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**Elements of Support in Community-Based Forest Management Strategies:
Contract NGOs in the Philippines**

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Abstract
In this paper, contract NGOs in the Philippines are examined in terms of their effectiveness at assisting community-based forest management groups. The focus is on the abilities of contract NGOs to provide services, use participatory methods, and build the capacity of community groups. The analysis is based on data from four community-based forest management sites in the Philippines. Delivering services and building capacity contribute differently to the effectiveness of community-based forest management groups. While providing services such as training courses may improve the ability of community groups to manage forest resources, assistance that builds leadership skills, networks with other institutions, and norms within the community of resource users may contribute more to the resiliency of community-based forest management groups. The findings suggest that community groups are in need of greater levels of assistance to develop collective interests in forest resource management and to build the capacity to satisfy programmatic requirements in a long-term and sustainable method.

Introduction
Community-based forest management (CBFM) is a strategy being adopted by many governments in developing countries. The extent to which community groups function effectively as common property resource managers depends on a number of factors. The ability to be resilient to changes in external political, economic, and environmental systems is important to the long-term sustainable management of resources. As such, building the capacity of community groups is an important component of CBFM strategies. Governmental and non-governmental organizations function as "community support organizations" by assisting CBFM groups to develop skills and abilities to collectively manage forest resources.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are one type of community support organization. In CBFM strategies, NGOs have a role in helping build the ability of community groups to adapt to,

and seek opportunities in, changing resource management scenarios. In the Philippines, contract NGOs are a common feature of government reforestation, community forestry, and other natural resource strategies. This paper focuses on the role of contract NGOs in assisting community groups to collectively manage forest resources and participate in the Philippine CBFM strategy. Contract NGOs are examined in terms of their ability to provide services, use participatory methods, and build the capacity of the community group.

Elements of Support
Many forest-based communities do not have a history of collective utilization of natural resources, lack financial resources, and have minimal experience as organized groups. As such, effective management of government-leased forest resources by community groups participating in CBFM programs may depend on the quality of the assistance they receive from community support organizations. The term 'community support organizations' includes a range of organizations, such as local and international NGOs and government agencies that work with CBFM groups. Support organizations provide assistance to community groups in numerous ways, such as helping community groups develop skills and implement projects. While this discussion on elements of support applies to any type of community support organization, this paper focused on local NGOs contracted to assist CBFM groups in the Philippines.

The types of assistance that contract NGOs provide to CBFM groups can be divided into three categories: service delivery, participatory methods, and group capacity building. Service delivery tends to be more technical in nature, focusing on training activities and task completion. However, service delivery also includes the process and outreach that coincide with delivering a service, for instance how the contract NGO communicates with members of a community.

Participation and capacity building are related concepts in rural development. There are many forms of participation. Some types of beneficiary involvement are referred to as participation and are deemed successful if people are persuaded to undertake a required task--for example, when a group of people are encouraged to plant trees in an area and they do. This form of participation continues to be used by the development community and government agencies. However, often it does not produce long-term benefits for the user groups nor ensure long-term results from the project itself because the user groups do not participate in the design of the project (see Jodha 1992; Utting 1994; Poffenberger and McGean 1996).

A second perspective, which has gained more wide-spread use in the last decade, involves setting of objectives and goals by the people who in turn will manage, monitory, and evaluate a project. Whether considered a strategy of "putting people first" (Cernea 1991b) or "putting the last first" (Chambers 1983), this type of participation encompasses more than the time and labor contributed by people.

Group capacity building is often an implied dimension of the latter, more complex participatory approach. It is considered separately here in acknowledgment of the history of participatory

efforts that lacked long-term mechanisms for beneficiary involvement and subsequently led to failed rural development projects (see Lele 1975; Rondinelli 1977; Korten and Alfonso 1981; Ruttan 1989; Cernea 1991a; Wells and Brandon 1992). Stable social-organizational structures become essential. Self-perpetuation is an important characteristic group capacity and involves sustaining participatory activities especially when the initial catalyst for forming a group is less apparent (Cernea 1991b; Uphoff 1991). Although generally referred to as a long-term component of a participatory strategy, *group capacity building* is rarely defined. A brief deconstruction of the term may provide a better understanding of the concept.

First, what is a meant by *group*? Groups participating in social forestry projects may range from family units to communities and community subgroups (Cernea 1991b). The identification or creation of a group is a task that requires both sociological and anthropological understanding and consideration of the methods for social organization (Cernea 1991b). Too often assumptions about beneficiaries of a project ignore considerations of subgroups, social classes, relations to the state, and other group dynamics. For instance, the goals and values of subsistence-oriented people differ from those of people who produce crops for cash (see Kottak 1991). The degree of shared interest and motivation among members contributes to the 'organizability' of community groups (Carroll 1992). Apart from having specific though not always widely understood interests, goals, and needs, groups are fluid and go through numerous mutations over time (Carroll 1992; Kottak 1991).

Like the group itself, *capacity* is a dynamic dimension and is continually being eroded or built. Capacity can be considered the financial, social, and physical capital of a community group (Flora 1994). Social capital tends to be more abstract than financial and physical capital. Norms, mutual trust, and leadership are examples of social capital. Group cohesiveness is a good example of the dynamic quality of capacity. Even groups that start out being highly participatory and cohesive can lose these features over time because of a dominating leader or some external force, such as shifting regional political alliances (Hornsby 1989b in Carroll 1992).

