

Towards Sustainable Rural Farm School Program: Challenges and Opportunities on Its Implementation in Sta. Ines Integrated High School

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Date Submitted:

March 16, 2026

Date Accepted:

June 27, 2026

Date Published:

August 23, 2026

DOI:

10.5281/zenodo.22070051

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the challenges and opportunities perceived by the learners, teachers, and stakeholders in the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School. Using the weighted mean of the responses of the learners, teachers, and stakeholders undergoes quantitative analysis, the research identified the key challenges in the implementation of this program. The main concern of the learners is the challenges in safety and environmental conditions; for teachers, it is the training support, while the stakeholders' main challenge is their perceptions and contribution to this program. On the other hand, the study identified key opportunities as perceived by the learners, teachers, and stakeholders in the implementation of this program: for learners, it is the opportunity for livelihood

and entrepreneurial development; for teachers, it is the opportunity to collaborate with different subject areas on the integration of farm-based activities, while for stakeholders, it is the opportunity for community development. The perceived challenges and opportunities of the participants contributed to the development of Project GULAY (Growing and Utilizing Livelihood and Agricultural Yields), a structured action plan towards a sustainable Rural Farm School Program. The findings emphasize the importance of school-stakeholders-LGU collaboration in addressing the challenges and strengthening the opportunities of this program. This research offers practical recommendations to sustain the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program.

Keywords: *Rural Farm School Program, sustainability*

INTRODUCTION

The Rural Farm School (RFS) program is an alternative learning program that offers early exposure to agricultural field practices. It is a special program designed to train learners to become competent in the field of agriculture. Experience in the RFS program may lead to increased encouragement and inspiration to support backyard farming and family entrepreneurship.

In adherence to DepEd Order No. 36, s. 2015, titled Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 10618, otherwise known as the Rural Farm School Act, and supported by the Regional Memorandum 439, s. 2023, the Policy Guidelines on the Establishment and Implementation of the RFS in CALABARZON, the Schools Division Office of Rizal implemented the RFS program in five (5) schools. One of these schools is the Sta. Ines Integrated High School. Guided by the objectives of RFS, such as providing an alternate delivery mode to learners, improving food safety and security in the agriculture and fishery sectors, and alleviating climate change effects in the country, the school will implement this program.

The school is currently in its fourth year of implementing the RFS Program. The Grade 7 curriculum is designed to help learners explore the different fields under the RFS. This curriculum is called the Exploratory Course. In this course, learners are exposed to areas such as poultry production, swine production, crop production, and aquaculture; in Grade 8, the focus shifts to agricultural research and enterprise, where learners study aquaculture and food processing. Agricultural research topics, such as feasibility studies, are also introduced. By Grade 9, learners focus on poultry and ruminant production, with harvesting and hatching also included in the curriculum. Grade 10 mainly focuses on food and beverage production and the Family Enterprise Program (FEP).

All grade levels are also taught agricultural enterprise, where their produce can be monetized and serve as an additional source of income for learners.

The researchers, as members of the RFS Team, have witnessed the greater opportunities available to learners in this program. One of these opportunities is their ability to earn income while studying. While the school is motivated to further improve the program, challenges cannot be avoided. Both the school and the learners face dilemmas in its implementation. One of these challenges is ensuring the sustainability of the program and encouraging more stakeholders to support it.

Thus, the researchers conducted this study to develop a research-based mechanism for a sustainable RFS Program. In response to the identified challenges, this research aims to determine ways to address them. At the same time, it seeks to strengthen and enhance the existing opportunities of the program.

Furthermore, the results of this research can be used by the school to design a plan for a sustainable RFS Program. Through the findings of the study, the challenges will be identified, and the root causes of the problems will be determined. In this way, the school can strategically develop plans that address the identified gaps. Moreover, identifying existing opportunities can also contribute to creating a plan that is meaningful to learners' experiences. In this context, the school can strengthen these opportunities and use them to lessen the impact of the challenges.

Therefore, through this study, the future of the RFS Program in the school can be secured, ensuring that the program's goals are achieved. The results of this study will also emphasize that sustaining the RFS Program should remain a long-term priority of the school.

