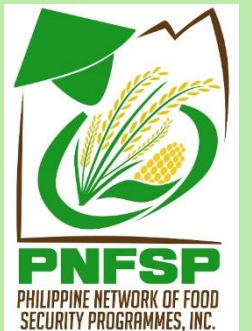


A decorative image on the left side of the slide. It features several stalks of golden rice grain standing upright, and a brown burlap sack lying on its side with white rice grain spilling out of its open mouth. The background is a solid light green color.

Advancing the struggle against Rice Liberalization through Community Empowerment

Lorena R. Villareal

Institutional Capacity Development Officer





A Brief Background of Farmers' Situation in the Philippines

Land Ownership in the Philippines

- ❑ 7 out of 10 rural farmers in the Philippines do not own the land they farm
- ❑ Often, more than 75% of what they harvest go to the landowner, a system which perpetuates an indebted peasantry, with farmers barely subsisting.
- ❑ 2.4 small farmers have an average farm size of 2 hectares (4.94 acres) while 13,681 landholders own up to 20,000 hectares (49,421.076 acres)
- ❑ The concentration of Philippine agricultural lands in the hands of oligarchs amid sham land distribution is becoming even more rampant, depriving the actual land tillers of the fruits of the land they made productive, and threatening the country's food security.

Rice Farming in the Philippines

- ❑ In the Philippines, there are about 2.7 million rice farming families
- ❑ Rice is grown on small family based farms with an average size varying from less than 0.5 to 4.0 ha, hence the ratio is small.



Rice Self-Sufficiency

- ❑ The Philippines' annual average rice self-sufficiency ratio over the last 30 years was **91%**
- ❑ The country was **93% rice self-sufficient as of 2017.**

Source: IBON Foundation

Rice can be much cheaper and the country can be fully self-sufficient if only farmers have the lands of their own, there was enough support, subsidies and facilities for the country's 2.7 million rice farmers.

Why does the Philippines resort to liberalizing importation?

Runaway inflation has always been our economic managers' alibi for liberalizing importation.

Since 1995 that the Philippines entered into the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), over 10% of the total supply of rice in the country is imported.

- ❑ 1998 at 28% over 2 million metric tons,
- ❑ 2010 at 19%
- ❑ 2008 at 18%
- ❑ 2006-2007 at 15%

Prior to the country's entry into the WTO-AoA, it only reached 0%, 3%, 4%, the highest was 9% in 1990.



Concrete Experience when the Philippines entered the World Trade Organization Agreement on Agriculture(AoA)

For nearing three decades since the Philippines entered into the WTO AoA, past and present regimes subscribed to neoliberalism, which is liberalization in the agriculture sector, in the name of “free trade” and “global competitiveness at the expense of the Filipino farmers.

- ❑ no protection to the local rice industry
- ❑ rice imports flooded local markets
- ❑ Retail prices of rice speedily doubled and even tripled in the countryside. It forced millions of poor Filipinos into chronic hunger, via reduction of consumption, reaching extremely once a day.

Republic Act 11203 or Rice Liberalization Law (RLL)

The Law was passed in February 14, 2019

- ❑ Farmers were already facing worse prospects for selling palay even before the RLL.
- ❑ The government clipped the powers of the National Food Authority (NFA) to influence and support the price of rice in the market by restricting the amount of palay and rice it buys locally and reduced it to mere buffer stocking for emergencies.
- ❑ Rice Competitive Enhancement Fund (RCEF) claims to enhance farmers' competitiveness through mechanization, seeds distribution and trainings. However, its coverage is actually limited and can even aggravates farmers' indebtedness if productivity or earnings do not increase much and if farmers' expenses are still too high.

On the Department of Agriculture's National Food Security Summit 2021



“

A national food security summit without a program for genuine agrarian reform only reinforces the oppressive status quo.

Any measure it takes is a measure only for advancing the interests of landgrabbers and compradors who see agricultural land not as a source of nourishment but profit.

Genuine agrarian reform is the first step to ensuring food self sufficiency founded on food sovereignty.

Antonio “Ka Tonying” Flores

Chairperson, Unyon ng mga Manggagawa sa Agrikultura

On the Department of Agriculture's National Food Security Summit 2021



“

The government should promote a pro-people and farmer-centered approach to production for local consumption instead of liberalization which destroys food self-sufficiency.

The DA acknowledges the need to support and subsidize our farmers. But if by 'support' they mean making them dependent on agribusiness corporations, this is abandoning the cause of food self-sufficiency and security. It means that profit, really, becomes their goal.

