

# Family Farming in the Philippines

The Asia-Pacific region holds 60 percent of the world's population and 70 percent of its family farmers. Small-scale food producers, farmers, forest producers, fishers and herders produce 80 percent of the region's food. Family farmers ensure the future of Asia and are at the heart of food security and sustainable food systems.

The United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNOFF 2019-2028) aims at unleashing the potential of family farmers as key agents of change to transform food systems world-wide. Within this framework, the ComDev Asia communication initiative implements a regional campaign to raise awareness on the UNOFF and promote improved communication capacities and services for family farming in Asia.

## KEY FIGURES

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The Philippine agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector reached 105 528 000 households in 2018. Of this total, 53 percent live in rural areas and 48.5 percent are agriculture dependent.

About 5 000 000 (30 percent) Filipino farmers cultivate 9.7 million hectares. Agriculture contributes 12 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The average farm size was 0.9 hectare in 2012. Despite having one of the lowest mechanization levels in Southeast Asia, the Philippines agriculture, forestry, and fisheries (AFF) sector continues to increase its crop production with a gross output growth of 0.3 percent and remains one of the top fish producers globally with 1.5 percent growth or 4 400 000 metric tons.

The AFF sector contributed 9.4 percent to the total exports with 52.5 percent from banana, pineapple, and coconut oil. Rice, sugarcane, and corn are the top products of the country.



## UNOFF in Action

The Philippine Action Plan for Family Farming (PAP4FF) is a product of multi-stakeholder consultations and effort with strong participation from the key government agencies, non-government organizations, civil society organizations, farmers' organizations as well as private sector. It has benefitted from the active leadership from the government. The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture issued a Special Order (2019) designating the Department of Agriculture - Agricultural Training Institute (DA-ATI) as the focal unit of the government for the National Committee on Family Farming. DA-ATI has a key role in maintaining fluid and regular communication about the initiative with national stakeholders at all levels, aimed at maintaining the collective interest and commitment to the plan's implementation within its duration.

The document which was launched on May 27, 2021, is an initiative that is in line with the key strategies of the OneDA Reform Agenda where every member of the farming family - particularly the women and the youth- are mobilized and empowered in establishing more agri-based industries in the countryside and developing markets for agriculture products. Its overarching goal is "Masaganang Ani, Mataas na Kita, at Marangal na Buhay ng Pamilyang Magsasaka" or

"Abundant Harvests, High Incomes, and Dignified Life of Family Farmers."

The PAP4FF has three strategic action areas, namely: Policy and Program, People, and Partnerships, which are aimed at addressing the main concerns and challenges of Filipino family farmers. Aligned with the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNOFF) Global Action Plan, the main pillars which also serve as driving forces to achieve the PAP4FF goal are:

- enabling policy and program;
- generational renewal and sustainability;
- gender equity and empowerment;
- strengthened family farmer organizations;
- socio-economic inclusion, resilience, and holistic development;
- sustainable and climate-resiliency of food systems; and
- enhanced multifunctional roles of farm families.

Developed amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the PAP4FF is a proof of the enduring commitment and stronger engagement of the different stakeholders, not only in the development of a national action plan, but for the decade-long implementation of the programs and activities to ensure that in the end, no Filipino family farmer is hungry, vulnerable and dissatisfied.





# Contribution to sustainable food systems

Along with the initiatives of the other government agencies, non-government organizations, civil society organizations, private sectors among other, the Department of Agriculture has been implementing different initiatives for youth engagement to boost their knowledge and skills and engage them in agricultural activities leading into establishing market linkages or community business enterprises.

- Young Filipino Farm Leaders Training Program in Japan (YFFLTPJ)**

The program will employ an 11-month internship training in Japan and is a commitment of the Japanese government to ASEAN regions through the Japan Agricultural Exchange Council (JAEC) and the Japan Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). The program aims to develop deserving young Filipino farmers to become farmer leaders and agricultural entrepreneurs.

- Filipino Young Farmers Internship Program (FYFIP) in Taiwan**

In partnership between DA with the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) and Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in the Philippines (TECO), the program aims to develop deserving young Filipino farmers to become farmer leaders and empowered agricultural entrepreneurs by providing them with the technical knowledge and skills in agricultural and cooperative management through an 11-months internship training in Taiwan.

- Educational Assistance for the Youth in Agriculture (EAsY Agri) Scholarship Program**

The program aims to encourage capable and deserving youth by providing them equal opportunities to pursue Degree Courses in Agriculture and Agricultural Biosystems Engineering.

- Binhi ng Pag-asa Program (BPP)**

The BPP program aims to provide the youth sector with leadership and values formation training and exposing them to agricultural economic opportunities as key strategies to boost youth engagement in agriculture.

- Agripreneurship Program**

The program aims to address the lack of interest of the youth in agriculture and the limited opportunities for the youths engaged in it to develop their capacities and economic conditions.

- Glamorizing Farming through Urban Agriculture: Metropolitan Youth in Sustainable and Healthy Living Program**

The program was created to address the reality of ageing Filipino farmers which reflects the waning interest of the youth in agriculture. The program aims to engage the metropolitan youth in urban agriculture by providing various extension support that will improve their knowledge and skills in farming and gardening.

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# Philippines - a family farming story

## Enhancing Women’s Cooperative through Early Warning Early Action

Through the Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) Project, Badria Alon, President of the Datu Saudi Ampatuan Women’s Cooperative, knowledge and skills of women related to agriculture such as mallard duck and vegetable garden production, were greatly improved. The mallard duck eggs and the vegetables that the women farmers in the cooperative produced and are now selling, has generated income that has helped them support their children’s school-related costs. The vegetables have also been used in feeding programs at four elementary schools in the community. The FAO Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) Project aims to safeguard the livelihoods of rice farmers by providing them with irrigation systems and climate resilient farm inputs. The project also supports rice farmers by promoting the diversification of their livelihoods, encouraging livestock farming and high value commercial crops to prevent depletion and increase resilience. The project provided drought-resistant rice and corn varieties, garden tools, fertilizers and plastic drums for water storage.

The members of the women’s cooperative attended capacity building training on drought-related agricultural technologies and early warning system. They were likewise exposed to the Provincial El Niño Information Caravan and participated in planning workshops and activities.



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