Literature Review

In the study on the challenges and opportunities for sustainable agricultural education, Zamora (2014) discovered that the enactment of the Enhanced Basic Education of 2012 or the K-12 Basic Education Program; the integration of the Southeast Asian economies into the ASEAN Economic Community; and the rise in the influence of global rankings of the universities which underlies the internationalization of higher education, pose opportunities and challenges of agricultural education in the Philippines. Zamora (2014) identified the challenges in sustainable agricultural education, which are the negative perception of agriculture as a profession, insufficient government investment, rapid urbanization of agricultural areas, and devolution of agricultural services to the local government units.

The reviewed literature presents a clear overview of the challenges and opportunities facing agricultural education in the Philippines. Its strength lies in the use of statistical data and policy contexts to explain the declining enrollment in agriculture-related programs, as well as in identifying key factors such as negative perceptions of agriculture, limited government investment, urbanization, and decentralization of services. The discussion of recent developments, including the K-12 reform, ASEAN integration, and global university rankings, effectively highlights how external forces influence curriculum development and graduate competitiveness. However, the reviewed literature is largely focused on universities and offers limited discussion on basic education or alternative learning programs that could foster early interest in agriculture. The reviewed literature also reveals gaps in understanding localized, school-based mechanisms for sustaining agricultural education programs, thereby supporting the need for further research, such as the present study.

The present study is similar to the reviewed study as it both focuses on the challenges and opportunities of sustainable agricultural education. It also aims to identify the challenges and opportunities arising in a particular setting of the study and use them to address the issue. However, the present study and the reviewed study differ in the level of education where the study is conducted; the present study focuses on the basic school-based RFS condition, while the reviewed study focuses on agricultural education in higher education. While the reviewed study aims to create a plan for sustainable agricultural education in SUCs, the present study aims to create a school-based Plan for the Sustainable RFS Program.

Santiago and Roxas (2015) suggest reviving the farming interest of the students in the Philippines. According to them, there is a need to entice a new generation of Filipinos to practice value-added agriculture to replace the current farmers expected to retire in a decade or so. But persistent poverty levels in agricultural areas have dissuaded Filipino youth from pursuing opportunities in this sector. In their study, they proposed that the Philippine government work with private investors and socio-civic organizations to revive interest in agriculture by positioning it as an attractive and viable option. Also, based on their research, this can be done by stimulating entrepreneurial activities in agriculture through targeted agricultural entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship shifts attention from producing more of the same things to producing value-added goods and services through managed agricultural risks.

The reviewed literature discussed the urgent need to attract a new generation of Filipinos to agriculture, particularly as current farmers approach retirement, and identifies poverty in rural areas as a major barrier to youth participation. The reviewed literature also suggests transforming traditional farming into value-added and market-oriented practices. By emphasizing entrepreneurial skills, the reviewed literature frames agriculture as a viable career that goes beyond mere production, encouraging innovation and risk management. The reviewed literature explores Philippine programs on farm school education, like Family Farm Schools, the SAKA program, Farm Business Schools, and Gawad Kalinga's Social Enterprise, and their approach to addressing challenges and strengthening opportunities in the sustainable program of farm school education. On the other hand, while the reviewed literature provides valuable insight into the importance of entrepreneurship in revitalizing the agricultural sector, it underscores the need for research that evaluates program outcomes and identifies strategies for sustaining engagement among learners and communities.

The reviewed study and the present study are related to each other as they both concern farming education and how to sustain its implementation. They both suggest that there is a need to revive the interest of the Filipino learners in farming. However, they differ in their primary goal: while the present study would like to target a Plan for Sustainable Rural Farm School Program for school-based benefits, the reviewed study focuses on how the government will have a partnership with the private sector to increase the interest of the learners in farming education. It is also important to take note that the present study used the approaches and objectives aligned with the Rural Farm School Program under the Rural Farm School Act, while the reviewed study utilizes the approach of other similar programs, such as Family Farm Schools, the SAKA program, Farm Business Schools, and Gawad Kalinga's Social Enterprise.

Blair et al. (2023) stated in their study that farm schools are becoming more prominent programs to teach food education. They also emphasize that research is needed to support farm school implementation and sustainability. They identify the characteristics of farm schools, which is it offers vocational agricultural training, animal husbandry, and crop production. In their study, they discovered the different themes in sustainable farm school implementation, such as sustainability, healthy eating, and food systems. They also discussed the farm school structures and objectives as promising food education and production programming. Production programming includes a mechanism that transforms learning into livelihood endeavors.

