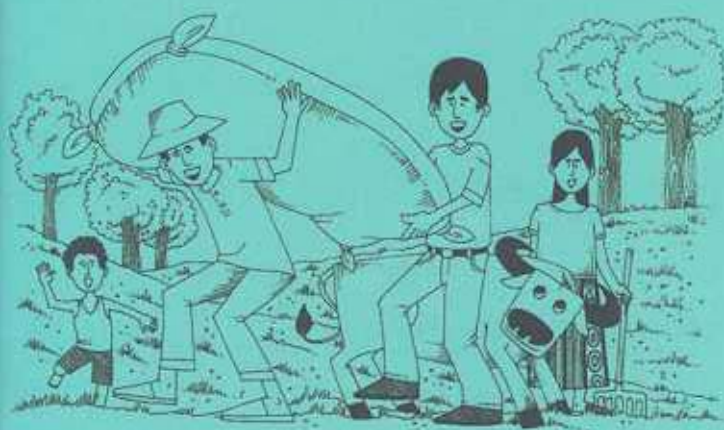




Farmer-Led Organizations in Natural Resources Management

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preface

The poor in the uplands and mountains of Asia are increasingly becoming the focus of attention in efforts to address resource degradation, insecurity of tenure, cultural isolation, and the marginalization of local communities. Locally-adapted, resource-conserving technologies are prioritized over supply-driven approaches of the past. Local people are vested with the responsibility for conserving their environment. Improved systems for securing access and control by marginalized upland people are being sought in order to ensure that the benefits accrue directly to local communities. Market linkages are valued because of the recognition of the importance of a sustainable livelihoods oriented approach. Indeed, a broadening of the paradigm has characterized the past decade of work in the uplands of Asia.

Striking is the “discovery” by programs working in such diverse sectors of forestry, agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, upland resource management, watershed management, credit and micro enterprises of the critical and pivotal role of local organizations. Farmer-led and farmer-managed local organizations can and do make a difference in how natural and human resources are managed in the tropical uplands of Asia. They influence the quality of what is done and how long outcomes are sustained. Local organizations are social assets. Local organizations allow democratic processes to emerge and they increasingly are effective in promoting culture of downward capability. With donors and governments increasingly transferring resources and powers to local governments and user groups, new windows of opportunities have become available to local organizations.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) are collaborating in order to develop and disseminate technical and institutional innovations that promote the application of sound natural resources management practices. These innovations aim to benefit poor upland communities including those covered by IFAD-assisted upland projects in Southeast Asia. One of the innovations being developed is that of farmer-led organizations and related initiatives to improve upland farm profitability and sustainability.

This booklet is meant to broaden the knowledge base of practitioners involved in facilitating the development of farmer-led local organizations among the upland poor in Asia especially in Southeast Asia. It is designed for facilitators of farmer-led organizations: project managers, extension leaders, and trainers. It is also directed towards researchers engaged in on-farm research within the more challenging R and D (research and development) paradigm. NGOs and Civil Society will find this of use too.

This publication is based on previously published material. In a world where knowledge management is emphasized, there is often a need to build upon and better utilize available resources. The highlighted experiences are drawn from a diverse range of perspectives of community organizers, researchers, academicians, policymakers, and practitioners. This makes this collection of materials unique and hopefully of wider relevance to those engaged in the design and implementation of programs.

An attempt has been made to cover a rather wide range of topics in the booklet:

Section 1: Devolving natural resources management to local people

Section 2: Nature of local organizations

Section 3: Local institutions' effectiveness in natural resources management

Section 4: Research and farmer organizations

Section 5: Building social capital and strengthening partnerships

Section 6: Building civil society at the grassroots

This diversity and range of coverage has been planned and is deliberate. The inclusion of findings from research studies is also deliberate and is aimed at enhancing the use of field-derived research outputs. Also included are experiences from allied work such as watershed management, soil and water conservation, and community-based forest management. These account for a major portion of the publication (Section 3). A special section (Section 6) draws upon the rich community organizing tradition of civil society. Although this section does not directly deal with upland resource management, it draws the attention of reader to lessons of at least two decades of community organizing by civil society.

This is not an implementation manual but more of a reference from which a reader can draw principles which can serve as the basis for designing or adapting strategies within ongoing programs.

Local organizations must evolve out of a response to each specific cultural, economic, and social context. They cannot be imposed but must be nurtured. With strong, effective, and responsive local organizations in place, the returns, in terms of adoption and sustainability of resource management practices will be greatly enhanced.

Julian F. Gonsalves with Eduardo E. Queblatin

Section 1:

Devolving Natural Resources Management to Local People



LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE UPLANDS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

Upland tropical watersheds contribute significantly to the livelihoods of many of the poorest rural populations in the world. Large and growing populations are farming and harvesting forest products in upper watersheds, even as watershed natural resources—for water supply and quality, environmental services, habitat for wild biodiversity, and carbon services—become increasingly important at regional, national and

The contents of this section are taken from Scherr, S.J., J. Amornsanguasin, M.E.C. Javier, D. Garrity, S. Sunito, S. Ir. 2001. Local organization in natural resource management in the uplands of Southeast Asia: Policy context and institutional landscape. Paper presented at the SANREM Conference on "Sustaining Upland Development in Southeast Asia: Issues, Tools and Institutions for Local Natural Resource Management", 28-30 May 2001, Makati City, Philippines.

international scales. The governance of watershed resources in many developing countries is undergoing profound change. Control and decision-making over natural resources is being transferred in many places from highly authoritarian government agencies to local people. Collective action and modification of property rights are essential to address many of the critical challenges of watershed management—

devolving natural resource management (NRM) to local communities, internalizing environmental externalities, negotiating use rights over resources, and resolving conflicts among stakeholders (Meinzen-Dick and Knox 2001).

Box 1. Active groups

Pretty and Ward (2001) estimate some 50,000 watershed and sustainable agriculture groups became active in the past decade in Australia, several African and Central American countries, India and Nepal, and the USA.