Building refers to the self-directed, as well as externally-assisted, efforts that enable community groups to adapt to circumstances of all sorts and to meet the needs of their residents. In this way, external assistance is not about providing routine services (Brown and Korten 1989), but about developing the capacity of groups. One way to understand capacity building is to consider it in terms of internal and external dimensions (Carroll 1992). The internal dimension of capacity building is about the group learning how to manage resources collectively (e.g., nursery, marketing, group credit). The external dimension is about learning how to negotiate with and make claims on the government, banks, and other power holders (which respect to legal petitions, indigenous rights, etc.). Common to both of these dimensions is the capacity to work effectively as a group, interact democratically, reach a consensus, manage conflict, limit corruption and free ridership, and forge networks (Carroll 1992). It is about building a leadership capable of adapting to new circumstances, dealing effectively with a dynamic external world, and fostering mutual trust and group cohesion.

Measuring NGO Performance
Understanding the effectiveness of NGOs at delivering services, using participatory methods, and helping build the capacity of CBFM groups requires some sort of measurement of NGO performance. The literature on the non-governmental sector reveals several factors that make measuring NGO performance a challenging task. One involves the issue of NGO accountability. Accountability is generally understood as a means by which individuals and organizations report to authority and are held responsible for their actions (Edwards and Hulme 1994, in Edwards and Hulme 1996). Depending on the type of NGO, accountability to clients varies from one organization to the next. Some organizations have clear lines of accountability, while others are more diffuse (see Smillie 1996). Whereas the political system is seen as a feedback mechanism between constituents and the government, few formal systems exist that allow beneficiaries to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with an NGO providing services (Fowler 1996).

Accountability is often related to the degree of participatory processes used during a performance evaluation. Open consultative processes between NGOs and their clients are associated with accountable organizations (Carroll 1992). Even when lines of accountability exist, the methods for determining stakeholder satisfaction may be lacking. For instance, methods such as client surveys increasingly are being implemented but are not standardized across stakeholder groups and NGOs. Also, relatively clear lines of accountability may or may not lead to more accurate measures of NGO performance (Edwards and Hulme 1996). For instance, there is a notion that membership-based organizations are more closely linked, and thereby responsive, to their clients, since the clients are members of the organization. But there is little evidence to support this (see Carroll 1992; Bebbington and Theile 1993).

Another factor involves determining what are the appropriate indicators to measure NGO performance. NGOs come in many shapes and sizes and even if they could be categorized by type (e.g., membership-based, international, local), there are few agreed-upon standards for measuring the performance of a given type of NGO. In the absence of any form of representative accountability, NGOs are often evaluated by measuring tangible outputs (such as the number of wells built, or the number of people attending a training session) and comparing them to stated plans or intentions (Edwards and Hulme 1996). In arenas where donors play an important role, financial accountability often becomes the default method of evaluation (Tandon 1996; Edwards and Hulme 1996). The adequacy of using financial returns to measure performance is called into question (Fowler 1996) because financial returns do not indicate whether client needs are being met.

What is often lacking in assessments of NGOs is any type of measurement of crucial elements of development processes, such as people's degree of control over decisions or the capabilities of community-based organizations (Marsden, Oakley, Pratt 1994 in Fowler 1996). Also, the very nature of the work of NGOs makes it difficult to construct and apply performance measures. Some processes are difficult to measure, such as an NGO's willingness to experiment with new approaches and apply what is learned along the way. And, some concepts are hard to assess, such as empowerment (Fowler 1996; Edwards and Hulme 1996). Disaggregating the factors that

influence the actions and outcomes associated with NGOs is challenging, particularly those in which an NGO has little control--such as macroeconomic changes and state policy (Edwards and Hulme 1996; Uphoff 1986; Biggs and Neame 1996). A few assessments measured NGO performance by examining the NGO's ability not only to deliver services but also to empower groups through participatory and capacity building activities (Carroll 1992; DAI 1985). However, the literature indicates that more work is needed in developing indicators and measures of NGO performance.

Overview Community-based Forest Management in the Philippines

The history of forest use in the Philippines is similar to other countries in the region, such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand (see Peluso *et al*. 1995). Forests have played a critical role in local, national, and regional economies during the colonial periods and after independence. The colonial predecessors passed on to the liberalized states the desire to maintain centralized control over resources. Government policies responded to international demand for tropical hardwoods that stimulated periodic economic booms coinciding with high rates of deforestation (see Repetto and Gillis 1988; Sharma 1992). The emphasis was on: providing legal authority for the exploitation of forest resources by timber companies; generating domestic revenues and foreign exchange; focusing on technical considerations; and, using local people largely as wage laborers (Rao 1985). Control of the forests gave power to state governments and national elites to influence not only economic development but also social and political movements of upland and forest dwelling people (Peluso *et al*. 1995).

Forest management in the Philippines has experienced an important evolution from the period of colonial resource extraction to present day forest management. Recent policies have been praised for being some of the more enlightened policies in Asia, receiving high levels of international financial and political support. Yet the policies have also been criticized for the excessive number of programs and regulations, subsequent programmatic contradictions, and over-dependence on governmental and non-governmental design combined with a de-emphasis on local initiatives (Guiang and Dolom 1992; Lynch and Talbott 1995; Laarman 1994; Dugan 1997; Acosta and Braganza 1995).

The dramatic shift to a new forestry paradigm began in the late 1970s and early 1980s, leaving behind much of the colonial style system of forestry. Increasing environmental problems, such as erosion, sedimentation, flooding, and fisheries damage also contributed to the shifting paradigm. This coincided with a growing awareness of indigenous rights and concern about overlapping concessions with indigenous territories. The new goal was to move away from what was increasingly referred to as an opportunistic, mercenary, and myopic system riddled with professional and political compromise and shortsightedness (Guiang and Manila 1994; Dugan 1997). The new approach was to be more people-centered, more equitable in terms of how the benefits from national forests were distributed, more focused on conservation and protection, not just utilization, and would begin to devolve the responsibilities of forest management to local

communities, local governments, and local forestry administration offices (Briones 1995).