The reviewed literature provides information on school farms, addressing a significant gap in food and agricultural education research. The reviewed study highlights common characteristics of school farms, such as vocational training, animal husbandry, and crop production, and discusses themes like sustainability, healthy eating, and food systems education that reflect contemporary shifts in educational priorities. The reviewed study also gives emphasis on the potential of school farms to improve agricultural literacy, experiential learning, and

food access, suggesting the need for more empirical research to substantiate these claims and guide sustainable implementation in diverse educational contexts.

The reviewed study is parallel to the proposed study, as both focus on the structure and objectives of the farm school. The reviewed study also aims to develop a production program that establishes a livelihood initiative for the sustainable implementation of the farm school, which can serve as the basis for the proposed study. However, the reviewed study differs in its discovered themes; it focuses on sustainability, healthy eating, and food systems, while the proposed study will concentrate on addressing the challenges and opportunities in the RFS program for its sustainable implementation. The reviewed study also uses a qualitative research approach; it enumerated various themes, while the proposed study will use a quantitative approach.

Research Questions

This research aims to determine the challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated School and to come up with a Sustainable Rural Farm School Program. It also seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the perceived challenges in the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program of:
 - 1.1. RFS Learners;
 - 1.2. RFS Teachers; and
 - 1.3. Stakeholders?
2. What are the perceived opportunities in the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program for:
 - 2.1. RFS Learners;
 - 2.2. RFS Teachers; and
 - 2.3. Stakeholders?
3. What action plan can be made to address the challenges and strengthen the opportunities in the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program to create a Sustainable RFS Program?

Scope and Limitation

The study will be conducted at Sta. Ines Integrated High School. The respondents in this study will be the RFS students, or the Grades 7 to 10 learners who are under the RFS Curriculum and currently enrolled in the School Year 2026-2027, their teachers, and the stakeholders. The study will use a survey questionnaire checklist to identify the challenges and opportunities they perceive in the implementation of the RFS Program.

METHODS

Participants and/or Sources of Data

The primary participants in this research are the 228 RFS learners of Sta. Ines Integrated High School who are currently enrolled in the school for the School Year 2025-2026. They were selected because they are part of the implementation of the RFS Program. To ensure comprehensive data collection, the researchers employed total enumeration. All RFS learners who participated in the research obtained informed consent from their parents or legal guardians.

The research also includes 17 teacher respondents, all of whom are subject teachers of the RFS classes.

This study used a Total Enumeration Sampling Technique. According to Laerd (2012), total population sampling is a type of purposive sampling technique that involves examining the entire population that has a particular set of characteristics.

In addition, eight (8) stakeholder representatives participated in the research. They were selected because of their existing partnerships and involvement in the RFS Program of the school.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

This research will utilize a quantitative approach that determines the challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the RFS program.

This study will also utilize a descriptive research design. According to Sirisilla (2023), the descriptive research design involves observing and collecting data on a given topic without attempting to infer cause-and-effect relationships. The goal of descriptive research is to provide a comprehensive and accurate picture of the population or phenomenon being studied and to describe the relationships, patterns, and trends that exist within the data.

To determine the perceived challenges in the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program of the RFS learners, RFS Teachers, and stakeholders, the study used the weighted mean.

To determine the perceived opportunities in the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program of the RFS learners, RFS teachers, and stakeholders, the weighted mean was also used.

To address Research Question 3 on proposing a plan for the sustainable implementation of the RFS, the study used the responses of the respondents as a basis for proposing a context-based solution to address the challenges and strengthen the opportunities perceived by the respondents in its implementation.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research generated the following results with corresponding discussions of interpretations.

Challenges and Opportunities in the Implementation of the Rural Farm School Program

The implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School deeply lies on how the learners, teachers, and the stakeholders work hand-in-hand to achieve the desired outcomes. However, there are existing challenges that the school must understand in order to sustain the implementation of this program.

On the other hand, in the existence of these challenges, there are also opportunities that the RFS Program has to offer. These opportunities, when realized and appreciated, will improve the quality and sustainable implementation of the RFS Program. Thus, these opportunities need to be strengthened.

Challenges

Challenges perceived by the Learners

To obtain the perceived challenges by the learners on the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School, the researchers gathered the responses of the 228 RFS Learners from the said school; they were asked to respond through Google Forms, where they answered using a scale, indicating whether they strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statements appearing in the questionnaire.