INNOVATION IN UPLAND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

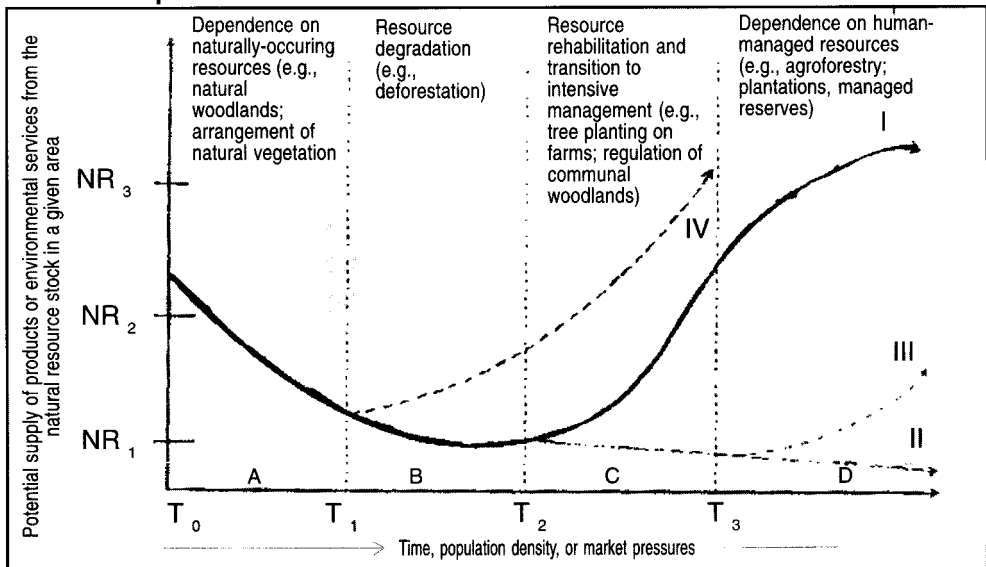
Upland populations have grown faster than overall population, and improved infrastructure has linked these regions much more closely with national economies. As settled farming populations have sought to intensify production on steeply sloping lands, often with poor soils, rural poverty has become more concentrated. Degradation of many key environmental resources—notably forests, water quality and supply, and wild biodiversity—has been associated with upland “development,” threatening local livelihoods as well as environmental values important nationally and internationally (Scherr 2000a).

However, studies of livelihood strategies have revealed that although the rural poor may have limited resources, they still have considerable capacity to adapt to environmental degradation, either by mitigating its effects on their livelihoods or by rehabilitating degraded resources. A wide variety of coping mechanisms may be used to deal with environmental stress. Some of these responses imply further impoverishment (e.g., reducing consumption, depleting household, or moving). Others may offset the welfare effects of resource degradation without improving the natural resource base (e.g., increasing off-farm employment, exploiting common property resources). Some strategies *both* improve natural resources *and* reduce household poverty by protecting and preserving the asset base, diversifying and improving on-farm production systems, or taking out

credit to invest in future production or resource protection (Davies, 1996; Scherr, 2000b).

Over time, local people develop technical and institutional innovations in natural resource management to reduce risks and adapt to or reverse degradation, even as pressures increase. These findings suggest a phenomenon of local innovation in NRM. As population or market pressures increase, farmers first experience degradation and its welfare effects, but not sufficiently to trigger a response. As effects become more pronounced farmers will seek innovations to stabilize or improve the resource base, or to compensate for their welfare effects by depending less on the degrading resource. Such a positive adaptive response is not assured; resources may eventually be destroyed or a delayed response may permanently reduce resource conditions; consumption may decline (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Innovation in soil resource management under population and market pressure.



SOURCE: Scherr, 2000b.

The phenomenon of “induced innovation” is shown in Figure 1 as trajectory I. Note that this analysis does not imply that the original resource conditions are recovered, only that the supply of products or environmental services recovers. Thus, intensive agroforestry systems may replace natural forests, with negative impacts for biodiversity services, even where other goods and services recover. Under trajectory II, degradation continues to the point that rehabilitation is infeasible. Under III, rehabilitation is delayed to the point that potential resource recovery

is limited. To conserve natural resources and enhance livelihoods over the long term, accelerated innovation and rehabilitation (IV) is often desirable.

Organizational limitations appear to be a key constraint in this innovation process, especially for natural resources that are common property or public goods, and innovations that have economies of scale or require collective action. Local organizations may play critical roles in such adaptive processes: in managing common property resources, regulating private

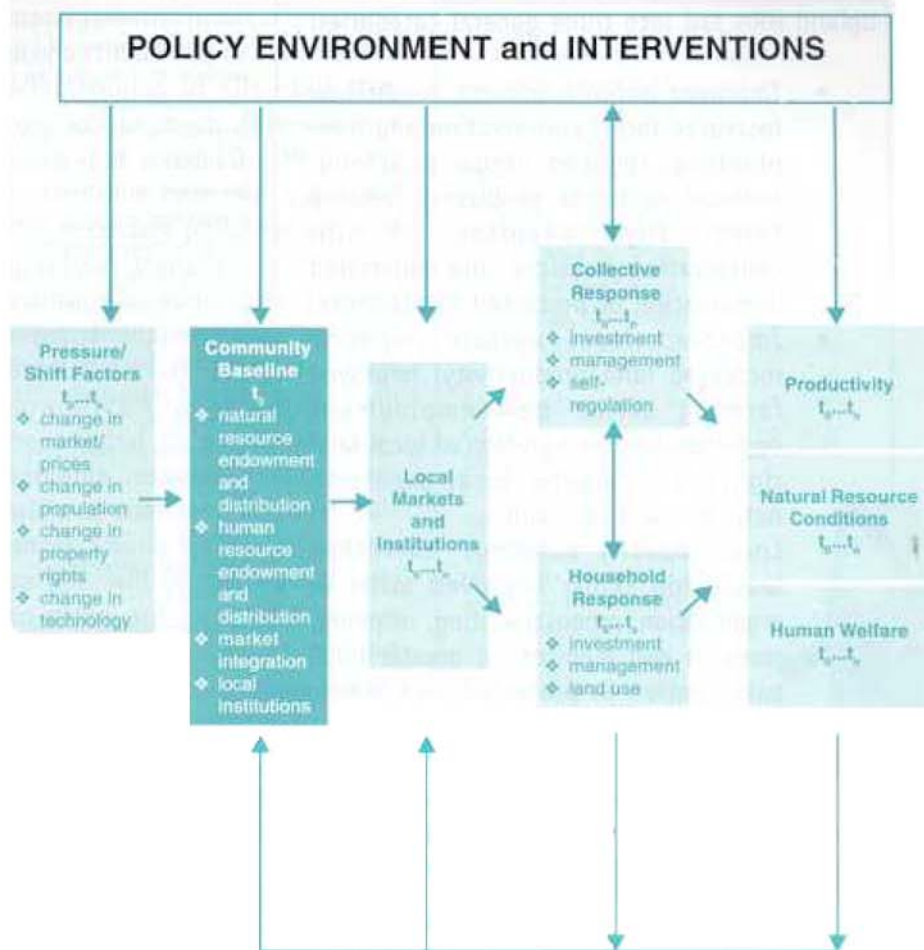
resource management to protect community interests, organizing community investments to improve natural resource conditions, sharing knowledge about NRM, cooperating to market products or environmental services from NRM, or advocating for community interests with policymakers and other influential external actors (Hinchcliffe, et al. 1999).

“Organizational limitations appear to be a key constraint in this innovation process, especially for natural resources that are common property or public goods, and innovations that have economies of scale or require collective action.”