By the early 1980s, stricter controls on timber harvesting were enacted. By 1989, annual timber production had declined to 4.5 million cubic meters from over 15 million cubic meters in 1975 (Walpole *et al* 1993; Durst 1981). By 1987, the Manila Observatory found that less than 22% of the country's land area supported forest vegetation and undisturbed old growth represented less than 3% (Walpole *et al*. 1993). Also by the mid-1980s, much of accessible timber had been harvested and international timber companies began leaving the Philippines. Vast areas of "public" land existed without any formal management (although it has been argued that the timber concessionaires did not practice forest management) and fell victim to further encroachment, migration, and illegal forest products extraction typical of open access systems (Rowe, Sharma and Browder 1992). Social marginalization and political instability furthered the migration of people into the uplands increasing the pressure on primary and secondary forests (Sajise and Omegan 1990; Sajise 1986; Kummer 1992; Church *et al*. 1994). By 1985, the indigenous upland population of 5.3 million had absorbed an additional 12.2 million migrants (Walpole *et al*. 1993).

1982 is often cited as the year that social forestry became the official government strategy for forest development and conservation in the Philippines. The keystone program during this period was the Integrated Social Forestry Program (ISFP), which offered two tenurial instruments--one to families and one to community groups–granting the recipient a 25-year lease on a parcel of land for agroforestry, reforestation, and conservation activities. ISFP became the umbrella program for all preexisting programs, most of which were tree farming and reforestation programs that did not include tenurial instruments. The social forestry programs in the 1980s also began addressing the issues of poverty and tenurial insecurity in the uplands (Payuan 1987; Gibbs *et al*. 1990; Borlagdan 1992; Lynch and Talbott 1995). Many of these programs were initiated with support from international bilateral and multilateral organizations, such as the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and large international non-governmental organizations such as the Ford Foundation and CARE (see Aguilar 1986; Olofson 1985; Brechin 1997). Although these programs were innovative and revolutionary, some had varying levels of community participation and remained top-down driven. A number of factors contributed to low success of these early social forestry efforts, including the history of centralized control, the constraints associated with operationalizing a program at the national level, and the incapacity of the Bureau of Forestry to respond to locally-initiated resource management systems (Payuan 1985; Poffenberger *et al*. 1995).

In 1995, President Fidel Ramos' Executive Order No. 263 adopted community-based forest management (CBFM) as the national strategy to achieve sustainable forestry and social justice by guaranteeing equitable access of people to natural resources, respecting indigenous rights to ancestral domains, and entrusting communities with the management of national forests (Guiang and Manila 1994; DAI 1995). In return for responsible forest management and protection, community groups were awarded the right to extract, process, and sell forest products to generate local employment and income to finance agroforestry development, reforestation, non-timber based livelihoods, forest protection, and community enablement and empowerment (DENR

1995). This was done in partial recognition that forestlands included timber that would provide much needed capital to implement community development strategies (see Laarman *et al*. 1995). Like other social forestry programs, CBFM projects were supported, both financially and technically, by international funding organizations, such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and USAID. The programs continued to be top-down, but with a more pronounced bottom-up focus.

By mid-1997, there were over fifty USAID-supported pilot sites, representing two CBFM program, the Community Forestry Program and the Ancestral Domain Program (ADP). These spanned 550,200 hectares and involved approximately 835 *sitios*, the smallest jurisdiction of a community in the Philippines (DAI 1997). Though there were only a few ADP sites, they typically involved large areas of land (>5,000 hectares) and several community groups. The selection of project sites was based on criteria that included: that the community was well-defined and could relatively easily become a registered economic entity; that the forest site was within a certain distance to the community; and that the site was composed of at least 500 hectares of residual and/or old-growth public forestland.

One important tenet of all CBFM programs has been the awarding of a tenurial instrument to a community or organization. The tenurial agreement grants specific resource management, protection, and utilization rights to a community group or indigenous tribe (see Lynch and Talbott 1995 on the role and evolution of tenurial instruments in Asia). The tenurial instruments between the government and a community group or federation of groups granted usufruct rights through 25-year renewable leases on specific areas of national land.

Although the tenurial instrument was an important element of a more people-oriented strategy of resource management, groups could not extract forest products until a series of documents were completed and approved, including a management plan, annual operational plan, and other requirements. Many details were required in management plans, particularly in the early years of the program. Not surprisingly, budget and personnel constraints affected the ability of the DENR to evaluate and approve the submitted management plans. Unfortunately this meant that even requests for minor revisions took many months to reach the community group. With the hope of speeding up the approval process, in late 1996, the DENR simplified the required format for management plans. Because the fieldwork for this study was conducted soon after this change it was difficult to determine if the approval process was substantially improved. Once a management plan was approved, the DENR was in a position to hold the communities responsible for implementing the plan. In the later half of the 1990s, the process for the development and approval of management and work plans took on average four years, even with assistance from non-governmental organizations, the DENR, and NRMP-DAI[1] officials.

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[1]The USAID-sponsored Natural Resource Management Program (NRMP-DAI) was a technical support division within the DENR. At the time of the fieldwork this program was managed by a U.S.-based consulting firm, Development Alternatives, Inc.

Role of NGOs in CBFM Program
Local-level NGOs have existed in a variety of forms and functions in the Philippines and they have played important roles in social development since the people-powered revolution against the Marcos regime in 1985 (Constantino-David 1992). One estimate suggested that there are over 2,000 NGOs in the Philippines that can be classified as intermediary organizations (Constantino-David 1992). These are organizations that work directly with grassroots groups or special sectors of the population. Typically, intermediary NGOs operate with full-time staff and provide a wide range of programs and services for grassroots organizations, such as community associations (Constantino-David 1992). Although many local-level NGOs have worked in rural development in the Philippines, more emerged when the opportunity arose to participate in the CBFM program.