Liza L. Maza

Spokesperson, Council for People's Development & Governance



Campaigning Against Rice Liberalization in the Philippines

The campaign for the right to safe, sufficient and affordable food involves many sectors.

Identifying the targets of the campaign

- ✓ Rice farmers
- ✓ Consumers
- ✓ National Food Authority (NFA) employees
- ✓ Rice Millers
- ✓ Academic sector
- ✓ Women
- ✓ Youth

Campaign Strategies

- ❑ Massive Information Drive
- ❑ Organizing and Mobilizing Rights Holders
- ❑ Formation of Alliances and Networks
- ❑ Engagement with Duty Bearers
- ❑ Holding of Protest Actions
- ❑ Forging International Solidarity and participation in Global Campaigns for Food Security

Massive Information Drive

- ❑ **Forums** – we held community meetings and forums to discuss the ill effects of rice liberalization and discussing people's alternative bills for legislation
- ❑ **Study Sessions and Round Table Discussions** – In these activities, case studies were presented to further validate data and analysis.
- ❑ **Leaflets and Primer Distributions** – in strategic places, we distributed information education materials to reach the broad masses/sectors
- ❑ **Radio Hopping (Guestings and Interviews)** - maximizing air waves to reach the broad masses who rely on radio programs for information
- ❑ **Press Releases and Press Conferences** – announcing activities and stand on specific issues concerning the campaign against rice liberalization and food security

Conduct of Fora and Community Meetings



Study Sessions and RTDs



Primers and leaflets
distribution on strategic
places

Campaign Strategies

Organizing and Mobilizing Rights Holders

- ❑ Organizing actions through organizations – we held community meetings for campaign unification and planning of activities
- ❑ Signature Campaigns – through community meetings and forums, we also gathered signatures for the petition to junk the Rice Liberalization Law. Signature campaigns were also held in strategic places in the urban areas, like markets and office entrances
- ❑ Social media rallies - with the interactive features we maximized the use of social media platforms to quickly disseminate information and rally supporters for a common good like the campaign to defend the Philippine rice industry and repeal of the rice liberalization law

Formation of new Farmers' Organizations and Strengthening of Existing Ones



signature campaigns

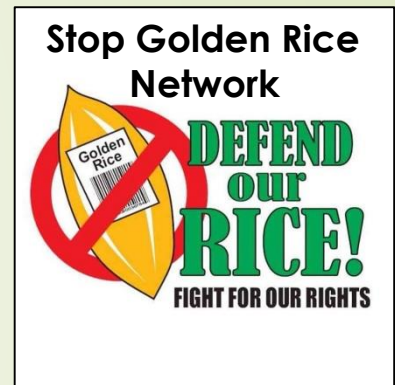


Social media rallies

Campaign Strategies

Formation of Alliances and Networks

- ❑ **Bantay Bigas** – (Rice Watch) a network of peasant organizations and food security advocates formed in 2008 with the aim for safe, sufficient and affordable rice for the people.
- ❑ **Stop Golden Rice Network** – a network of farmers, scientists, consumers, youth, church people, food right advocates, women and children groups, environmentalists, and other sectoral organisations campaigning for the people's right to health and healthy environment, the protection and promotion of farmers rights to seeds, and food sovereignty that is being threatened by the introduction of genetically modified rice in Asia.
- ❑ **Agroecology X** - a unique community of organizations, associations, sustainable agriculture practitioners and advocates, social entrepreneurs, organic food buffs, and many other believers and doers of agroecology.



Engagement with Duty Bearers

Dialogues were held to engage the duty bearers to hear the cries of the affected sectors

Dialogue with local government units



Submission of petitions to repeal RA11203 to legislators



Holding of protest actions

Aside from dialogues and indoor activities, there are also protest actions on occasions like World Food Day, October peasant month, Department of Agriculture Food Summit among others. This is to show the united action of farmers and peasant advocates and put pressure on policy makers of the government to address the issues and impacts of food insecurity



Forging International Solidarity for Food Security

Participation in international activities against liberalization, campaign for food system change, promotion of agroecology and fight against GMOs was also part of the campaign strategies to raise the advocacy globally and forge people to people solidarity to advance common goals for food security.