The table revealed that the RFS Learners perceived safety and environmental conditions as one of the challenges in implementing the Rural Farm School program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School, which had the highest computed weighted mean of 4.60 (strongly agree), was followed by time allocation and academic demands, which had a computed weighted mean of 4.33 (strongly agree). The farm facilities, inputs, and resources got a computed weighted mean of 4.13 (agree), while the learning materials, tools, and equipment got the lowest computed weighted mean of 4.09 (agree).

Hence, the safety and environmental conditions were mainly the challenges of the learners in the RFS Program, by which if it is addressed, it has impact on the sustainable Rural Farm School Program. This challenge is parallel to the study of Pate et al. (2016) on the safety issues in the farm-based activities of the students. According to them, students were not always following the required safety practices, and there were concerns about which dangerous tasks they should be allowed to perform without adult supervision during their Supervised Agricultural Experience activities (similar to field activities of the RFS Program). In addition, the results of their

study showed a gap between the required safety practices and the hazardous tasks that students were allowed to perform independently during their farm-based activities.

Table 1. *Perceived challenges of the learners in the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School.*

Perceived Challenges	Weighted Mean (Wx)	Verbal Interpretation
Learning Materials, Tools, and Equipment		
I experience difficulty accessing the learning modules needed for our RFS lessons.	4.28	Strongly Agree
The learning materials provided for RFS lessons are insufficient to meet my learning needs.	4.32	Strongly Agree
There are not enough instructional materials available for our RFS activities.	4.30	Strongly Agree
I experience difficulty getting the farm tools I need during hands-on activities.	3.39	Slightly Agree
Some of the available farm tools are not in good condition.	4.15	Agree
Combined Wx	4.09	AGREE
Farm Facilities, Inputs, and Resources		
I experience difficulty accessing the school farm areas needed for our RFS activities.	4.08	Agree
The available farm area is not sufficient for all learners to participate in RFS activities.	4.18	Agree
The condition of some farm facilities makes it difficult for me to perform RFS activities.	4.33	Strongly Agree
I experience difficulty obtaining the seeds and planting materials needed for RFS activities.	4.76	Strongly Agree
I experience difficulty accessing an adequate water supply during farm activities.	3.29	Slightly Agree
Combined Wx	4.13	Agree
Time Allocation and Academic Demands		
The time allotted for RFS activities is not enough to complete the assigned tasks.	4.85	Strongly Agree
I find it difficult to manage my time between RFS activities and my regular school subjects.	4.06	Agree
RFS activities sometimes take time away from completing my other school requirements.	3.96	Agree
Some RFS activities require more time than the time provided for their completion.	4.85	Strongly Agree
The number of RFS activities makes it difficult for me to manage my schoolwork.	4.08	Agree
Combined Wx	4.33	Strongly Agree
Safety and Environmental Conditions		
I experience difficulty performing some RFS activities because they are physically demanding.	4.65	Strongly Agree
I feel unsafe when performing certain farm activities due to the risks involved.	4.67	Strongly Agree
Hot weather makes it difficult for me to participate actively in RFS activities.	4.56	Strongly Agree
Rain or other unfavorable weather conditions sometimes interfere with our RFS activities.	4.79	Strongly Agree
Environmental conditions, such as poor soil or limited water availability, make some farm activities difficult.	4.34	Strongly Agree
Combined Wx	4.60	Strongly Agree

Challenges Perceived by the Teachers

To obtain the perceived challenges by the teachers on the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School, the researchers gathered the responses of the 12 RFS teachers from the said school; they were asked to respond through Google Forms, where they answered using a scale, indicating whether they strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statements appearing in the questionnaire.

As shown in the table, teachers perceived the training support as a challenge, which obtained the highest computed weighted mean of 4.65 (strongly agree), followed by the teachers' competence, which got a computed weighted mean of 4.13 (agree). The challenges in curriculum integration obtained a computed weighted mean of 4.08 (agree), while the lowest was the challenges in resource availability, which obtained a computed weighted mean of 3.73 (agree).

This data revealed that the main challenges of the teachers in the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School is the training support. Insufficient training and technical assistance need to be addressed, as it greatly affects how the teachers deliver instruction for RFS classes. This claim is also supported by Muzaffar et al. (2023), as they discussed that teachers' continuous learning and professional growth foster a high standard of education delivery. According to their study, teachers' involvement in professional development workshops and programs concerning the successful adoption of innovative teaching strategies leads them to be more equipped and competent in delivering effective curricular instruction, just like in the Rural Farm School Program.