The conceptual framework shown in Figure 2 predicts that increasing pressures on natural resources will influence community conditions in ways that modify local institutions, including local organizations (LOs) responsible for NRM. Such LOs may influence both collective and household-level NRM. Resulting changes in productivity, natural resource conditions and human welfare within the community produce further dynamic changes (Scherr 2000b).

The conceptual framework considers these questions within the broader dynamics of rural change. Pressures from population growth, markets, new technology or other external factors induce change in local markets, prices and institutions within individual communities. The local impacts of these shifts are conditioned by community characteristics, such as their human and natural resource endowments, infrastructure, asset distribution, market linkages and local knowledge base and culture. Resulting community-level changes may induce responses in agriculture and NRM strategies at both household and collective levels (e.g., changes in land use, land investment, use intensity, input mix, conservation practices and collective action). These responses are similarly conditioned by community characteristics and may thus be path-dependent. Subsequent

Figure 2. Factors Mediating Local Response to Changing Natural Resource Pressures: A Conceptual Framework.



SOURCE: Scherr, 2000b.

changes in NRM then affect environmental conditions, agricultural production and human welfare. These in return have feedback effects on local conditions, institutions and NRM decisions.

Public policies and investments can influence poverty-agriculture-environment dynamics at various points of the framework. For example, public agricultural research investments and food price policies affect shift factors, while technical assistance influences response patterns. The most effective action for reducing poverty and environmental degradation will depend on the dynamics of the local change process and the relative importance of key factors influencing poverty-environment interactions.

IMPACTS OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

The major impacts reported from LOs in upland NRM fall into three general categories:

- *Improved natural resource conditions:* increased forest conservation and tree-planting; reduced illegal poaching; reduced pesticide problems; reduced forest fire; adoption of soil conservation practices, and negotiated demarcation of protected forest areas;
- *Improved local welfare impacts:* increased farm productivity; improved farming skills; new employment opportunities, recognition of local land rights, and greater local access to natural resources; and
- *Local capacity building:* increased leadership skills; improved skills in organization, proposal-writing, mapping, research and monitoring; greater local participation in protected area management; greater political consciousness; and networking.

Box 2. Positive impact

There has been little documentation of such impacts, in terms of local welfare and resources or watershed-level environmental services and production. Even donor and government-funded watershed projects tend to monitor only operational indicators (e.g., number of seedlings produced in tree nurseries), rather than final impacts. Because the state of natural resources typically fluctuate from year to year, longer-term monitoring is needed to ascertain genuine changes.

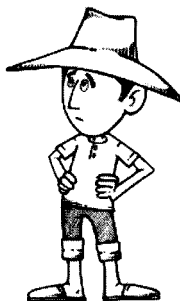


The establishment and empowerment of local organizations are not a panacea for the serious challenges of upland NRM—only a necessary first step. Local capacity for good resource husbandry, equitably managed,

is constrained by social factors, including male domination in most organizations, high social stratification in some traditional organizations and peri-urban communities, limited social capital on which to build, and social disruption due to continued immigration. Greater access and control over natural resources by local communities may not always lead to improved NRM—as defined by environmentalists or downstream resource users—in the short-run, given

Box 3. On upland communities

Established upland communities in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand have commonly protected natural resources important to their livelihoods and identity.



resource-scarce conditions in most rural communities. Local governments and watershed management institutions will play a critical role in assuring the effectiveness of LOs—but that role will be much different in a context of active LOs. Most such institutions have not yet made the necessary philosophical and practical transitions. Environmental education, planning and research support, even environmental service payments from downstream resource users, will be needed to encourage sustainable resource management without coercion. Stronger alliances among locally led organizations will be needed not only to safeguard local control over resources, but also to support and encourage long-term investment in sustainable systems.

Box 4. A consideration in involving local organizations

It is important to consider that, despite the advances gained in involving local organizations in upland resource management, natural resource management remain a multisectoral concern that requires a multisectoral approach. While it is obvious that local resource users may directly benefit from sustained and sustainable resource management, this concern cannot be left exclusively in the care of local upland communities where the poorest of the country's poor belong. They not only cannot do the job effectively without external assistance, but it is unfair to expect only the local people to steward resources that benefit also the society at large.

Source: Chiong-Javier, 2001.



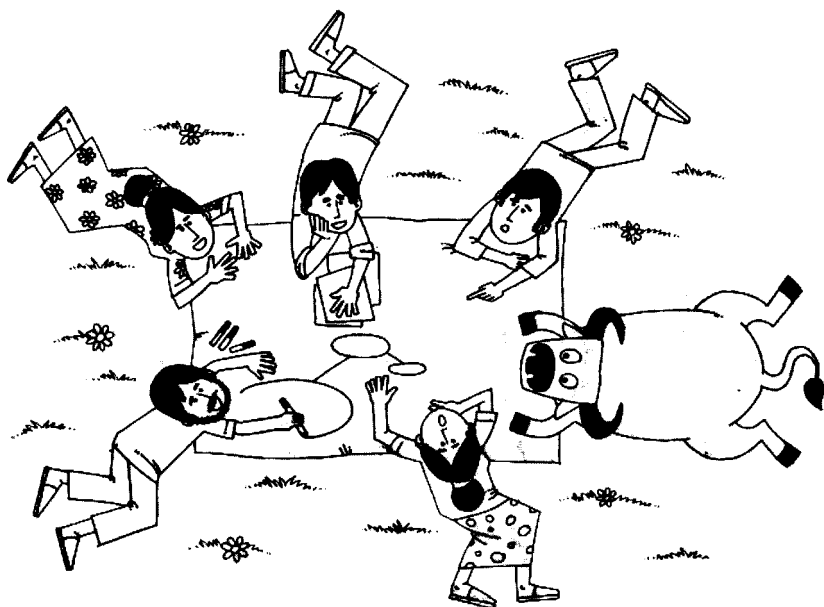
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Section 2:

