

2023 PhilRice R&D Highlights



COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICE



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Community Relations Office

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ComRel provides general rice science education and serves as PhilRice's corporate communication arm. It operates as the central point of coordination in aligning messages, educational experiences and images, and branding efforts to communicate the Institute's mission and vision, ensuring goodwill and understanding between PhilRice and the general public.

To achieve these objectives, two projects were implemented: (1) Community Relations covering visitors management, museum collection, exhibit management, FutureRice agrotourism, Palay Aralan, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR); and (2) Corporate Communication, which is responsible for the Institute's corporate branding, public relations, and cultural events management.

These projects directly contribute to PhilRice's Extension Support, Education, and Training Services (ESETS), particularly under the Knowledge Sharing and Learning Activities/ Community Outreach. By proactively connecting PhilRice to the public, ComRel plays a crucial role in disseminating knowledge and fostering a shared understanding of the importance of rice research.

Community Relations

Andrei B. Lanuza

Building and sustaining culture and gender-responsive relationships are at the heart of organizing and reaching out to PhilRice's immediate community. The strength of communities lies in the integrity of the connections that we have with each other. With strong connections, people have the power to make real change. It is on this premise that the ComRel Office was created. Along this line, ComRel serves as a link between several stakeholders or communities of the institute. It requires the office to provide general education on basic rice science, technology, and culture through an array of activities and programs.

PhilRice, through ComRel, prioritizes building mutually advantageous relationships with the surrounding communities. The underlying principle of community relations is that when the Institute fulfills its role and responsibility as a good corporate citizen and takes an active interest in the well-being of its community, then in return, it gains a number of long-lasting benefits in terms of community support, loyalty, and goodwill. In essence, community relations is the function that evaluates public attitudes, and adapts the mission of an organization to the public interest. Like public relations, community relations is something that an organization nurtures whether this fact is recognized or not.

The project consists of: (1) General Institute Promotions, (2) Community Outreach and CSR, and (3) General Education.

In 2023, ComRel conducted online seminar lectures on rice production with 26 livestream sessions of RCEF PalayAralan, attracting 2,475 live viewers. The sessions garnered 176,960 post-views, with 33,675 engagements, and reached 176,960 individuals through Facebook. Throughout the wet season (March to September), ComRel coordinated technical and program briefings for the RCEF Technology Awareness Component with 28 sessions. During the dry season (September 2023 to March 2024), 17 sessions were conducted. These occasions played a pivotal role in disseminating valuable information and guidance to 4,949 seed beneficiaries who actively participated.

The in-person 2023 Lakbay Palay themed "RCEF ano na?!" was participated in by more than 1,000 farmers mostly from Region 3 and a few from Mindanao. Its livestream hooked almost 8,000 hits on Facebook.

Two rice paddy art renditions were organized and created in collaboration with the Information Systems (ISD) and the Technology Management and Services Divisions (TMSD). ComRel also actively involved internal and external audiences through a series of 11 exhibitions and specialized showcase materials.

The Office duly managed and accommodated 208 groups of visitors (2,731 men and 1,996 women), mostly farmers (27.40%) and from the academe (15.38%). Number of visitors averaged 394 per month. Knowledge gained was rated “beyond expectations” by the respondents. ComRel helped improve visitor management by training frontline educators selected from different divisions. They were also trained on the Filipino Brand of Service Excellence in collaboration with the Department of Tourism.

Two PalayKamalayan educational presentations were released online at the Rice Science Museum (RSM) FB page. These are short informative videos on “Pagpapataba” and “Pamamahala ng Peste at Sakit.” Rice trivia videos titled “Extra Rice” that answer common questions about rice science and rice production were also produced, created, and uploaded on the Museum’s social media page. The topics are: “Pangunahing Ekosistema ng Palayan sa Pilipinas,” “Bakit Maraming Barayti ng Palay?,” “Ano’ng Hybrid Rice?,” and “Mga Bahagi ng Binhing Palay.”

ComRel undertook 13 corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities in 2023. These initiatives alleviate local needs and contribute to the well-being of the surrounding communities. The RSM utilizes Facebook to educate the public about rice science, rice art, and PhilRice’s activities. This online presence has garnered a significant following of 4.8k followers. By integrating CSR activities and science communication through RSM, PhilRice goes beyond its core mission to serve the broader community and cultivate a society with a deeper appreciation for rice science.

Corporate Communication (CorpComm)

Laarnie L. Mandia

CorpComm is vital to the operations of PhilRice as a government research agency that generates knowledge and technologies. Rice, being a political commodity, necessitates the maintenance and protection of its institutional identity, image, and reputation for its clientele and the public to remain patronizing and supporting its R4DE efforts. Its contributions to science, bodies of knowledge, and society must also be communicated to fortify favorable perception. The Institute's need for funding and collaborations also requires it to sustain its excellent relationships with the stakeholders.

Production and circulation of Institute newsletter. In 2023, five issues were produced. The electronic or "e-Newsletter" can be accessed by the general public through the DA-PhilRice website and is circulated among the staff and stakeholders via email. By yearend, 691 people subscribe to the eNewsletter and 96% find it helpful.

Implementation and maintenance of the Online Reservation System. In collaboration with the ISD, ComRel applied the system in 2023 to organize and keep track of the utilization of Institutional resources and facilities.

Social media management. The Rice Science Museum Facebook page (4.8k followers and 4.4k likes) caters to the general public on rice arts and sciences, as well as the Institute's core activities. Posts include the RCEF PalayAralan livestreams even as the page also shares relevant posts from other Facebook pages. There were 66 posts published in the page with 32.2k reach and 1,431 engagements.

Visitors database management. Data and feedback from the 208 groups of visitors, including sex-disaggregated information were stored in ComRel's database. There were 431 guests/visitors who filled out the feedback forms, 232 of whom 53.8% are men and 199 (46.2%) are women. Evaluators were students (176), government employees, (103) and farmers (64).

Photo database management. There were 127 selected photos saved and uploaded to expedite retrieval: 66 were from visitors management; 35 from various meetings; and 26 from online activities like PalayAralan.

RSM accession database management. The pooled information on all artifacts in the museum contains their local name, origin, function, height, and width. As of 2023, 27 pieces of information were collected while the database is currently in the works using PHP and MySQL Xampp.

Corporate image branding. Lobby exhibit collaterals and signages in all stations were updated to reflect the new slogan, mission/vision, and core values of the Institute as articulated in the new Strategic Plan. Also updated were the customized corporate collaterals and templates in all stations (i.e., letterhead, PowerPoint, signages, experiment field information banners and streamers, calling cards, and video call background templates). Provided were creative assistance and art direction for institutional projects/activities and division-based exhibits, or production of related collaterals. The design and packaging of seasonal Lakbay Palay collaterals in all stations were also unified.

Service Request and Support. Beyond traditional community outreach, creative support is likewise provided to researchers, management, and other personnel to enable them to effectively communicate their work and initiatives: (1) design and production of award statuettes, Board of Trustees (BOT) document covers, AVP presentations (for HR and retirees), and rice-based artworks, (2) logos for projects like CSMap, (3) graphics for DevCom, RiceBIS, and GSMapping projects, (4) corporate ID lanyards and FFF booth backdrops, and (5) holiday tags/cards and greeting cards.

These services help the staff and personnel to visually popularize complex information, enhance brand recognition, celebrate achievements and milestones, and highlight PhilRice initiatives.