Table 2. *Perceived challenges of the teachers in the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School.*

Perceived Challenges	Weighted Mean (Wx)	Verbal Interpretation
Teachers' Competence		
I find it challenging to apply my knowledge of farming in implementing the Rural Farm School Program.	4.17	Agree
I find it difficult to guide students in developing farm-based business ideas.	4.08	Agree
I find it challenging to connect farming activities with entrepreneurial skills.	4.17	Agree
I find it difficult to provide students with appropriate technical guidance during farm activities.	4.75	Strongly Agree
I lack sufficient knowledge about modern and sustainable farming practices needed for the program.	3.50	Agree
Combined Wx	4.13	Agree
Training Support		
I find it challenging to access training related to the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program.	4.75	Strongly Agree
I receive insufficient training on sustainable farming practices.	4.83	Strongly Agree
I find it difficult to access professional development opportunities related to the program.	4.25	Strongly Agree
I lack adequate technical assistance when conducting farm-based activities.	4.92	Strongly Agree
I need more training and technical assistance to effectively implement the Rural Farm School Program.	4.50	Strongly Agree
Combined Wx	4.65	Strongly Agree

Resource Availability		
I find it challenging to access sufficient agricultural tools for farm activities.	4.25	Strongly Agree
I experience a lack of adequate farming materials needed for the program.	3.67	Agree
I find it difficult to provide students with sufficient farm supplies for hands-on activities.	3.92	Agree
The school has insufficient facilities for conducting farm-based activities.	3.00	Slightly Agree
Limited resources make it difficult for me to provide adequate hands-on farming experiences.	3.83	Agree
Combined Wx	3.73	Agree
Curriculum Integration		
I find it challenging to integrate farm-based activities into my subject area.	4.75	Strongly Agree
I find it difficult to connect farming concepts with the learning competencies of my subject.	4.17	Agree
I find it challenging to incorporate entrepreneurial skills into my lessons.	3.58	Slightly Agree
I find it challenging to develop lessons that combine academic concepts with farming activities.	3.83	Agree
I find it challenging to align farm activities with the required curriculum competencies.	4.08	Agree
Combined Wx	4.08	Agree

Challenges Perceived by the Stakeholders

To determine the perceived challenges of the stakeholders in the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School, the researchers gathered the responses of the selected RFS stakeholders: a contact person in the Department of Agriculture – Region IV-A CALABARZON, who donated broilers to the school for poultry production, two (2) representatives from the Samahan ng mga Magsasaka sa Sta. Ines, two respondents from Pamahalaang Pambarangay ng Sta. Ines, two (2) from the School Parent-Teacher Association, two (2) respondents from the indigenous community, and a contact person in the Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO) of the Municipality of Tanay. There are a total of eight (8) respondents from stakeholders. They were asked through in-person interviews, and others were asked through Google Forms.

The stakeholders were asked to respond, and they answered using a scale, indicating whether they strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statements appearing in the questionnaire.

The table indicates the stakeholders' perceptions and contributions perceived as challenges in the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program of Sta. Ines Integrated High School, which obtained the highest computed weighted mean of 4.25 (strongly agree), while the school.

These data clearly manifested that school stakeholders are aiming to understand their role in the implementation of the RFS Program; communication challenges must be addressed for them to be aware of the advocacies and activities under this program. While the stakeholders' perception and contributions are still one of the challenges, the institution must address the gap for sustainable implementation of the said program. According to Lopez and Bauyot (2025), the issues among school stakeholders such as communication barriers, competing priorities, and limited resources hindered progress, necessitating adaptive and sustainable strategies of the school. Stakeholders played a pivotal role in bridging community-school relations, while the school facilitated program delivery amidst resource constraints.

Table 3. *Perceived challenges of the stakeholders on the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School.*

Perceived Challenges	Weighted Mean (Wx)	Verbal Interpretation
School-Stakeholder Relationship and Engagement		
Limited communication between the school and stakeholders makes it difficult to receive timely information about RFS activities	4.00	Agree
Lack of clear information from the school makes it difficult for stakeholders to understand RFS activities and objectives.	3.63	Agree
Limited opportunities for stakeholders to express their suggestions and concerns make it difficult to contribute to RFS implementation.	4.38	Strongly Agree
Difficulty in coordinating schedules between the school and stakeholders affects participation in RFS activities.	4.25	Strongly Agree
Lack of consultation with stakeholders makes it difficult to establish trust in decisions concerning the RFS Program.	2.88	Slightly Agree
Combined Wx	3.83	Agree
Stakeholder Perceptions and Contributions		
I find it difficult to clearly understand my role in supporting the implementation of the RFS Program.	4.63	Strongly Agree
Limited information about the RFS Program makes it difficult for me to identify how I can contribute.	4.50	Strongly Agree
I find it difficult to determine what type of support I can provide to the RFS Program.	3.88	Agree
Limited access to resources makes it difficult for me to provide the support needed by the RFS Program.	4.00	Agree
Limited awareness of the benefits of the RFS Program affects my ability to provide meaningful support.	4.25	Strongly Agree
Combined Wx	4.25	Strongly Agree