Nature of Local Organizations



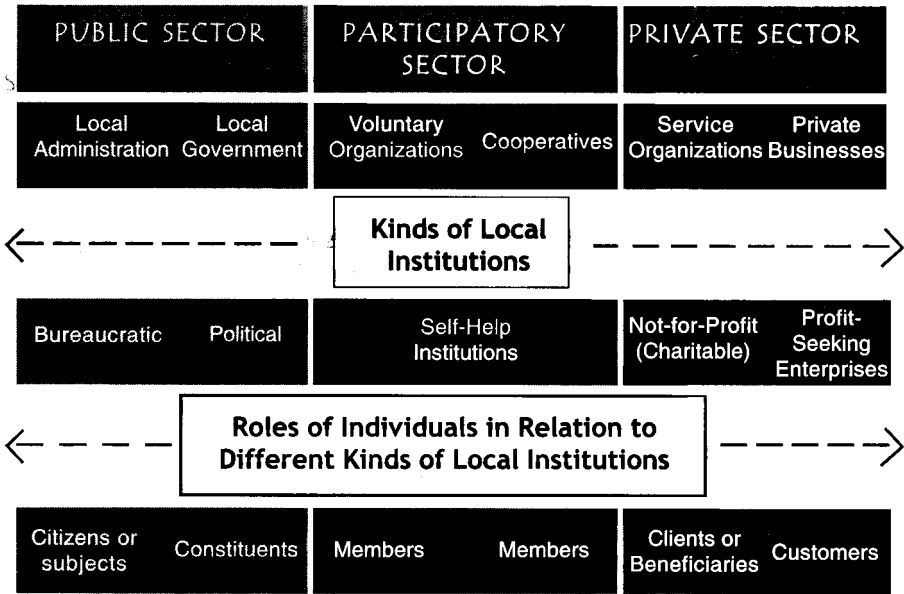
Behavior is conditioned by community norms and consensus. Preserving or instituting practices that are environmentally sound requires more than just individual incentives and persuasion. Local institutions encourage people to take a longer-term view by creating expectations and a basis for cooperation that goes beyond individual interests. To the extent institutions are regarded as legitimate, people comply without (or with fewer) inducements and sanctions. Available resources can be put to their most efficient and sustainable use with location-specific knowledge, which is best generated and interpreted locally. Monitoring changes in resources' status can be quicker and less costly where local people are involved. Making adaptive changes in resource use is speeded up where local decision-making has become institutionalized.

THE RANGE AND VARIETY OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONS*

Participatory institutions are not just another category to be added to the prior categories of public and private sector institutions. It is better to think in terms of a continuum of institutions ranging from public to private with participatory institutions in between.

While most of the private sector institutions has profit as its goal, there are also charitable or philanthropic (not-for-profit) institutions. Within the public sector there is a similar distinction to be made between local administration and local government. Local administration refers to institutions that represent central authority and are accountable to bureaucratic superiors. On the other hand, local government pertains to institutions responsible to their local constituents. The significance of these distinctions can be seen at the bottom of Figure 3 where it is shown how people have different relationships to these several kinds of local institutions.

Figure 3. Continuum of local institutions by sector (adapted from Uphoff 1986:5).



* The contents of this subsection are taken from Uphoff, N. 1992. Local institutions and participation for sustainable development. Gatekeeper Series No. 31. London: International Institute for Environment and Development.

**LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS (LOs) IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA***

Local organization is an umbrella term for diverse types of local groups. Box 5 enumerates these terminologies.

LOs currently involved in upland NRM vary considerably. There are four major categories of LOs involved in upland NRM, in terms of their genesis or overall objective. These are the following:

1. **I n d i g e n o u s** communities in their ancestral lands, located at higher altitudes, with less intensive land use systems, for whom land rights issues are primary.
2. Farmer groups organized by the government or larger-scale private sector firms to support production activities (for example, for credit or outgrower schemes).
3. Community groups organized by the government to pursue soil, water or forest conservation objectives

Box 5. Local organizations terminology

The following terms are used in the Philippines. There is considerable, but not complete, crossover in Indonesia and Thailand.

- ❖ **Community-Based Organization (CBO):** an organization based or located in a community; it may not be representative of the community.
- ❖ **Community-Led Organization (CLO):** a variant of CBO with emphasis on leadership born by representatives chosen by a cross-section of community members, working to affect the common good, often self-initiated.
- ❖ **Farmer-Led Organization (FLO):** a sectoral grouping of farmers, often self-initiated; may develop to become CLOs;
- ❖ **People's Foundation (PF):** a variant of FLO with an outward service-orientation, existing to serve not only its members but also external clients who may be CBOs or FLOs, often self-initiated.
- ❖ **Cooperative:** a formal organization registered with the government, with a well-defined socioeconomic agenda and capital, and oriented towards some form of social enterprise (e.g., credit, lending or marketing); may have a community-wide or sectoral membership;
- ❖ **People's Organization (PO):** a generic term embracing all of the above groupings—a form of civil society at the grassroots level.
- ❖ **Federation:** a formal (i.e., government-registered) or informal alliance or coalition of several or many types of organizations, associations or cooperatives. It may have a multisectoral composition when POs coalesce with NGOs and/or Local Government Organizations.

Source: Chiong-Javier, 2001.



* The contents of this subsection are taken from Scherr, S. J. et al. 2001. Local organization in natural resource management in the uplands of Southeast Asia: policy context and institutional landscape. Paper presented at the SANREM Conference on "Sustaining Upland Development in Southeast Asia: Issues, Tools and Institutions for Local Natural Resource Management", 28-30 May 2001, Makati, Philippines.

(for example, community-based forest management or CBFM on public lands).

4. Farmer or community groups, self-initiated or organized by social and environmental NGOs, that emphasize local empowerment for social development and natural resource management.

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS IN INDIA*

MYRADA, a non-government organization in India, has been involved in resource management for dry lands for nearly two decades. They focus on building and managing appropriate, innovative, local level institutions rooted in justice, equity, and mutual support.

MYRADA believes that various groups evolve with time:

1. **Self-Help Groups (SHGs).**

Individuals form groups

because of a common concern or interest. For example, people who talk about watershed issues form watershed associations; those interested in forest issues go with forest management committees. SHGs provide a stimulating venue for effective participation at the village level. Being just a small group focused on a particular issue, it is more likely that members can freely voice out their thoughts. This can easily lead to a lively interaction. More often, the poor are organized first into SHGs in order to establish a solid power base.

2. **Organization.** As small group concerns unfold, comes along increasing participation and deepening commitments. Group discussions are now elevated into rules and regulations. Moreover, each member has defined functions and responsibilities. There comes an urge to formalize the group bonding through registration procedures. In most cases, rules, regulations, and functions are imposed from the outside.

“SHGs provide a stimulating venue for effective participation at the village level. Being just a small group focused on a particular issue, it is more likely that members can freely voice out their thoughts.”

* The contents of this subsection are taken from Fernandez, A.P. 2001. The MYRADA experience. MYRADA, Bangalore.

3. **Institution.** When members have full ownership of the body and imbibe to a large extent the organizational culture and systems, then an organization has developed into an institution. In this level, members are able to develop their own vision and mission as well as confidently modify rules and regulations. Moreover, a stable pattern of behavior manifests an institution. Sanctions for deviant behavior are self-imposed and accepted by all as necessary for a growing organization.

Conflict resolution is primarily the institution's responsibility. There is no tension between a member's rights and responsibilities. Both are given respect. Although in some crisis situations, responsibilities easily take precedence over right. An institution has a culture for self-assessment and change. It does not need to be "restructured" from the outside. An institution can function only in a genuine democracy. This means it grows over a period of time. It requires at least two-three years before a group develops clear signs of an institution.