Throughout the late 1980s and 1990s, the role of local NGOs in community forestry programs in the Philippines continued to evolve. The Integrated Social Forestry Programs of the 1980s contracted NGOs to train communities in silvicultural practices and form partnerships for reforesting degraded forest land. The programs were designed such that after the departure of the NGOs, the communities would maintain and manage the reforested land and be entitled to a percentage of the earnings from the forests.

More recently, as part of the implementation of the pilot projects of the CBFM program, NGOs were contracted by the DENR to organize and train communities to become capable "people's organizations" in the sustainable management of forest resources. The government awarded three-year contracts to NGOs to work with selected CBFM communities in technical, financial and organizational assistance.[2] As part of their contracts, NGOs were required to organize, train, equip, and empower rural communities and assist them in conducting resource inventories, preparing management plans, and developing alternative livelihood projects. Other deliverables included location and perimeter operational maps, process documentation, community profiles, and the official registration of the community group. The training involved a variety of activities such as leadership development, financial planning and various resource management techniques. The contract NGOs tended to be small-scale, Filipino organizations. Some had experience in natural resource management. Most had worked in some area of rural development and had only recently begun working with communities in natural resource management.

In recent years, the DENR's NRMP-DAI office relied less on contract NGOs to provide assistance at the early stages of the project and instead relied on a variety of methods of assistance, including its own staff, contracted professionals hired for specific sites, and collaborative efforts between NRMP-DAI, DENR, and the local government at a site. This coincided with the increased emphasis on the part of the DENR to decentralize and move more staff into the field offices.

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[2]Most NGO contracts during the pilot stage were for three years. NGOs contracted after 1996 received only one-year contracts (with the possibility for renewal).

Methods
During the period from April through June, 1997, four CBFM sites were selected and visited. The sites were located in geographically different areas spanning three regions and two of the larger islands in the Philippines. Site I was is in Northern Luzon; sites II and III were in the southern area of Mindanao; and site IV was in the eastern part of central Luzon.

DENR and NRMP-DAI officials helped identify sites representing a range of experiences between community groups and their contract NGOs. Sites I and II were considered examples of fairly good interaction between the contract NGO and the community group. Site III was considered a failed relationship between the contract NGO and the community group, resulting in the termination of the NGO's contract. Site IV was the only site where an NGO was in the process of fulfilling its one-year contract during the time of the fieldwork.

Data collection was accomplished through observation, in-depth interviewing, informal interviewing, and unobtrusive measures. Informants were selected using a "snow ball" sampling approach. A variety of contacts, mostly from NRMP-DAI Manila office, helped identify individuals affiliated with NGOs, DENR (central and field offices), and NRMP-DAI field offices. These key informants helped identify community-level informants and opened up the way to meet them. Within each site, community leaders and a research assistant, hired to serve as a community liaison, helped identify additional informants from the community. Over 70 individuals were interviewed during the course of the fieldwork. Informants were advised that the purpose of the research was to better understand the CBFM program and the type of external support received by community groups.

When not engaged in interviews, I functioned mostly as an observer. Interviews were combined with field observations to aid in checking descriptions against observed facts, whenever possible. Those rare instances when observation was coupled with some form of participation (e.g., participating in a ceremony giving thanks for a new project office for the community) were highly informative. In all sites there were some opportunities to gain access into the daily lives of community members. This allowed for observation of how people interacted with each other, for instance how the leaders interacted with the members of the community group.

Unobtrusive data collection included historic information, archival records and public documents associated with the CBFM program, the community groups, and the contract NGOs. Some of the documents were copies of NGO-DENR contracts, Community Forestry Management Agreements, Forest Management plans, NGO quarterly reports, and NRMP-DAI reports.

Study area
The CBFM program served as an umbrella over several programs. Two programs were represented in this study. Sites I, I, and III were part of the Community Forestry Program (CFP). Site IV was within the Ancestral Domain Program (ADP). The CFP worked with a variety of community groups, while the ADP worked strictly with indigenous tribes. The CFP tended to work with smaller areas of land, usually around 1,000 hectares, but sometimes up to 5,000

hectares. The Ancestral Domain program dealt with larger areas of land, usually greater than 5,000 hectares.

All four CBFM sites received assistance from USAID-funded NGOs, contracted by the DENR specifically to assist communities in the CBFM program. Each site also received technical support from the USAID-funded NRMP-DAI division of the DENR. In most cases, the completion of the NGO contract coincided with the arrival of an "assisting professional," hired by NRMP-DAI to work with a specific community group. After the departure of the NGO, the community group also received assistance from a variety of specialists and consultants working with NRMP-DAI.

The study sites existed within former timber concessions that either expired, were canceled due to improper management, or were abandoned as the forest resources were depleted or became too costly to extract. All were located in mountainous or hilly areas and some were quite difficult to access. Most of the sites included more hectares of residual forest than old growth forest, except for site IV which was unusually large because it involved an indigenous ancestral claim in an area that had experienced relatively less intensive logging.

At the time of the fieldwork, community organizations had been formed in all sites. The leadership structure of the community groups was fairly uniform across sites and consisted of a chairman or president, officers, and committees. The committees had two main functions, timber harvests and livelihood development not related to timber. For most of the groups, vacancies existed for some of the committee positions. The officers and staff (e.g., bookkeeper and secretary) in site I received some salary, while the officers in sites II, III, and IV volunteered, though the plan was that once the group generated income they would pay the officers. Most committee positions were volunteer.

