The innovation integrated 3 major components:

**Bio-intensive School Gardens**
These were enhanced using ecological gardening practices to improve productivity and sustainability. Practices include deep-dug, raised plots followed by minimum tillage, use of green tree fertilizers like kakawate (*Gliricidia sepium*), and cover cropping using legumes during summer-season to protect soil health. Decentralized crop museums helped conserve and propagate seeds of local vegetables to support needs of schools and household gardens.

**Supplementary Feeding**
Iron-fortified rice and indigenous vegetables from school gardens were used for feeding of underweight children. Fifteen menus with indigenous vegetables were developed, lab-tested, and used.

**Nutrition Education**
It was provided to students, parents/care providers/guardians, and teachers to promote the importance of nutrient-dense food and good eating habits. It ensures sustainability of gains in school nutrition program while optimizing benefits from limited resources. Nutrition-sensitive lesson plans and modules were developed and used by teachers for children and parents.
Integrating nutrition-related interventions resulted to:

- Enhanced garden productivity and functionality
- Improved year-round availability of diverse vegetables with lesser inputs, easier maintenance of gardens, and overall improvement in yield and crop performance
- Conservation and mass production of indigenous vegetables through the establishment of 27 school crop museums
- Improved nutritional state of schoolchildren through the use of standardized recipes using indigenous vegetables and iron-fortified rice in feeding program
- Improved knowledge and attitude towards nutrition and gardening through education

Serving vegetables produced in the school garden resulted in better nutrition while lowering feeding costs. Results from a study with 160 children showed improvements on nutrition knowledge, attitude and practices among children and parents.

Experience with the pilot implementation of the program underscored the important role of institutional mechanisms, partnership building, communication support and capacity-building strategies. Development/refinement and enforcement of implementation guidelines are warranted even before the potential of gardens to support school feeding program.

Visit https://schoolnutritionphils.wordpress.com for more information about the integrated school nutrition model during its pilot testing. Efforts to scale up the adoption of the model in every public elementary school are underway, in partnership with relevant agencies, particularly the DepEd. It is envisioned that this will bring good nutrition to many kids, more quickly!