Sometimes it is also possible that a functioning institution^f can loose its culture and undermine its systems through external or internal causes. An institution therefore requires both time to develop and constant commitment among all its members to remain healthy. An institution must continue to develop its own learning mechanisms and confidence to protect its identity and inter-dependence.

Box 6. SHGs as the appropriate groups

If credit is the resource to be managed, therefore, the appropriate institution cannot be one where rich and poor are members; it will have to be an institution where only the poor have membership, and which they own. If they do not own these institutions and instead have to conform to rules and regulations of the official financial systems, they will continue to be exploited. The Self-Help Groups are institutions of the poor; experience has shown that they are also the appropriate institutions to manage credit.

Source: Fernandez, 2001.



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Section 3:

Local Institutions' Effectiveness in Natural Resource Management



CRITICAL ROLE OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONS IN MANAGING RESOURCES*

According to Uphoff (1992) local institutions are more likely to be successful in natural resource management where the resource is "bounded". Meaning, known and predictable rather than shifting and variable. Moreover, the users themselves are an identifiable group or community with its own authority structure. The most favorable situation for local resource management is irrigation water management by water users themselves. As shown in Figure 4, the resource is relatively ascertainable and only certain persons have access to it. One cannot encroach on channel water to the extent that one can extract forest resources or graze pasture land surreptitiously. The most abundant examples of effective local

* The contents of this subsection are taken from Uphoff, N. 1994. Local institutions and participation for sustainable development. Gatekeeper Series. IIED. 31:9-10.

management of natural resources are in the irrigation sector (Uphoff 1986a). And among irrigation systems, institutional arrangements are more successful where the users are a socially cohesive group. In larger systems, there is likely to be less solidarity among farmers than in smaller, community-based ones.

Figure 4. Resource management situations according to differences in resource and users (Uphoff 1986b).

USER-MANAGERS ARE:	NATURAL RESOURCE IS:	
	Known and predictable	Little known and unpredictable
Identifiable and coherent group	(I) Irrigation water management, by water user themselves	(II) Coastal fishing, by local fisherman groups
Lacking group identity	(III) Forest management by all who have access to the forest	(IV) Rangeland management by nomadic herders

The contrasting situation—rangeland management by nomadic herders—represents a resource that fluctuates according to shifting rainfall patterns and users are of various migrating clans. Such conditions make it difficult for local institutions to control access and regulate resource use. This means that use-management is another option—management by individuals who use the resource within certain cultural and social norms that are not enforced by any formal authority (Roe and Fortmann 1982). This involves institutions (based on shared values and expectations) that are not at the same time organizations, following the definition of “institution” in Box 7.

The potential of local institutions for natural resource management can be improved, other things being equal, by investing in gathering information on the resource in question and making it available to local people. Likewise, working with users to encourage the establishment of groups is likely to be a good investment for promoting local resource management. One of the “social technologies” developed over the last

Box 7. What are local institutions?

The term "local" is often misused. Three levels, not just one, should be regarded as local: (1) localities, sets of communities that have kinship, marketing or other connections; (2) communities or villages or towns, and (3) groups. These have in common the prevalence of face-to-face interpersonal relationships, which are naturally more frequent and intense within groups and communities than within localities.

The fact that people know each other creates opportunities for collective action and mutual assistance, for mobilizing and managing resources on a self-directed and self-sustaining basis. People feel more mutual rapport and sense of obligation at these levels than at district or subdistrict levels, which are basically *political* constructions. There, the bonds among people are defined more formally or legally. Decisions and activities are based more on authority than on consensus which grows out of discussion and mutual understanding. The latter is more likely in localities, communities, and groups because they exist as social entities.

Source: Uphoff, 1992.



decades is the deployment of catalysts — community organizers, social organizers, institutional organizers, or association organizers—to overcome previous barriers to resource user cooperation (Uphoff 1992).

Uphoff further stressed that getting local people to take responsibility for natural resource management will be easier where the benefits accrue more quickly, locally, visibly, and to those who bear the cost. In the opposite situation, where benefits are delayed, remote, hard to identify, and do not go to those who invested effort, money or foregone use, local management and maintenance of natural resources would be most unpromising. Institutional arrangements should seek to include those who bear the costs of as well as those who benefit from resource management schemes.

“...getting local people to take responsibility for natural resource management will be easier where the benefits accrue more quickly, locally, visibly, and to those who bear the cost.”

Among the organizational models for enhancing local initiative in attacking land degradation challenges, one of particular interest is called 'Landcare'. Through this movement local communities organize to tackle their agricultural problems in partnership with public sector institutions. The distinguishing characteristics of Landcare groups are they being voluntary, self-governing, and focus on problem-solving resources within the community. Experience in the Philippines (200 groups) and Australia (4,500 groups) suggests that such an approach may provide a means to more effectively share and generate technical information, spread the adoption of new practices, enhance research, and foster farm and watershed planning process. These groups exhibit some similar characteristics to the farmer field schools made popular in integrated pest management. Landcare groups, however, are aimed at a broader range of land degradation and sustainability issues. Some distinguishing features of Landcare groups are:

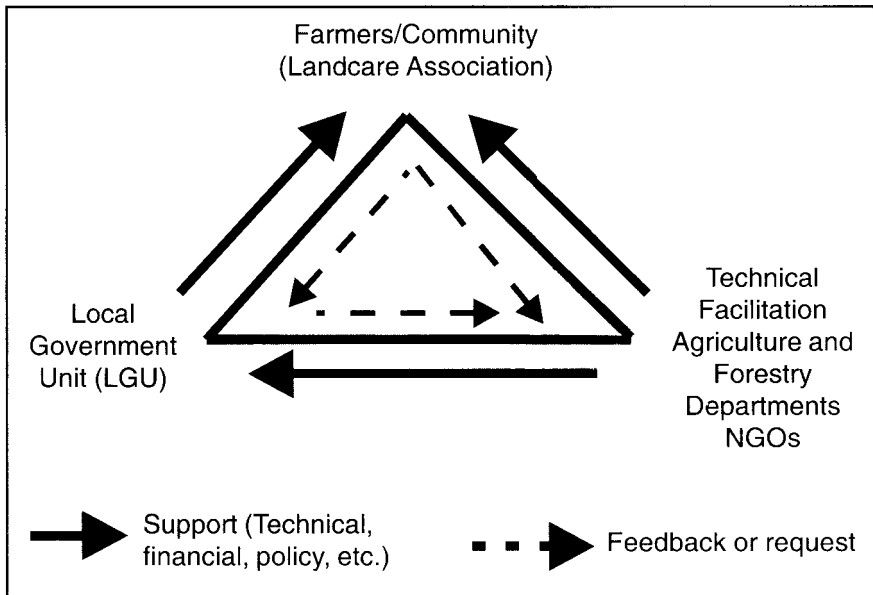
- They develop their own agenda and tackle the range of sustainability issues considered important to the group.
- They tend to be based on neighborhoods or small sub-watersheds.
- The impetus for formation comes from the community, although explicit support from outside may be obtained.
- The momentum and ownership of the group's program is with the community.