Opportunities

Opportunities Perceived by the Learners

Table 4 shows the computed weighted mean of the perceived opportunities of the learners on the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School.

Table 4. *Perceived opportunities of the learners on the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School.*

Perceived Opportunities	Weighted Mean (Wx)	Verbal Interpretation
Agricultural Knowledge and Skills Development		
The RFS Program helps me develop skills in solving common problems encountered in farming.	4.42	Strongly Agree
The RFS Program provides me with opportunities to gain knowledge about agriculture and farming.	4.70	Strongly Agree
The RFS Program helps me learn proper techniques in planting and growing crops.	4.43	Strongly Agree

I have opportunities to develop practical skills through hands-on farm activities.	4.69	Strongly Agree
The RFS Program allows me to apply what I learn in the classroom to actual farming activities.	4.61	Strongly Agree
Combined Wx	4.57	Strongly Agree
Experiential Learning and Personal Development		
I have opportunities to apply what I learn by participating in real farm activities.	4.21	Strongly Agree
RFS activities help me become more responsible in completing assigned tasks.	4.40	Strongly Agree
Participating in RFS activities helps me develop discipline in following instructions and procedures.	4.39	Strongly Agree
The RFS Program helps me become more confident in performing tasks independently.	4.70	Strongly Agree
RFS activities provide opportunities for me to work cooperatively with my classmates.	4.24	Strongly Agree
Combined Wx	4.39	Strongly Agree
Livelihood and Entrepreneurship Development		
I have opportunities to learn how agricultural products can be processed or developed into other useful products.	4.56	Strongly Agree
The RFS Program provides me with opportunities to learn basic entrepreneurial skills.	4.71	Strongly Agree
I have opportunities to learn how agricultural products can be turned into sources of income.	4.64	Strongly Agree
RFS activities help me understand the value of producing agricultural products for livelihood.	4.75	Strongly Agree
The RFS Program provides opportunities for me to learn how to plan simple agricultural projects.	4.49	Strongly Agree
Combined Wx	4.63	Strongly Agree
Career and Educational Opportunities		
The RFS Program provides me with opportunities to learn about different careers related to agriculture.	4.18	Agree
I have opportunities to discover the different jobs and professions available in the agricultural sector.	4.06	Agree
RFS activities help me understand the skills needed for agriculture-related careers.	4.57	Strongly Agree
The RFS Program helps me recognize agriculture as a possible career path in the future.	4.74	Strongly Agree
The knowledge and skills I gain from the RFS Program can prepare me for future work opportunities.	4.08	Agree
Combined Wx	4.33	Strongly Agree

The table revealed the opportunities perceived by the learners in the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School. The opportunities for livelihood and entrepreneurial development obtained a computed weighted mean of 4.63, or strongly agree, followed by the agricultural skills and knowledge development, which got a computed weighted mean of 4.57, or strongly agree. The opportunities for experiential learning and personal development got a weighted mean of 4.57, and the opportunities for career and educational opportunities got a computed weighted mean of 4.33, both strongly agree.

With these data, the researchers conclude that the majority of the learners perceived the Rural Farm School Program as an opportunity for livelihood and entrepreneurial development. The learners perceived that the RFS program provides opportunities to learn basic skills in entrepreneurship, processing and developing agricultural products into profitable ones, and making them into additional sources of income. When exposing learners to agri-

business and entrepreneurship activities, they will not be confined to the classroom but will appreciate the program towards its sustainable implementation. Mujuru et al (2022) also claimed that schools prioritize educating students about livelihoods and entrepreneurship. Schools need to holistically embrace entrepreneurship education in their curricula, as this is paramount to a sustainable green industrial development.

Opportunities Perceived by the Teachers

Table 5 shows the computed weighted mean of the perceived opportunities of the teachers on the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School.