The community groups were at varying levels of advancement in the CBFM program at the time of the fieldwork. Sites II and III had completed and DENR-approved forest management plans and were in the midst of, or were about to engage in, their first timber harvest. Site I had a completed, yet unapproved, management plan and had conducted an authorized timber harvest. Site IV, the newest site, did not yet have a management plan and had not conducted a timber harvest. In all sites, some degree of extraction of timber and non-timber forest products was occurring for in-house, subsistence purposes.

Forest protection was an important component of the CBFM program and participating communities agreed to assume responsibility for forest protection. No site had any legally deputized forest officers, though plans existed for the DENR to train and deputize members of the community. The duties of the forest protection staff included: patrolling forested and reforested areas; protecting the area from fire; preparing and maintaining fire lines; and reporting to the community organization any illegal activity observed in the area.

Indicators of effective assistance

This study focused on three areas of interaction between contract NGOs and CBFM groups: service delivery, participatory methods and group capacity building. The three areas represented categories under which sets of indicators were developed to measure the performance of the support organization and the capability of the community groups. Because in most cases the NGO was no longer active at the site, indicators reflecting the capabilities of the community groups were developed. This, combined with other information, was used to assess the quality of assistance community groups received. Many of the indicators were adapted from Carroll's (1992) work on evaluating the performance of intermediary NGOs. These were modified to fit characteristics of the CBFM program, for example the specific obligations within NGO contracts. Concepts from work on common property resource management regimes (Ostrom 1990; Bromley 1992; Runge 1992) were also incorporated into the indicators of the capacity building category.

Service delivery, participatory methods, and group capacity building are interrelated and some of the indicators overlapped categories. Service delivery refers to the NGO's ability to deliver services that are needed or requested by a beneficiary group or are part of the government contract. Group formation, training in leadership, financial management, and forestry and marketing techniques were some examples of service delivery activities that were part of the NGO contract. Also, the ability of the NGO to reach a large and diverse share of community residents was considered part of service delivery because DENR entrusted the NGO with the initial responsibility of engaging communities in the CBFM program. Another indicator reflected whether the process by which the contract NGO delivered their services was appropriate given the needs, experiences, and history of the community. According to Carroll (1992), services should be provided in such a way that they build a foundation for other accomplishments by the beneficiary group.

Capacity building and participatory activities were considered separate but related events. An illustration of this is when a group is assembled to plant trees as part of a project that is not of their own design or interest. Participation in this activity could be high, but it may only minimally enhance the capacity of the group. Similarly, the use of participatory methods is important to the gradual strengthening of capacity, but many forms of participation, such as open communication or broad consensus, do not themselves build capacity (Carroll 1992).

Participatory methods refer to the ways in which assistance is provided to community groups from NGOs and the ways in which members of community groups participate in group activities and processes. Although participatory methods are both a means and an ends, they are easier to observe as a process rather than an outcome because the relationship between those who are providing assistance and those who are receiving it can be observed (Carroll 1992). For instance, one can observe if an NGO is encouraging a community group to articulate its needs and participate in decisions affecting community well-being. Participation also refers to accountability and whether the members of a group can hold the leaders accountable for certain actions. Indicators to assess the capabilities of community groups and the performance of NGOs in using participatory methods are presented in Table 1.

Indicators associated with group capacity building reflect both the effectiveness of the NGO at helping build the capacity of a group and the level of capacity of a group (Table 2). Capacity building activities are less tangible and as such may require a unique sets of skills by both NGO and community leaders. Indicators reflect evidence of leadership development, engagement with the outside world, conflict resolution, and fostering a sense of collective ownership of forest resources among members.

The categories and indicators do not represent all the dimensions of assistance from NGOs, nor all abilities of community groups, but focus on factors important for community development and the CBFM program.

Following the data analysis, each indicator was assigned a "score." Indicators were rated on a scale of "failed", "initiated", "developing", "established", and "outstanding." An indicator received a "not applicable" (n/a) rating if the indicator did not pertain to a particular site and a not evident (n/e) rating if there was not sufficient evidence to determine a rating, or it was not possible to measure. Ratings were related to the objectives and standards of the CBFM program, rather than on the performance of one site compared to another. The ratings were determined by the researcher based on the analysis of the data compiled from in-depth interviews, observations, and documents. Unfortunately there were no opportunities to arrive at consensus ratings, given that there was only one researcher in the field. As such, triangulation was important part of the data collection process.

Table 1. Indicators of participatory methods

Community Groups	
Contribution	Community member contribution (labor, materials, funds) to the project outputs.
Degree Benefit to Members	Relates to the degree that the members are seeing the benefit of their participation, or other issues related to participation and receiving a benefit.
Mechanisms to Facilitate Participation	Availability and use of mechanisms to enhance participation.
Contract NGOs	
Access to Information	Community members have access to records and information.
Consultation and Decisionmaking	Opportunities for, and degree of participation by community members in, consultation or shared decisionmaking during design of management plans, projects, or activities.

Table 2. Indicators of group capacity building

Community Groups	
Collective Effort	Evidence that group is learning to cooperate in effective management of common resources or collective tasks.
Community Group's Ability to Resolve Conflict	Growth in community ability to resolve conflict among members or other groups/entities.
Leadership Development	Development of leadership to deal with members' needs and the outside world (e.g., bargaining, mobilizing resources, communicating with other organizations).
Linkages	Progress toward acquisition of linkages to public or private services/resources after completion of NGO's contract.
Contract NGOs	
Group Formation	Enhancing and supporting group formation.
Involvement as a Way of Increasing Capacity	Including community members in a variety of tasks and activities as a way of increasing capacity.
NGO's Ability to Resolve Conflict	Ability of the NGOs to resolve conflict within the community group, or between the group and other entities.
Transition from NGO Assistance	Progress toward seeing that the community group gains greater independence and autonomy as NGO contract expires.