Global People's Summit on Food Systems

September 21 Summit Opening
9AM New York & La Paz / 3PM Rome / 4PM Nairobi & Amman / 9PM Manila

September 22 Side Events

September 23 Global Day of Action
Speak Out (Closing Plenary)
for Just, Equitable, Healthy, and Sustainable Food Systems
9AM New York & La Paz / 3PM Rome / 4PM Nairobi & Amman / 9PM Manila

Register to join: bit.ly/GlobalPeoplesSummit

#Hungry4Change #OurFoodSystems hungry4change.info [f](https://www.facebook.com/OurFoodSystems) [i](https://www.instagram.com/OurFoodSystems) [t](https://www.twitter.com/OurFoodSystems) [y](https://www.youtube.com/OurFoodSystems)

People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty • PAN Asia Pacific • Asian Peasant Coalition • Arab Group for the Protection of Nature • Arab Network for Food Sovereignty • Eastern and Southern Africa Small-scale Farmers Forum • In! Indigenous Peoples' Movement for Self-Determination & Liberation • Coalition of Agricultural Workers International • Asian Rural Women's Coalition • Global Forest Coalition • People Over Profit • Asia Pacific Research Network • BOP International • Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Land & Development • Stop Golden Rice Network • PAN North America • A Growing Culture • Youth for Food Sovereignty • Local Futures • International League of People's Struggles (ILPS) • International Women's Alliance • International Migrants Alliance



STOP GOLDEN RICE!

UNITY STATEMENT CALLING TO JUNK THE PERMIT FOR COMMERCIAL PROPAGATION OF GOLDEN RICE AND OPPOSE ALL DEVELOPMENTS THAT WILL ADVANCE THE GREEN REVOLUTION AND THE CORPORATE CAPTURE OF FOOD SYSTEMS

STOP GOLDEN RICE NETWORK

PCFS
PEOPLE'S COALITION ON FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Good Food Co.

GREENPEACE

Communities for Alternative Food Ecosystems CAFE Initiative

GLOBAL SEED SAVERS

AMIHAN **Bantay Bigas** **SEARICE** **KMP** **KILUSANG MAGSUSUKUP NG PILIPINAS** **NNARA-YOUTH**

Campaign Strategies

What obstacles did we encounter in mobilizing the target sectors?

Shrinking democratic space and red-tagging

- ❑ Individuals and organizations are "tagged" as either communists or terrorists or both, regardless of their actual political beliefs or affiliations. Red-tagging is being used as a political tactic that undermines Philippine democracy by stifling dissent, producing a chilling effect on general discourse and, more insidiously, encouraging assassinations and hurling trumped up charges.

We continuously hold human rights orientations and para-legal trainings to equip leaders and members on the defense of human rights and advancement of their socio-economic and political rights amidst intensified attacks.

What obstacles did we encounter in mobilizing the target sectors?

Restrictions due to coronavirus pandemic

- ❑ Restrictions imposed by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging Infectious Disease on the Emergence of Infectious Disease affected the mobility of organizers and leaders and delay of activities.
 - ❑ Mass gatherings were prohibited and violators were apprehended
- ✓ Organizers/field staff had to secure the necessary permits and medical requirements, observed quarantine protocols
 - ✓ Face to face activities were modified to online activities

Empowerment Issues and Challenges

- ❑ Formation of organizations and strengthening of existing ones
- ❑ Organizing women and involving them in decision making and collective actions
- ❑ Amplifying farmers' voices through the support of different sectors
- ❑ Introducing new farming methods and practices versus conventional (chemical dependent) farming to achieve safe, affordable and sufficient food production

Formation of organizations and Strengthening Existing Ones

With the decades-long experience of oppression and repression, organizing farmers is not that difficult because they can easily understand the context and need to form their organizations.

In order to empower community organizations, we had to conduct:

- ❑ Orientation and assemblies to form new organizations
- ❑ Leadership Trainings to develop the skills and knowledge of potential leaders to manage campaigns and organizational activities
- ❑ Integrating human rights seminars to educate farmers more on their socio-economic and political rights for assertion and claiming of their rights.



Organizing women and involving them in decision making and collective actions

Filipino women in general suffer from economic disadvantages. They are always regarded as household buddies in charge of majority of the household chores.

Organizing peasant women is liberating in some ways because we enable them to:

- ☐ Form their organizations
- ☐ Engage them in decision making for their families and communities
- ☐ Take actions in issues concerning their socio-economic and political rights



Organizing women and involving them in decision making and collective actions

Specific cases where women are actively involve in the defense of their land and campaign for food security

- ❑ **Miriam Villanueva** is the secretary general of Katipunan ng mga Lehitimong Magsasaka at Mamamayan sa Lupang Ramos (KASAMA-LR), the organization that fights for the residents' rights to the 372-hectares land of Lupang Ramos in Dasmariñas Cavite.
- ❑ **Asosasyon Dagiti Mannalon a Babbai ti Isabela (AMBI)** a chapter of AMIHAN Isabela Province were able to conduct seeds distribution to calamity affected rice farmers in 2020

Amplifying farmers' voices through the support of different sectors

Farmers are majority of the Philippine population but their voices are suppressed and rarely heard. It is in this context that the role of other sectors come, to promote the advocacy and aspirations of the peasants.