Table 5. *Perceived opportunities of the teachers on the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School.*

Perceived Opportunities	Weighted Mean (Wx)	Verbal Interpretation
Professional Development		
The RFS Program provides opportunities for me to improve my knowledge of sustainable farming practices.	3.58	Agree
I have opportunities to participate in training related to farm-based education.	3.42	Agree
I have opportunities to participate in seminars and workshops related to RFS implementation.	3.83	Agree
I have opportunities to learn strategies for integrating farm-based activities into my subject area.	3.75	Agree
The RFS Program allows me to gain practical experience that improves my teaching skills.	4.50	Agree
Combined Wx	3.62	Agree
Teaching Innovation		
I have opportunities to create contextualized instructional materials that connect lessons with students' farming experiences.	3.75	Agree
The RFS Program provides opportunities for me to develop innovative teaching strategies through farm-based activities.	3.67	Agree
I have opportunities to use farm-based activities as learning experiences in my subject area.	3.92	Agree
The RFS Program encourages me to develop contextualized learning materials based on local farming practices.	4.17	Agree
I have opportunities to develop creative classroom activities that incorporate farming concepts.	3.00	Slightly Agree
Combined Wx	3.70	Agree
Community Partnership		
The RFS Program provides opportunities for me to collaborate with local farmers in supporting learning activities.	3.33	Slightly Agree
I have opportunities to work with agricultural organizations in implementing RFS activities.	3.92	Agree
The RFS Program provides opportunities to establish partnerships with local businesses related to agriculture.	4.08	Agree
I have opportunities to involve parents in supporting farm-based learning activities.	4.00	Agree
The RFS Program encourages collaboration with community members who have agricultural knowledge and skills.	4.42	Strongly Agree
Combined Wx	3.95	Agree

Subject Area Collaboration		
The RFS Program provides opportunities for teachers from different subject areas to work together in planning RFS-related activities.	4.42	Strongly Agree
I have opportunities to collaborate with teachers from other subject areas in developing RFS learning activities.	4.17	Agree
The RFS Program encourages teachers to share ideas and strategies for integrating farm-based concepts into different subjects.	4.25	Strongly Agree
I have opportunities to coordinate lessons with teachers from other subject areas using common RFS themes or activities.	3.67	Agree
Combined Wx	4.13	Agree

The table revealed the opportunities perceived by the teachers on the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School. The opportunities for subject area collaboration obtained a computed weighted mean of 4.13, or agree, which is the highest computed weighted mean, followed by the opportunities for community partnership, which got a computed weighted mean of 3.95, or agree. The opportunities for teaching innovation got a weighted mean of 3.70, and the opportunities for professional development got a weighted mean of 3.62, or agree.

The majority of the RFS Teachers in Sta. Ines Integrated High School perceived the subject area collaboration as an opportunity in the implementation of the RFS. Since the curriculum required farm practices integration in the competencies, the teachers collaborate to create or develop RFS-related activities. Subject area collaboration is a good practice towards sustainable Rural Farm School Program implementation. Berry et al (2009) found in their study that teachers become effective in teaching when they collaborate with their peers; the authors also offer evidence to show that when teachers are given time and tools to collaborate with their peers, they are more likely to teach effectively and more likely to remain in the high-needs schools that need them most.

Opportunities Perceived by the Stakeholders

The stakeholders play an important role in the sustainable implementation of the Rural Farm School Program; thus, it is important to understand how they perceived the opportunities of helping the school in the implementation of this program.

The stakeholders were asked to respond, and they answered using a scale, indicating whether they strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statements appearing in the questionnaire.

Table 6. *Perceived opportunities of the stakeholders in the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School.*

Perceived Opportunities	Weighted Mean (Wx)	Verbal Interpretation
Opportunities for Resource Contribution		
The RFS Program provides opportunities for stakeholders to contribute farm tools and equipment.	4.13	Agree
The program creates opportunities for stakeholders to provide seeds, planting materials, and other farm inputs.	4.38	Strongly Agree
The RFS Program provides opportunities for stakeholders to extend financial assistance for farm activities.	3.25	Slightly Agree
The program creates opportunities for stakeholders to contribute materials needed for the development and maintenance of the school farm.	4.50	Strongly Agree
The RFS Program provides opportunities for stakeholders to share their time and manpower during farm activities.	4.25	Strongly Agree
Combined Wx	4.10	Agree