Results and Discussion
A great degree of variability existed across the categories of indicators. The service delivery category ranged from "initiated" to "outstanding" with a median rating of "initiated" (see Table 3). The participatory methods category ranged from "initiated" to "established" with a median rating of "initiated" for the community groups and "established" for the contract NGOs (see Table 4). The greatest degree of variability occurred in the capacity building category, which ranged from "failed" to "outstanding." The median rating for the community groups was "initiated" and for the contract NGOs was "initiated-developing" (see Table 5).

Contract NGOs in a CBFM strategy
The process of preparing the communities had many components and involved several stages, including group formation, organization, resource inventories, and designing management plans. From a contractual standpoint, the NGOs were considered successful in they completed the tasks specified by their contracts. The DENR viewed these tasks as necessary for getting the CBFM program underway and for providing a standardized method for implementing the CBFM program on a large scale.

Agency-wide mechanisms are important, but should not preclude the development of mechanisms for tailoring training activities to meet the needs of community groups. Ideally it would have been a give-and-take process, where the DENR explained to a community group the types of skills it believed the group should develop to function as resource managers and the group identified areas where it needed training. This would have provided for a more demand-driven approach (Harker 1997; Carroll 1992). Instead the services were identified by the DENR as tasks that the contract NGOs had to fulfill to meet their contractual requirements.

While the contract NGOs (except in site III) were capable of delivering the basic services required by the contracts, such as forming officially recognized groups and conducting resource inventories, the more successful NGOs recognized that in order to develop group capacity and participatory norms, they had to function beyond the scope of their contracts. The CBFM program had no reward or incentive system to encourage NGOs to be innovative at achieving outcomes that may be difficult to quantify and measure, such as using effective participatory methods. Some contract NGOs conducted community development and farming improvement activities in order to address the stated needs of the community groups. This was most effective in sites II and IV. These activities provided good opportunities for group involvement, decisionmaking, financial management, and livelihood enhancement. However, the objectives were detached from the concept of community forestry and thus did not build familiarity with and ownership in the CBFM program. Another example that was not specifically required by the contract, but had capacity-building implications, was involving leaders in design of management plans. The contract NGOs in sites II and IV were most effective at using participatory methods and at preparing the community leaders to practice participatory involvement. One characteristic of these two contract NGOs was that staff members resided in or near the communities and had day-to-day contact with community members.

NGOs from sites I and II had considerable experience working with rural community groups and

recognized that the process of building leadership and forming strong groups required effort and time commitment to produce lasting results. The NGOs felt they needed three to five years to build a foundation from which resource management and other community development practices could emerge. The duration of the NGO contracts reflected neither the expressed needs of the community group nor the skills and experience of the NGO.

In addition to contractual time constraints, NGOs questioned the intent of some of the required deliverables. For example, the contractual requirement for forming a group, which included organizing meetings, electing officers, and gaining official recognition as a group, was only partially consistent with the type of capacity building roles that some of the contract NGOs envisioned they would undertake (sites I, II and IV). The contract NGO at site IV, for example, had experience working with indigenous communities and knew that some processes were complicated by political, legal, and cultural factors. The NGO not only emphasized patience and cultural sensitivity over desires for timely action, but also planned to continue to help build a strong community organization after the contract expired. Also some NGOs, such as in sites II and III, were contracted to work in communities where they had little prior experience. The contract NGOs in site II dealt with this by focusing their early efforts on building trust and confidence within the community. The NGOs in sites I, II, and IV were regarded by agency officials as competent and effective organizations in the rural development arena. It is not surprising, therefore, that some of them portrayed a commitment to the community groups above and beyond the requirements of their CBFM contracts. Not all NGOs had this commitment. Some were lax at fulfilling contractual obligations. Although the DENR and other agencies have responded to lesson learned from working with a variety of NGOs and modified their criteria for selecting contract NGOs, more work is needed that would enable agencies to evaluate an NGO's commitment to capacity building processes.

While there were instances of successful capacity building, the median ratings of "initiated" for the community groups and "initiated-developing" for the NGOs indicate underdevelopment in several areas. This is the result of a number of factors.

First, contract NGOs were required to fulfill numerous obligations related to satisfying the requirements of the CBFM program. The contract NGOs involved community members in many of these activities, such as the resource inventories and management plans, and this was reflected in the relatively stronger participatory ratings. Although community members participated, they often had peripheral roles in these activities. Their lack of involvement in highly technical components and activities that required report writing and communicating with DENR officials diminished their capacity to conduct such tasks in the future and develop important linkages with the DENR and other institutions.

Second, in order to expedite tasks, meet contractual deadlines, and not overburden community leaders, NGOs frequently shouldered a major portion of these programmatic responsibilities. Although their intention was not to deny community leaders capacity building opportunities, contract NGOs could have been more attentive to such opportunities. Some examples of capacity building opportunities included involving community leaders in discussions with the

DENR, increasing their participation in writing management plans, and empowering the leaders to set agendas and make decisions.

The DENR and contract NGOs were not alone in their need for greater creativity and improved mechanisms that foster capacity building. The international donor community (namely, USAID, for the sites in this study) played a key role in determining the set of deliverables required by the contract NGOs. Again, increasing flexibility, tailoring deliverables to the specific needs and interests of the community group, and holding NGOs accountable for processes rather than paperwork, are ways to increase a programmatic emphasis on capacity building.