Farmer-driven approaches show promise of being more effective and less expensive than current transfer-of-technology approaches. In the southern Philippines, farmer organizations became the basis for a successful grassroots approach to finding new land care solutions, partnering with local government, pulling in outside technical and financial resources, and diffusing new information throughout the community (Garrity 1999). The experience suggests that there is major potential for enhancing this grassroots approach elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

There are signs that institutions like this could revolutionize extension systems. Extension agents are transformed from the role of teacher to one of facilitator to whole farmer groups (Campbell 1994). Conservation farming based on contour buffer strips is one practice popularized through Landcare in the Philippines. Another has been the expansion of nurseries

* The contents of this subsection are taken from Garrity, D. 1999. A paper presented at the IFAD Symposium on "The Asian Crisis and the Rural Poor", UN University, Tokyo, Japan, 8 July, 1999.

Figure 5. Collaborative structure of Landcare.



for growing new species of fruit and timber trees to diversify the farm enterprise. As a result of Landcare activities, hundreds of household nurseries have been established by the membership using their own resources. Landcare groups have also gained significant influence at the local political level. Local governments have begun to actively assist the movement with budgetary allocations and political support. The collaborative structure of Landcare is built through these mutually supported relationships among the farmers' organizations, local government, and technical support agencies (Figure 5).

Conditions are evolving to stimulate greater entrepreneurship in the rural areas of Asia. Self-governing, farmer-led knowledge-sharing organizations may play a key role in helping to foster this entrepreneurship, and channeling it into productive opportunities. They may complement local savings and credit groups, and other types of local organizations.

What needs to be done to release the power of the Landcare concept? The public sector and nongovernment sector can assist in facilitating group formation and networking among groups, enabling them to grow, developing their managerial capabilities, and enhancing their ability to capture new information from the outside world. They can also provide leadership training to farmer leaders, helping ensure the sustainability of the organizations. Cost-sharing external assistance can also be provided. The use of trust funds, where farmer groups receive small grants for local projects, should be emphasized.

Management of Micro-Watersheds

Around 1985, realizing that a major investment in dry lands was required to ensure food security of the poor, MYRADA began exploring the strategy of micro-watershed management in Gulbarga District in collaboration with the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation and the government of Karnataka. MYRADA's focus was to foster appropriate people's institutions which would take on the responsibility of planning, budgeting, and implementing treatment measures in watershed and then managing the investment for sustained impact. MYRADA has two simple slogans—"Make the water walk" and "Bring the soil back to life" (through judicious use of biomass, compost, silt, and soil cover). ISRO's satellite photographs of 1986 and

1994, prove that there has been remarkable change in the biomass cover in the project area. Several studies have shown sustained increases in productivity and ability of crops to weather prolonged dry periods. The lessons learned from this project were incorporated in others both in MYRADA and outside; a national policy and strategy on watershed management was also derived from this experiment.

Over the years, MYRADA has evolved basic principles on how micro-watersheds are managed. All these were derived from field-testing and development with the people themselves. MYRADA has emphasized the importance of small micro-watershed for the following reasons:

- The people could see their watershed.
- It should be an area that they are relating either through agriculture, grazing, forestry, etc.
- The extent of land assets and resources should not be too large for them to manage without continuing outside assistance.

Box 8: The MYRADA strategy

Poverty involves fundamental structural barriers that limit access to productive assets, markets and fair wages. MYRADA's strategy is two-fold:

- ◆ Foster alternate systems of the poor through which they mobilize and manage the resources they need. These institutions form the basis for their sustained empowerment.
- ◆ Lobby with the official system to recognize these alternate systems in their own right and to relate with and support them.



* The contents of this subsection are taken from www.myrada.org/profile.htm and People's participation in the management of mini watersheds. Rural Management Series: Paper 6. 19 August 1989.

Box 9: MYRADA and the micro-watershed project

MYRADA is a non-governmental organization managing rural development programmes in three States of South India and providing on-going support including deputations of staff to programmes in six other States. It also promotes the Self Help Affinity strategy in Cambodia, Myanmar, and Bangladesh.

At any point of time, MYRADA, through its various initiatives, works with one million poor people.

In a micro-watershed project, MYRADA aims to:

- ❖ foster people participation and develop appropriate people's institutions to mobilize, regenerate and manage resources sustainably; and
- ❖ influence the government to focus efforts in an integrated manner regarding watershed development and recognize people's participation integral to policy and programme formulation and implementation.



- The number of families involved should be small enough to enable them to function together. If the number of families was large (above 30) they would have to break-up into smaller socially functional and homogenous groups managing various particular operations like credit, with an apex group supervising the overall functions of a watershed.

Size of Watersheds

- The watershed cannot be too large. Its size must depend on the "capacity" of the people and their institutions to manage the operations required.
- The watershed cannot be too small either. If it is, then the programme will hardly be symbolic in nature. The functional institutions are too small to achieve economic viability. On the social aspect, like health and education, its political organization may be too weak to exert pressure. Hence, a watershed covering 600-800 acres with 80 to 100 families would be a possible start.

Structural Features of People's Institutions in Watershed Development

- **Small size** – An ideal 15-20 members and a maximum of 30 members. Larger than this may be difficult in function. Large groups which are homogeneous may be aware of each one's responsibilities but participation of each member is restricted. Some members are shy and different. They can only talk and function in small groups. Group dynamics should ensure that everyone is encouraged to talk and participate in decision-making without inhibitions or fears. In a large group, this is impossible to do. Size is therefore a structural feature which has to be given importance.

- **Homogeneous in composition** - They should be sharing a common interest. Similarity in economic status may be essential in groups involved in management of scarce inputs (i.e., credit).
- **Fully participative** - Decisions are not delegated to representatives. Members gather, discuss, and arrive at one decision harmoniously.
- **Voluntary** - The emergence of values, rules, and regulations which are appropriate to the activities of the group help establish better living systems for its members and enables them to cope with the continuously changing demands of the environment.

