APEC Journey from International Workshop on Policy Translation to Local Advocacy on Stunting

INTRODUCTION

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) project began with the 2016 workshop which endeavors to bring all R&D and S&T activities into the policy agenda by strengthening the capability of APEC member economies on policy translation and advocacy of policies into actions. Specifically, the delegates from APEC member economies forwarded policy recommendations on stunting, newborn screening, family planning and malaria. For the past two decades, the prevalence of stunting in the Philippines remains high with an average of 3 out of 10 children 0-59 months found to be short for their ages, translating to an estimated 3.8 million stunted children in 2015. Stunting as a public health concern persists, hence, calls for immediate attention from policymakers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In 2017, the APEC Policy Translation Project aimed to bring policy recommendations on stunting at the local level through advocacy to the intended stakeholders composed of local chief executives and officials. In pursuing this commitment, three (3) roundtable discussions (RTDs) which engaged multi-sectoral health and nutrition experts in in-depth discussions on ways to address the concern for stunting were convened at the national level. The policy cycle moved on to four (4) provincial advocacy fora in Western Samar, Palawan, Misamis Oriental and Davao Oriental during the second half of 2017. The activity dubbed as Advocacy Forum on Stunting: “Talakayan sa Pagtugon sa Isyung Malnutrisyon ng mga Batang Bansot ayon sa Kanilang Edad” aimed to encourage the Local Government Units (LGUs) to include stunting in their priority agenda.
3 Roundtable Discussions
Roundtable Discussion on Formulating Strategies and Strengthening Multi-sectoral Collaboration to Address Stunting in the Philippines

The Policy Process of the APEC Project

APEC Workshop on Commercialization and Popularization of Research and Market-based Innovations through Policy Translation

4 Advocacy Fora
Talakayan sa Pagtugon sa Isyung Malnutrisyon ng mga Batang Bansot ayon sa Kanilang Edad

Davao Oriental
Misamis Oriental
Palawan
Western Samar
The Local Chief Executives (LCEs), Municipal Health Officers (MHOs) and Municipal Nutrition Action Officers (MNAOs) identified priority action points and forwarded key recommendations which were considered as crucial in addressing the concern for stunting: (1) enact policy/local ordinance for funding nutrition using LGU’s Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA); (2) include nutrition as indicator in the LGU score card; (3) enhance functionality of municipal/barangay nutrition committee (M/BNC); (4) create permanent position for MNAO; and, (5) institutionalize implementation of the First 1000 Days.

Summary of Action Points from the Local Advocacy Fora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Points</th>
<th>Rationale behind</th>
<th>Responsible group/agency</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enact policy/local ordinance for funding nutrition using LGU’s Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA)</td>
<td>Budget allocation for nutrition from the IRA is not strictly imposed to the LGUs</td>
<td>All LGUs</td>
<td>ASAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Include nutrition as indicator in the LGU score card</td>
<td>Lack of nutrition indicator in the LGU score card; as raised also in the RTD among NCR-LGUs and NGOs</td>
<td>All LGUs</td>
<td>ASAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enhance functionality of municipal/barangay nutrition committee (M/BNC)</td>
<td>The programs of the MHOs and MNAOs are not coordinated</td>
<td>All LGUs</td>
<td>ASAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create permanent position for MNAO</td>
<td>Appointed NAO has no plantilla position and has no valid nutrition-related qualifications</td>
<td>All LGUs</td>
<td>ASAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutionalize implementation of the First 1000 Days</td>
<td>Lack of awareness among LCEs and LGUs on the First 1000 Days program of the government</td>
<td>All LGUs</td>
<td>ASAP</td>
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