Opportunities for Community Development		
The RFS Program provides opportunities to promote agricultural activities within the community.	4.50	Strongly Agree
The program creates opportunities to increase awareness of sustainable farming practices among community members.	4.88	Strongly Agree
The RFS Program provides opportunities to contribute to food production for the school and community.	4.38	Strongly Agree
The program creates opportunities for community members to learn practical agricultural skills.	4.75	Strongly Agree
The program creates opportunities for learners and community members to share agricultural knowledge and practices.	4.63	Strongly Agree
Combined Wx	4.63	Strongly Agree

The table presents the perceived opportunities for school stakeholders regarding the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program. The opportunities for community development obtained the highest computed weighted mean of 4.63, which can be interpreted as strongly agree, while the opportunities for resource contribution got a weighted mean of 4.10, which can be interpreted as agree.

The stakeholders were aware of their partnership with the Rural Farm School Program as they perceived it as an opportunity for community development. While the school is promoting agricultural activities, the community is participating and contributing. Bagdonis et al. (2009) emphasize in their study the contribution of the farm school in the community through school-stakeholder initiation. This includes redressing poor food environments; improving student nutrition, health, and well-being; and revitalizing rural communities through support of local agriculture.

Recommendation to enhance the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School

The respondents offered suggestions to the researchers towards a sustainable Rural Farm School Program. Learners suggest exposing them to authentic and real-life agricultural experiences: *“Mas maganda pong ma-expose ang mga bata sa tunay na practice sa farm, para mas ma-appreciate po namin ang farming.”*

Teachers also offered their suggestions to provide more learning materials and improve the facilities of RFS for more meaningful learning: *“Kung magkakaroon ng mga mas angkop na facilities ay mas mapapaganda ang implementation ng RFS Program.”* Another teacher also suggested: *“Magkaroon ng mga readily available learning materials hindi lang sa TLE kundi sa lahat ng subject areas na naka-integrate na ang farming.”*

RFS Stakeholders also suggest strengthening the extension service of the school in the community: *“Mas magiging maganda ang programang ito kung mas aktibo ang mga mag-aaral at paaralan hindi lang sa loob ng paaralan kundi maging sa komunidad.”*

These recommendations from the respondents of this study are taken into consideration as it is salient to enhance the implementation of the program, and it leads to a sustainable RFS Program.

Proposed action plan to address the challenges and strengthen the opportunities towards sustainable RFS Program implementation

Project GULAY (Growing and Utilizing Livelihood and Agricultural Yields):
 A proposed Action Plan for Sustainable Implementation of
 Rural Farm School in Sta. Ines Integrated High School

Project GULAY (Growing and Utilizing Livelihood and Agricultural Yields) is an initiative developed to establish and sustain the implementation of the Rural Farm School Program. It was conceptualized in response to address the challenges that may be a threat in an effective implementation of this program.

Furthermore, this project was crafted with consideration for the given challenges and recommendations of the learners, teachers, and stakeholders.

This action plan may contribute significantly to enhancing and improving the implementation of the RFS Program in Sta. Ines Integrated High School.

Recommendations

1. The school may establish a feedback mechanism involving students, teachers, and stakeholders for the continuous improvement of the RFS Program.
2. Provide training for teachers on farm integration across subject areas, provide learning materials, and improve the RFS facilities for quality instruction.
3. Establish a scheme that helps the learners to monetize their produce from RFS farm-based activities to inculcate in them the value of agri-entrepreneurship.
4. The school may implement the Project GULAY and its action plan towards sustainable Rural Farm School Program implementation in Sta. Ines Integrated High School.
5. Conduct follow-up research to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the project on student outcomes and partnership sustainability.

Dissemination and Advocacy Plans

This dissemination and advocacy plan outlines strategies to communicate the key findings and recommendations from the study “Towards Sustainable Rural Farm School Program: Challenges and Opportunities on Its Implementation in Sta. Ines Integrated High School” to relevant stakeholders, to strengthen implementation support and encourage replication of best practices.

Dissemination Activities	Sept. 2026	Nov. 2026	Dec. 2026	Jan. 2027	Feb. 2027	March 2027
1. Present findings to SIIHS school administration.						
2. Division-level sharing						
3. Stakeholder dialogue and partnership forum						
4. Policy brief and school publication						
5. Community Awareness Campaign						
6. SIP Integration and Program Alignment						
7. Academic Sharing and Publication						

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