

About the Forum



REGIONAL POLICY FORUM
From Farms to Schools:
Towards Sustainable and Inclusive
School-Based Food and Nutrition
Programs in Southeast Asia
24-25 April 2023 | Alabang, Philippines

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Background and Rationale

- Southeast Asia continues to battle various forms of malnutrition – undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity. These can result to poor academic and work capacity, reproduction, and overall health.
- In children, malnutrition can cause delayed cognitive and motor development.
- A significant number of children in SEA suffers from moderate to high rates of stunting, wasting, and overweight.
- As a response, governments across the region are doubling their efforts to adopt policies and programs aimed at improving nutrition across the lifecycle.
- One major initiative in the region is improving nutrition of school-aged children by using schools as a platform to prevent and treat malnutrition.
- This is done through micronutrient supplementation, physical education, school feeding programs, and school gardens, among others.



Background and Rationale

- Food security is also a serious challenge in the region and therefore agriculture remains as a key sector.
- Family farming is considered as the backbone of global agriculture producing 80% of the world's food (in value).
- Family farmers are also seen as key agents of development as they are vital to eradicating poverty, undernourishment, and malnutrition.
- In December 2017, the United Nations proclaimed 2019-2028 as the Decade of Family Farming (UNDF) primarily aiming to achieve positive change in the global food systems.
- The implementation of the UNDF is guided by its Global Action Plan (GAP) which is hinged on seven (7) pillars.
- Pillar 5 focuses on improving the socio-economic inclusion, resilience, and wellbeing of family farmers, rural households, and communities by improving their access to markets and diversified income sources.
- Family farmers' engagement in institutional procurement programmes and procedures, such as for food assistance and school feeding could facilitate partnerships between family farmers and schools providing them with guaranteed, continuous, and structured demand for their products and services.



Background and Rationale

- At present, there are a lot of ongoing initiatives that aim to address malnutrition through school-based programs. This include SEARCA's School Plus Home Gardens Program (S+HGP).
- Another program that has been gaining significant attention and has been proven successful in developing countries around the world is farm-to-school programs.
- With the inclusion of farms, early care, and education, F2SPs can empower children and their families to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy and contributing to vibrant communities.
- The implementation of F2SPs also addresses the triple nexus of nutrition, education, and development.
- F2SPs present family farmers with a valuable opportunity for added income and livelihood by creating new markets for local farms.
- These are well-aligned with the intended outcome of the UNDFP Pillar 5.

Background and Rationale

Event Title:

Regional Policy Forum

From Farms to Schools: Towards Sustainable and Inclusive School-Based Food and Nutrition Programs in Southeast Asia

Organizers:

- Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA)
- Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA)



Forum Objectives

The forum generally aims to discuss potential policy interventions and courses of action to address the nutrition-education-development nexus through the inclusion of family farmers in new and/or existing school-based food and nutrition programs in Southeast Asia.

Specifically, the forum will:

1. Provide an overview of current state of food and nutrition security in Southeast Asia;
2. Present ongoing school-based food and nutrition programs being implemented in the region;
3. Identify and analyze opportunities and challenges in adopting and/or strengthening farm-to-school models for school-based food and nutrition programs in the region; and
4. Develop policy recommendations, identify courses of action, and explore potential areas for collaboration to engage family farmers in school-based food and nutrition programs to ensure their sustainability and inclusiveness.



Expected Outputs and Outcomes

- As a result of the forum, the following outputs are expected to be developed:
 1. A general framework for developing new and/or enhanced school-based food and nutrition programs;
 2. A detailed documentation of the event (Proceedings Report); and
 3. A policy paper discussing the recommendations gathered from the event.
- Through the forum, participating organizations will be encouraged to development and implement sustainable and inclusive school-based and food nutrition programs backed by strong policies and programs by their respective governments.
- Possible partnerships and collaborative activities toward addressing food and nutrition security issues in the region through school-based food and nutrition programs are also expected to be explored.



Program

DAY 1

Opening Session

Keynote Presentation

Session 1. School-Based Food and Nutrition Programs in SEA

Session 2. SEAMEO Centers School-Based Food and Nutrition Programs in SEA

Session 3. National School-Based Food and Nutrition Policies and Programs in SEA

DAY 2

Recap

Session 4. Farmers' Inclusion in School-Based Food and Nutrition Programs in SEA

Session 5. Breakouts

Session 6. Presentation of Outputs (Plenary)

Closing Session





Thank you!




S E A M E O
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