Introducing new farming methods and practices versus conventional (chemical dependent) farming to achieve safe, affordable and sufficient food production

With decades long of chemical farming experience, there is a need to educate them of alternative and low-cost farming method that is also climate resilient.

Shifting to organic method is not as easy as ABC because farmers would always want higher yield for higher income. And it is not easy to attain better yield while rehabilitating the overly acidic agricultural lands damaged by decades of chemical dependent farming.

Efforts start with orientations and trial farms to help them see the process while learning also from their years of experience.



Empowerment Issues and Challenges

Promoting the benefits of agroecology

Agroecology as an ecological approach to agriculture, often described as low-external-input farming

- ❑ focuses on changing social relations, empowering farmers
- ❑ pushes for food system change
- ❑ allows farmers to adapt to climate change, sustainably use and conserve natural resources and biodiversity.



How agroecology is empowering communities

- ❑ Farmers can lower their cost of production through the use of organic fertilizers with the available resources they have in the communities, Lower cost of production means higher income for farmers.
- ❑ Collective farming is also a contributing factor in lowering their cost of production because they won't have to pay for farm labour.
- ❑ Agroecology improves the adaptive capacity of agroecosystems and reduces vulnerability to natural disasters, climate change impacts, and new and emerging environmental and economic system stresses and shocks. Climate resilient crops can provide better yield to Filipino farmers
- ❑ Marketing support with the help of peasant and food security advocates through Agroecology Fairs creates alternative markets for organic crops

marketing support through Agroecology Fairs



Market access for just prices is a problem for farmers, thus Agroecology Fairs provided venues for farmers to market their organically grown crops.

Empowerment Issues and Challenges

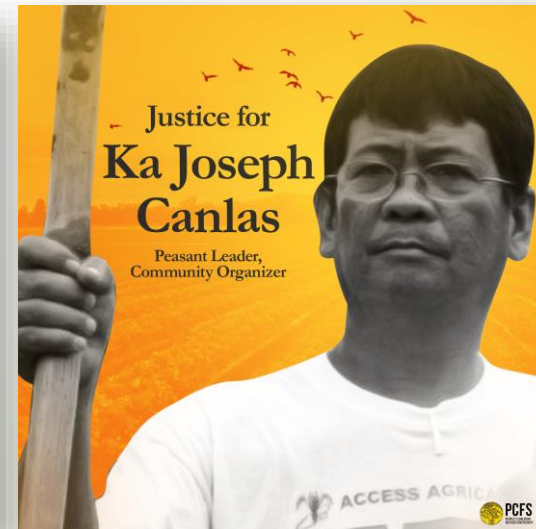


Risks and Challenges

Risks and Challenges

Community organizing has both risks and challenges that we also address

- ❑ Weather Disturbances – Typhoon season in the Philippines affect planned activities. People's organizations are compelled to address the needs of calamity survivors in their respective regions while actively campaigning for the repeal of the rice liberalization law
- ❑ Individuals and organizations are "tagged" as either communists or terrorists or both, regardless of their actual political beliefs or affiliations. It has pernicious effects on its targets.



Victories and lessons learned

- ❑ The campaign may not have achieved the repealing of RA 11203 yet but the continuing campaign strengthened the solidarity and unity in impacted communities as well as solidarity among sectors, in support to a common cause.
- ❑ The campaign also helped in forming new organizations in impacted rural communities, while strengthening existing peasant and rural women organizations.
- ❑ Synergy activities among organizations also provided venues for learning like the conduct of agroecology orientations, farm plannings and holding of agroecology fairs.
- ❑ Immediate actions to counter attacks can result to positive outcome



“

The signs are clear that food security amid the global pandemic is a ticking time bomb if not addressed with strong resolve to uphold the right to food and peoples' welfare. It's time to put local, farmer-led, and ecologically sound farming at the center of agriculture policies for a just, sustainable, and equitable food system.

Burly Mango

Executive Director, Philippine Network of Food Security Programmes



Council for People's Development and Governance



@cso_voices



People
economics
MAY MAGSAYSAY



MARAMING SALAMAT!
Thank You!

