

Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment



NORMITA G. IGNACIO

Executive Director

Normita G. Ignacio has a career in rural development that spans more than two decades. Particular to her work as a development professional, she has vast experience in charting and organizing programs in agriculture, food security and organizational capacity building. She is responsible for successful development programs in countries in the Southeast Asian region. In these programs, she has demonstrated technical and organizational expertise in sustainable agriculture and has skilfully displayed acumen in integrating multi-stakeholders participation, community education and systems management into programs she has undertaken. Her vast experience in design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of educational initiatives, as well as facilitation of training, workshops and conferences, has gained her a renown as a development professional in both national and international circles.

Before joining Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment (SEARICE) in 2003 as Program Coordinator, she had a string of assignments at the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (Philippines) in various capacities. While there, she developed the bio-intensive gardening (BIG) system together with communities for adaptation to different agro-ecological conditions as a strategy for household food security and nutrition. This was adapted in many developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

As Regenerative Agriculture Specialist, also at the IIRR, she developed and implemented projects related to sustainable agriculture (SA) to include agroforestry and upland management, integrated farming system, community-based plant genetic resource conservation, and alternative pest management going through the full cycle of project management (from project conceptualization, designing, strategy formulation, planning, implementation, financial management, monitoring and evaluation). A major achievement as project manager was the formation of a grassroots organization called Family Food Production Foundation Incorporated (FFPFI). This organization became a recipient of *Bayaning Filipino* (Filipino Heroes) Award and the group remained a regional top performer in land distribution under the land reform program of the Philippine government.

She developed sustainable agriculture as an integrated subprogram within the bigger rural development program of IIRR as Regenerative Agriculture Subprogram Coordinator. One of the major accomplishments in this area was the widespread implementation of the postharvest project throughout Vietnam with expansion in Cambodia, with recognition by the government of Vietnam through an award conferred by the President of Vietnam for the project's contributions to poverty alleviation in the country.

Nori, as she is popularly known, facilitated sessions in various IIRR international courses, such as Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation, Integrated Conservation and Development, Community-Managed Health as a Training Specialist. She managed a five-year capacity building program on Sustainable Agriculture Training of Trainers involving 12 partner organizations in the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. In a consultative capacity, her work has also seen her successfully undertaking capacity-building activities and evaluating programs in Zambia, Kenya and Guatemala.

Nori earned her Bachelor of Science, Major in Agriculture at the University of the Philippines at Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines in 1983, wherein she was awarded a University Scholarship Grant. In 2000, she earned her Masters Degree in Development Management (MDM) at the Asian Institute of Management, Makati City, Philippines under an Asian Development Bank Scholarship.

She is credited with publications and research initiatives covering various interests in the fields of agriculture, biodiversity, food security and conservation.