The Role of the Watershed Management Association

1. Create awareness among the subgroups on the importance of ecological balance of the watershed as an ecological unit which needs to be properly managed.
2. Coordinate and integrate the efforts of all the subgroups; so that all the subgroups work towards the same goal. Namely, the integrated development and management of the resources of the mini watersheds.
3. Work out systems to ensure that common resources and assets like *nala-bunds*, gully checks, grazing lands, drinking water resources etc., are managed by the subgroups in a manner where rights and responsibilities are shared appropriately.
4. Provide the necessary support to the weaker members of each group to develop and participate effectively.
5. Coordinate, lobby, and bargain with the government, contractors, financial institutions, Mandal Panchayats, MYRADA, and other

Box 10: The case of the watershed associations

In the case of watershed management, a single institution is not adequate or appropriate. MYRADA's experience indicates that in a micro watershed of about 70-100 families, the initial intervention required is to form Self-Help Groups (SHGs) of the poor. Representatives from these SHGs as well as from other groups, come together to form Watershed Associations. These associations form ad hoc committees which take the initiative to involve all concerned in every stage of the programme. The SHGs are in a position to lobby for the poorer sectors and to ensure that they have a share in the benefits of the investment.

By 2002, MYRADA listed 3,547 self-help groups and 129 watershed development associations as its strategic partners.

Source: Fernandez, 2001.



interest groups so as to mobilize, plan, and manage programmes offered by these institutions for watershed development and for the development of weaker sections.

6. Network with other Watershed Management Associations and institutions involved in similar programmes so as to help the subgroups develop appropriate skills, etc.

COMMUNITY-BASED FOREST MANAGEMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES*

Community-based forest management (CBFM) constitutes a powerful paradigm that evolved out of the failure of state forest governance to ensure the sustainability of forest resources and the equitable distribution of access to and benefits from them. Acknowledging the role of commercial timber extraction, corruption, and ineffectual governance in creating the twin problems of forest degradation and upland poverty (Porter and Ganapin 1988; Repetto 1988; Kummer 1992), CBFM advocates the urgent need to empower and involve communities in forest management (Poffenberger 1990; PWG 1999). Espousing a participatory development paradigm, they maintain that forest protection and sustainable use can be more effectively achieved when local communities plan and implement these themselves instead of having the state, which has shown dismal performance, thus far, continue to do so on its own. It is believed that "responsiveness, effectiveness, and efficiency are optimally obtained when decisions, programs, and projects are done by those who should know them best—the people themselves" (PBSP 1994).

This movement toward local forest governance reflects national and international tendencies toward decentralization and devolution,

Box 11: Credit-support via local organizations

Since 1984-1985 MYRADA has fostered self-help groups (SHGs) of the rural poor. These groups not only manage credit, they also provide space for the poor to grow in skills and in confidence to make decisions regarding their lives. They are credit-plus institutions. In March 1999, there were 3,547 SHGs in MYRADA's projects with 70,457 members, managing a total fund of Rs. 228,956,704, of which Rs. 76,770,926 is savings and Rs. 24,255,494 is interest earned on lending. They have disbursed over 379,278 loans.



* The contents of this subsection are taken from Borlagdan, S.B., E.S. Guiang, and J.M. Pulhin. 2001. Community-based forest management in the Philippines: A preliminary assessment. Quezon City: Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University.

Forest-dependent communities have as large, or even a larger stake in sustainable forest management as the government bureaucracy for the simple reason that they depend on this resource base for their survival (Poffenberger 1990; Ascher 1995). In addition, living near or within forestlands, local communities are presumed to have greater knowledge and understanding of the terrain, the resources, and their constraints and opportunities (Korten 1986; Ascher 1995), and are presumably in a better position to respond quickly to such emergencies as fire outbreaks, encroachment, or timber poaching.

particularly in the field of natural resource management (Poffenberger 1990; Hobley 1996). It is a central feature of the international discourse on common pool resources, which encompasses concerns on property rights, collective action, and local institutions that sustain self-regulation (Bromley and Cernea 1989; Ostrom 1991; Agrawal and Ostrom 1999).

The success of CBFM efforts is hinged on how well communities have exercised their right not only to participate in forest governance but also to employ their internal cultural resources—such as

indigenous knowledge system and social organizations—toward attaining resource sustainability, as well as on how much space they are given for exercising this right.

This section is based on a more detailed report that looks into the phenomenon of community participation in forest management and governance in the Philippines, both within and outside the context of the government's CBFM program.

Underlying Assumptions

Taking into account the ecological, social, and policy imperatives mentioned above, the Philippines has pursued the following key strategies through its CBFM program:

1. Provision of tenure security over forestlands to forest communities through stewardship contracts and Community Based Forestry Management Agreements (CBFMAs), and to

“...CBFM efforts is hinged on how well communities have exercised their right not only to participate in forest governance but also to employ their internal cultural resources—such as indigenous knowledge...”

- indigenous peoples through Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claims (CADCs) now convertible under the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) into the Certificate of Ancestral Land Claim (CALC) or Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT);
2. Promotion of sustainable forestry and upland farming practices in a manner that offers both immediate and long-term benefits;
 3. Creation of POs, or strengthening of existing ones, in forest-dependent communities, which will serve as recipients of communal tenure, perform the role of overall resource managers, and support the sustainable resource use practices of their individual members;
 4. Forging of partnerships between and among POs, the national government through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), local government units (LGUs), NGOs, and other private and public groups in order to negotiate resource allocation, coordinate resource use activities, and facilitate the sharing of responsibilities, benefits, and costs of sustainable forest management; and
 5. Invitation for NGOs to participate in building the POs' capacity to plan and manage the use of their resources, and to mobilize and monitor their human and financial capital (DENR MC 97-13).

Under the CBFM Strategic Action Plan, community forest management plays a vital role in sustaining the supply of goods and services from natural resources to both on-site and off-site users owing to upstream-downstream interfaces (from upland to coastal areas, including the upper, middle, and lowland portions of the watersheds). Management of the uplands will benefit not only on-site communities but also downstream users of natural resources through sustained water supply; improved water quality; and reduced siltation in coastal areas. The plan upholds a holistic and systems approach to managing natural resources with careful consideration of externalities, interdependencies, interconnectedness, and complementarities. It is expected that strong and equitable economic activities in the lowlands will discourage migration to the uplands and conversion of fragile areas into cultivated farms.

The increase in the state allocation of forests and forestlands to upland communities and the recognition of indigenous people's ancestral domains happened only in the early 1990s to 1998. In the Philippines, the total area of forests and forestlands now under the "control" and responsibility of communities (because of their long-term tenure) is 3.8 times larger than that given to the private sector under various instruments. This is a total reversal of the situation in

the 1960s and 1970s with one big difference: the forests then were still intact and had high economic value. The area of 5.3 million hectares under communities is also larger than the total area of about 4.6 million hectares of forests and forestlands that have been set aside for "public good," including protected areas, national parks, sanctuaries, wilderness, and watershed reservations (DENR 2000; Wallace 1993).

Increased Capacity for Self-organizing Toward Forest Management

The capacity of community organizations to protect, develop, and manage their forests and forestlands in the Philippines has reportedly improved and increased over time. This can be seen in the increased membership of POs, more organized and collective efforts toward enforcement and forest protection activities, emergence of community enterprises, increased individual farm development, greater environmental awareness, higher level of trust among members, development of training capabilities among farm-leaders, and creation and maintenance of community revolving funds. All this can be attributed to the project-related training and community organizing activities implemented in the sites. Further noted is the increased capacity of the community to negotiate with market players, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and the LGUs.

