’s organic garden that now includes the SEARCA-DepEd-UPLB school garden facility that consists of a 100-square meter area with a small greenhouse that serves as seedling nursery and equipped with rainwater collection system. The garden has been planted with different vegetable crops based on the school garden design and plan prepared in April 2016 during the *Seminar-Workshop on School Garden Planning*. The vegetables planted include pechay (*Brassica rapa*), mustard (*Brassica juncea*), eggplant (*Solanum melongena*), kulitis (*Amaranthus viridis*), tomato (*Lycopersicon esculentum*), saluyot (*Corchorus olitorius*), talinum (*Talinum paniculatum*), radish (*Raphanus sativus*), okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*), cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata*), and pole beans (*Vigna unguiculata sesquipedalis*).

In August, some of the crops were harvested by the students with supervision from the teachers. All the garden produce will be used in DepEd’s School-based Feeding Program. (Report from AGCVallez)



Students of Majayjay Elementary School with their harvest of radishes and pole beans from the SEARCA-DepEd-UPLB school garden.



The SEARCA-DepEd-UPLB school garden in Majayjay Elementary School.