With respect to each site, the abilities of the community groups in using participatory methods and building their capacity correlate, for the most part, with the effectiveness of their respective contract NGOs (see Tables 4 and 5). The community group in site II had more success with participatory methods and had achieved a level of community capacity that was somewhat more advanced than that of the other community groups. The group in site I was the least adept at designing income or skill building opportunities for members, motivating members, resolving conflict, and building their capacity as an organization. The group with the least experience in the CBFM program, site IV, showed good potential in participatory and capacity building abilities. As members of an indigenous tribe, the group had preexisting social and cultural norms that served as a foundation for the services and processes embarked on by the NGO, particularly the participatory processes. The group had tribal elders, for instance, who had a history of managing tribal matters. While the group in site III had overcome difficult situations, it had not yet become successful in encouraging participation and building the capacity of the group.

Although one case (site III) was an example of a failed NGO-community group relationship, the contract NGOs in three of the sites (I, II, and IV) had good intentions and appeared to be doing the best that they could. These three NGOs were considered by NRMP-DAI officials to be some of the better examples of contract NGOs working in the CBFM program. Even so, few indicators in the service delivery, participatory measures, and capacity building categories received "established" or more advanced ratings in this study. This does not indicate that NGOs were not capable or that the DENR was misguided in contracting those NGOs. Indeed, the DENR had personnel and other constraints that made the contracting of more experienced rural development specialists a promising feature. Continued procedural simplification, investments in community development specialists and social foresters, and heightened commitment to involving communities in selecting NGOs and defining the terms of the contracts will increase the effectiveness of contract NGOs.

While there existed unique social, political, and physical environments in the four CBFM sites, many sites throughout the CBFM program shared similar characteristics to the sites studied. Many had been in the program for two or more years and were still in the preparatory stages for timber or non-timber harvests. Most had contract NGOs, though the NRMP-DAI-supported sites were moving away from contract NGOs and were using their own staff or promoting collaborative approaches. Conflict between the groups and other political or local government factions was a consistent impediment to progress in other CBFM sites. All contract NGOs

functioned under similar contracts; therefore the general findings about contract NGOs in this study may be useful in understanding other sites.

Table 3. Effectiveness and ability of support organizations at delivering services, 1997[a]

Service delivery indicators	Sites				Overall Ratings
	I	II	III	IV	
Training Activities					
Financial Management	n/e	n/e[b]	n/e	initiated	n/e (12)
Forest Protection[c]	initiated	n/e	initiated	initiated	initiated (14)
Resource Inventory[d]	initiated	initiated	initiated	initiated	developing (4)
Leadership Training	n/e	n/e	n/e	n/e	init.-estb. (1)
Marketing	developing	developing	developing	developing	outstanding (1)
Forestry Techniques	initiated	n/e	initiated	initiated	**median = initiated**
Target Population	n/e	n/e	initiated	outstanding	
Process	initiated	initiated-	initiated	n/e	

[a]The findings reflect the status of the indicators during the period May through June, 1997.
[b]n/e (not evident) implies insufficient evidence to rate an indicator, or that it was not possible to measure.
[c]Ratings for this category related to the DENR.
[d]Ratings for this category related to a combined effort among the contract NGO, the DENR, and NRMP-DAI.

Table 4. Effectiveness of community groups and NGOs at participatory methods, 1997[a]

Participatory Methods Indicators	Sites				Overall Ratings
	I	II	III	IV	
Community Groups					n/e (2)
Contribution	initiated	initiated	initiated	initiated	initiated (7)
Degree Benefit to Members	initiated	established	established	n/e[c]	established (3)
Availability and Use of Mechanisms to Enhance Participation	initiated	established	initiated	n/e	**median = initiated**
Contract NGOs					n/e (1)
Access to Information	initiated[b]	established	initiated	established	initiated (3)
Consultation and Decisionmaking	n/e	established	initiated	established	established (4) **median = established**

[a]The findings reflect the status of the indicators during the period May through June, 1997.
[b]Ratings reflect the DENR effort in this community. Unable to assess the role of the NGO for this indicator.
[c]n/e (not evident) implies insufficient evidence to rate an indicator, or that it was not possible to measure.

Table 5. Effectiveness of community groups and NGOs at building group capacity, 1997[a]

Capacity Building Indicators	Sites				Overall Ratings
	I	II	III	IV	
Community Groups					
Collective Effort	initiated	established	initiated	n/e[c]	n/a (1)
					n/e (4)
Community Group's Ability to Resolve Conflict	initiated	established	established	initiated	initiated (7)
					established (4)
Leadership Development	n/e	n/e	n/e	established	**median =**
					initiated
Linkages	initiated	initiated	initiated	n/a[d]	
Contract NGOs					
Group Formation	n/e	n/e	n/e	developing	n/a (1)
					n/e (7)
					failed (1)
Involvement as a Way of Increasing Capacity	initiated[b]	established	failed	n/e	initiated (3)
					developing (2)
Support Organization's Ability to Resolve Conflict	n/e	n/e	n/e	outstanding	established (1)
					outstanding (1)
					median =
Transition from Support Organization Assistance	initiated	initiated	n/a	developing	**initiated-developing**

[a]The findings reflect the status of the indicators during the period May through June, 1997.
[b]Ratings reflect the DENR effort in this community. Unable to assess the role of the NGO for this indicator.
[c]n/e (not evident) implies insufficient evidence to rate an indicator, or that it was not possible to measure.
[d]n/a (not applicable) implies that the indicator did not pertain to the situation at the specific site.