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The capacity to be responsive of communities to protect, develop, and manage natural resource assets appear to hinge on several factors:

(1) effectiveness, sustainability, and commitment of support and service providers; (2) sound environmental governance that is anchored on consensus building, trust, complementation, and convergence of efforts, collaboration, and partnership at the local level; (3) enabling policies on tenure and resource use rights; (4) assistance in strengthening organizational capacities for supporting individual members' sustainable resource management efforts; (5) support for enhancing organizational capacity for financial and organizational management; and (6) tangible and sufficient economic returns of community forestry activities (Table 1).

Table 1. Major factors affecting sustainability.

Factor	Observations/Remarks
Community's capital build-up and saving mechanism.	The promotion and establishment of savings and credit systems to accumulate financial assets has not been a major focus in many nationally assisted projects.
Proper and transparent financial management system of the community organization	This reflects the disappointment of many community organizations that have been deeply hurt by cooperative leaders suspected of squandering the POs' financial resources.
Stable tenure and resource use rights.	This is among the most dominant factors affecting sustainability in all sites.
Sound management of viable income-generating/livelihood projects.	This is another dominant factor affecting sustainability in all sites which can be addressed by the establishment of transparent financial management systems.
LGU support and continued assistance to communities.	This is another dominant factor affecting sustainability in all sites.
Opportunities and support for training and cross-farm visits.	Most of the earlier "technology-focused" sites find this approach very effective (Seymour 1985; DENR-RRDP 1990; DENR-UDP 1996).
High economic returns of sustainable resource management practices.	Considering the high incident of poverty in the uplands, the need for increased household income is a "higher-level" concern of participating community members (Balisacan 2000; World Bank 1991).

Community-building Needs of CBFM

Limited information exists on how community is actually defined on the ground in relation to the practice of CBFM. From the process

of defining “community” emerge the notion of organic and incipient community. Organic communities are a social group with commonalities in terms of history, interests, sense of identity, and locale or geographic setting. Examples of these are the *Ifugao* of Banaue, the *Ikalahan* of Sta. Fe, and the *Higaonon* of Minalwang, or upland communities of long standing (e.g., *Bulolacao* of Cebu). In contrast, incipient communities may have different ethnic backgrounds, may actually identify themselves only with their own (smaller) social group, and may actually be new to the place (e.g., migrants), but such characterization does not preclude the evolution of a community with a shared interest in managing a resource such as the forest. The development of “community-ness” remains a potential for these aggrupations.

Peoples Organizations (POs), which are the *de facto* “community” managers in most CBFM sites, are incipient communities. Thus, especially those in large CBFM areas spanning several barangays or municipalities, they are

faced with daunting community organizing challenges, which include great heterogeneity of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, multiple and oftentimes conflicting social structures and political-economic interests, and varied indigenous resource management practices, not to mention large population sizes. More often than not, they lack the necessary organizational skills to steer different interests and voices toward one di-

“Peoples Organizations (POs), which are the *de facto* “community” managers in most CBFM sites, are incipient communities.

...faced with daunting community organizing challenges, which include great heterogeneity of ethnic and cultural backgrounds...”

rection. Debilitating organizational problems and inadequate organizational capacities in many sites reflect the need for prior community building as contrasted with community mobilization.

CBFM Projects as Impetus to Community Building

For the POs, the total CBFM project package and the economic benefits it promises serve as the “binder” that holds the members

together. This contrasts sharply with organic communities, in which shared ethnicity, culture, history, identity, and locality act as the binder. This weak basis for “community-ness” makes PO-based communities extremely vulnerable to internal threats, whether in the form of initial indifference or skepticism toward the project, or conflicting views with regard to the way funds are to be used or accounted for.

A very serious drawback of this project-based definition of community is that, upon the termination of CBFM projects and the alternative sources of livelihood they provide, immature “communities” tend to become unglued. When this happens, the gains made from mobilizing collective action for resource management get compromised. It is not surprising, therefore, that group-based protection activities involving patrols have been known to decline, and illegal logging and forest destruction have reportedly resumed in vulnerable CBFM sites. Such vulnerability reflects the need for community organizers to attend to community cohesion, just as much

as they need to focus on organizational capacity building in incipient communities.

“...POs representing communities of long standing or organic communities—that is, with historical and cultural ties among the members and self-regulating institutions which together make up the “social capital”—tend to exhibit greater resilience.”

In turn, POs representing communities of long standing or organic communities—that is, with historical and cultural ties among the members and self-regulating institutions which together make up the “social capital”—tend to exhibit greater resilience.

The CBFM experience provides opportunities for capacity building, especially

through planning, implementation and evaluation, mobilization of internal resources, policymaking or rule setting and enforcement, financial management, and linking for resource access.

Interest and Incentives

In a workshop organized with a wide range of groups in the Philippines on Community-Based Strategies for Natural Resource Management, the participants representing POs, NGOs, and national

government agencies (NGAs) identified community and environmental issues and concerns related to natural resource management, as follows:

1. resource depletion and habitat destruction;
2. competition for resources;
3. land tenure and landownership;
4. support services and LGU support;
5. economic opportunities and alternatives;
6. institutional and management capability concerns; and
7. population growth and concomitant pressure on resources (VSOP, FPE, and NIPA 1999).

The above concerns explain many of the key incentives that different stakeholder groups, except donor agencies and coastal residents, have for engaging in the community-based management of their natural resources, including forest resources (Guiang et al. 2001), see Table 2.

Table 2. Stakeholders and key incentives in community-based forestry management.

Stakeholder groups	Key incentives
Indigenous peoples	• recognition (tenure) of customary rights to their lands and natural resources • capacity building for community enterprises • access to infrastructure (roads and bridges) • provision of social infrastructure (education, health, welfare)
Upland farmers	• tenure (communal or defined individual property rights) over their occupied/cultivated lands • use rights over natural resources, particularly forest products • access to infrastructure (roads and bridges) • capacity building for community organizations and enterprises • technical assistance in the application of appropriate upland production technologies
LGUs	• increased and expanded constituency base • increased revenues, financial capacity, and improved efficiency • reclassification of LGUs to a higher category
NGA field offices	• capacity building to improve existing skills and knowledge • opportunity to focus on the provision of technical support to communities rather than impose and implement centrally designed programs and projects
NGOs/civil society groups	• opportunities to participate in local governance structures, advocacy, and capacity building of communities
Academic/research and training institutions	• opportunities to participate (and be strengthened) in capacity building exercises
Private sector (firms/individuals)	• reduced transaction costs in doing business • predictable and stable supply of natural resource products and services • reduced cost of marketing and processing these products and services

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