



RESEARCH PROGRAM ON  
**Climate Change,  
Agriculture and  
Food Security**



**Climate-smart agriculture appreciation event  
for the members of the  
Philippine Network of Environmental Journalists**  
An Activity Report



**April 2019**

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## About the event

On April 9, 2019, the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) coordinated a climate-smart agriculture (CSA) appreciation event and field visits with members of the media. This group of media practitioners are being trained to report on issues concerning the environment (e.g., climate change). The group was led by seasoned investigative journalist, Ms. Ellen Tordesillas of VERA Files.

VERA Files is an independent media organization that engages in production of media products and services of various formats. They use intensive research and in-depth reporting to tackle issues of national importance. Their biggest program is fact-checking news and information shared by media (all platforms) and investigating more deeply on major issues. They have also developed guidelines and knowledge materials on specific themes (e.g., reporting on PWDs, how to report on climate change, road safety, etc.) targeted for journalists.

These media practitioners are targeting the mainstreaming of environmental reporting to increase awareness of the public on environmental issues and their effects to the society. VERA Files has a portfolio called Earth Files (<http://verafiles.org/specials/earth-files>), which is a collection of news and feature stories produced by their members.

The appreciation event was organized to provide the members of the media with the basic concepts about the effects of climate change to agriculture, and of the contribution of agriculture to climate change; to facilitate collection stories on field-based experiences through interactions with farmers who have adopted practices that helped them adapt to climate risks; and to showcase climate smart agriculture approaches in demo farms, school garden, and farmers field.

Through this activity, they can also help IIRR extend its reach and scale-out learnings from various CSA initiatives. Once available, these media products will be collated.

## Objectives

To provide the media with a brief overview about the interrelatedness of climate change and agriculture, and their effects on food security and livelihoods;

To provide the media with an overview of the various initiatives that IIRR is doing to promote gender- and youth-inclusive sustainable agricultural practices, and to advocate health and nutrition security;

To demonstrate on the ground CSA practices through visits to Mang Julian's Integrated Farm, the IIRR Bio-intensive Garden (BIG), and Tinabunan Elementary School;

To provide the media venue to interact with farmers who have been successfully implementing CSA practices; and

To provide the media venue to interact with school teachers and administrators who have been successfully integrating bio-intensive gardening, nutrition education and feeding program, in primary school activities.

## Participants

PNEJ – Ellen Tordesillas (VERA Files), Rosal Revalido (VERA Files), Klaire Ting (VERA Files), Zanneth Lago (VERA Files), Vanessa Evangelist (VERA Files), Gian Miguel Roque (VERA Files), Arpee Lazaro (Radyo Pilipinas Dos), Angelica Yang (ABS CBN dot com), Joyce Rocamora (Philippine News Agency), Angela de Leon (Malaya Business Insight), Jheset Enano (Philippine Daily Inquirer)

Farmers – Gloria Macaraig (Guinayangan), Angeloken Flores (Guinayangan), Julian Aguilar (Silang)

Tinabunan Elementary School, led by Jesus Bergado (Principal) and Mary Ann Galas (Agriculture Teacher)

IIRR – Rene R. Vidallo, Ruvicyn S. Bayot, Ma. Shiela S. Anunciado

## Program

9:30 AM to 11:00 AM – presentation on the interrelatedness of climate change and agriculture; discussion





11:00 AM to 01:30 PM – visit to Julian Aguilar Integrated Farm



02:00 PM to 03:00 PM – interaction with farmers from Guinayangan over lunch



03:30 PM to 04:00 PM – visit to IIRR Bio-intensive Gardens



05:00 PM to 07:00 PM – visit to Tinabunan Elementary School

## Observations

The participants were indeed ‘too green’, with very little knowledge about agriculture. Thus, it was challenging to get the CSA knowledge across without having to explain basic agriculture concepts first. One point of discussion was how best to get them appreciate agriculture more so they could also understand what CSA is all about; and most importantly how could we engage them in CSA discussions and actions.

There were other topics or potential stories that surfaced during the interactions.

- Ms. Ellen Tordesillas pointed out the importance of looking at the value chain aspect to identify markets for native pigs and other farm produce. Stories on this context could be developed to highlight the impact of the interventions on livelihood.
- Another point that was raised was the ageing farmers in the Philippines and how to encourage the youth to become farmers. This has an indirect implication to the environment, since the next generation is not interested to till their lands. They sell their lands and pursue other professions. These lands that used to be productive are being converted into industrial, commercial or residential areas.
- Related to above, Mr. Ken Flores raised the importance of organizing youth farmers (young people who have found interest in farming) to sustain their interest.
- Micro-financing, credit cooperatives, and other facilities that could provide capital and/ or financial assistance to farmers who are willing to adopt CSA technologies and practices should also be taken into interest.

## Outcome

This appreciation event has generated five media products released in different platforms (institutional website, online newspaper, radio, and government news website), which leveraged the scaling of CSA to a wider audience.

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Lazaro, A. & Cortez, B. (2019, May 23). Radyo Pilipinas Dos hosts talk about climate-smart farm in Cavite [Audio recording]. Retrieved from <https://verafiles.org/articles/radyo-pilipinas-dos-hosts-talk-about-climate-smart-farm-trip>

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Yang, A. (2019, May 23). 5 ways Pinoy farmers and teachers are beating climate change. Retrieved from <https://verafiles.org/articles/5-ways-pinoy-farmers-and-teachers-are-beating-climate-change>