Relative effectiveness among indicator categories
For a variety of reasons, support organizations, broadly defined to include governmental and non-governmental agencies, are less effective at using participatory and capacity building methods than providing service delivery activities (Cernea 1988). One theoretical premise, however, is that participatory methods and capacity building contribute more to the sustainability of community-based resource management and community development (see Carroll 1992). While long-term data and a larger sample would be needed to test this, the findings provide insight into the difficulty community support organizations have in defining their relationship to community groups, providing services, using and encouraging participatory methods, and building capacity. Because of the short duration of the study, the findings provide incomplete evidence about how these components contribute to sustainable resource management.

The median ratings across the three categories of indicators can be interpreted as the relative

challenge that contract NGOs faced in working in the three areas of support. For instance, an "initiated" rating in the service delivery category would be depicted as a high challenge for the NGOs, indicating that the contract NGOs had not reached out to a broad and diverse set of participants in the design and implementation of training activities, for example. While the findings relate to the effectiveness of contract NGOs, it can be assumed that effectiveness is related to the difficulty that NGOs have in defining their relationships to community groups. Looking at the median scores of the three categories of indicators for NGOs, service delivery rated "initiated", participatory methods rated "established", and capacity building rated "developing". From a theoretical perspective, one would expect service delivery to be more developed, with a stronger rating, than participatory methods, and capacity building to have the least developed rating.

One explanation for the discrepancy is that the NGOs functioned within government contracts, whereas the theory is based on the performance of NGOs working on their own projects, fulfilling their own objectives. Although it is not uncommon for NGOs to contract with governments, the theory does not adequately reflect this.

This discrepancy leads to the question: how do government contracts affect the ability of NGOs to provide training, participatory, and capacity building assistance that contribute to sustainable resource management? Some findings of this study suggest that the NGOs were overwhelmed by the service delivery-type deliverables required in their contracts. While most were able to provide the required training courses, there was little evidence that the training had lasting benefits. A compounding factor was that training activities were not selected by the community groups, but were part of a contract. By contrast, one key objective of many NGOs that work independent of government contracts is to meet the needs of the intended beneficiaries; therefore, it is relatively less challenging for them to be successful at providing services. The services are desired by and often designed in conjunction with the intended beneficiaries, and are usually services where the NGO has expertise. When NGOs act as part of a government contract their work is influenced not only by their own mission and agenda, but by the mission of the government program. The most visible and perhaps influential way that the government's mission is imparted to the NGOs is through the set of deliverables that required by the government contract.

Most of the NGOs in the study had worked in community development. This experience probably accounts for the relatively more advanced rating of the participatory category compared to service delivery. Three of the four contract NGOs in the study (sites I, II, IV) were considered examples of good contract NGOs, as described by DENR and NRMP-DAI officials.

The capacity building category received a rating that would be expected, relative to the service delivery and participatory methods categories, according to the theory. Capacity building activities require long-term commitment and unique sets of skills and are therefore challenging for NGOs to implement. Also, because the CBFM program was new, it focused on the relatively more straightforward technical and planning functions. This involved developing a host of new management responsibilities, partnerships, and philosophies. Sorting through these activities led

to less focus on community capacity building in the first years of the program. Again, in several cases (sites I, II, and IV), the NGOs facilitated the development of the management plan, but in only limited ways involved the community members in the process. The DENR expected that the NGO would complete a substantial portion of the management plan without involving the community. Involving the community groups in implementing and complying with the CBFM program was not emphasized as a means to build the capacity of community groups to manage natural resources over the long-term.

Conclusion

The Philippine's multi-objective strategy of involving communities in the management of natural resources was intended to initiate management on national forestland that had received little, if any, management under previous government forest policies. A secondary goal of the strategy was to build the economic and social capital of forest-based communities. With limited human, physical, and financial resources, marginalized rural communities were expected to do what no other institution, either timber company or government agency, had achieved to date in the Philippines. This papers suggests that community support organizations, broadly defined, have a crucial role in a long-term resource management strategy because the ability of community groups to function as managers of national resources depends upon the nature and extent of the support they receive.

As such, the long-term success of the CBFM program may be less about achieving a particular outcome and more about the process of the people working toward an outcome. The DENR has made good use of its forestry expertise in advising communities how to develop management plans and harvest trees. However, the emphasis on technical outcomes, such as training activities in forestry and sustainable forest practices has outweighed the emphasis on processes, such as building partnerships, participation, and community capacity. The time and energy put into measuring, marking, and harvesting forest products will be spent in vain unless more emphasis is placed on the long-term components of the CBFM program. Why wasn't building group capacity as essential as conducting a resource inventory? A number of factors, including agency culture, lack of trained personnel in social sciences and community development, complex political dynamics between rural and urban sectors, and the general intangibility of social capital building processes, contributed to the de-emphasis on capacity building. Indeed, the findings from this study reinforce that capacity building processes are difficult to achieve. However, incremental projects and experiences that focus on short-term capacity building outcomes may be effective to building a sustainable strategy.

The national focus of the CBFM strategy and some of the DENR reforms devolving responsibility to local governments and DENR field offices indicate that the Philippine government is gaining valuable experience with innovation, shifting responsibilities, reaching out to communities, and managing national resources in a new way. The government is taking important steps by designing and implementing a natural resource management strategy that involves forest-based communities as partners in resource management, rather than as laborers in reforestation projects as was the prevailing mode of involvement. Like many government

initiatives, the CBFM program objectives focused more on quantifiable and technical activities. Developing community capacity, leadership, and collective interests were more challenging dimensions of the CBFM strategy. Heightening the ways in which the CBFM program reflects the interests, norms, and objectives of the local resource users may help in developing a more enduring resource management strategy. This would require the Philippines to frame the CBFM strategy with the explicit, rather than implicit, intention of building the capacity of groups to work together and collectively manage forest resources.

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