

Jovy S. Mendez-Servitillo
Social Forestry Department, College of Forestry & Environmental Management,
Isabela State University, Garita Slopes, Cabagan, Isabela 3328
Philippines
E-mail: jovzms@yahoo.com
Phone: (+63)919-5808571

Community-Initiated and State-Determined Strategies to Common Resources Management: A Comparative Analysis

ABSTRACT

It has been observed that wherever there is large concentration of forest, there is also high concentration of local and indigenous population. These forest resources are being locally owned, or enjoyed some form of open access regime with no clear form of ownership or management. These local populations are not only economically but socially and culturally dependent on these natural resources. In the Philippines, the social reform agenda supports people empowerment and the full meaning and indispensable participation of local communities as immediate stakeholder of the forest resources. The Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM) has been considered as a strategy for sustainable development that essentially entails people empowerment, capacity and skills building so that they will become managers of their own resources by giving them the opportunity to define their needs and goals and make their own decisions. It is believed that local capacity building is anchored on the premise that effective common resource management is directly related to the proximity of its locus of decision-making. In the above context, this paper was conceptualized to: understand how co-management approach has improved or weakened the capacity of communities to decide as to how common resources are to be developed, protected and used; and identify and assess the effectiveness of methods and strategies by which local communities respond to co-management approach in terms of a) expanding its benefits to their ability to control resources, and b) mitigating its constraining effects on them. Moreover, this paper provides a comparative discussion on how the community or self-initiated and state-determined strategy has strengthened or weakened the common resources in the context of resource quality, livelihood and well-being, and capacity and influence of the local community. An indigenous practice that reinforces the conservation and protection of common resources was also documented along with the community-initiated strategy.

INTRODUCTION

People-oriented programs became a popular common resource management strategy in the Philippines. Specific sections at the national and regional levels of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) were created to implement the Integrated Social Forestry Program (ISFP) which was launched in 1982 through Letter of Instruction (LOI) 1260. In 1991, the concept of devolution extends beyond the Local Government Code by virtue of Republic Act 7160. DENR funded Integrated Social Forestry Projects were then devolved to the Provincial Natural Resources Office (PNREO) retaining only six ISFP model sites, one from each province in Region 02. These retained sites are now called Center for People's Empowerment in the Uplands (CPEU). In 1995, the Community-Based Forest Management Program (CBFMP) was implemented by virtue of Executive Order No. 263. These social forestry programs served as the extension arm of DENR which was envisioned to uplift standard of living of the forest occupants and the same time contribute to the stability of the upland ecosystem. As in other areas of the country, CBFMP went into full swing in Region 02.

Today, there is a need to determine how common resource management strategies have affected the lives of such program participants. This paper reports on two case studies conducted to assess the intervention strategies to common resource management. One community case deals with the devolved project considered to be state-determined while the other case deals with the retained project under the DENR considered being community-initiated.

STATE-DETERMINED COMMON RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: THE CASE OF THE INTEGRATED SOCIAL FORESTRY PROJECT (ISFP) OF SANGBAY, NAGTIPUNAN, QUIRINO

Some Information on the Site

Sangbay is one of the barangays in the municipality of Nagtipunan, province of Quirino in Region 02, Philippines. It is about 16 km. from the town proper. To reach the area, one has to cross the Cagayan River using a banca during high water level and ferry boat during low water levels (Figure 1). However, 6x6 trucks which are commonly used in the area to haul farm products can cross the river when its water level is very low. This area is undulating to rolling (8-18%) in topography, has a mean annual rainfall of 1,500 mm, and has elevations ranging from 100-300 meters above sea level. Soil in the area is clay of brownish color and is moderately eroded. The land use of the area is divided into old-growth and residual forest, kaingin farms, grassland, and residential and other uses (Figure 2). Residential lands are situated in the flat slopes while the kaingin farms mostly planted to banana are located in the middle slopes. The forest areas are located in the highest slopes. The houses are concentrated in the flat lands but there are also house sporadically scattered in the middle and upper

slopes. Figure 3 and 4 shows transect and spot map of community resources. The major crops planted in the area are banana and corn. Other minor crops include coffee, root crops, upland rice, vegetables, and papaya.



Figure 1. The study area can be reach by crossing the Cagayan River

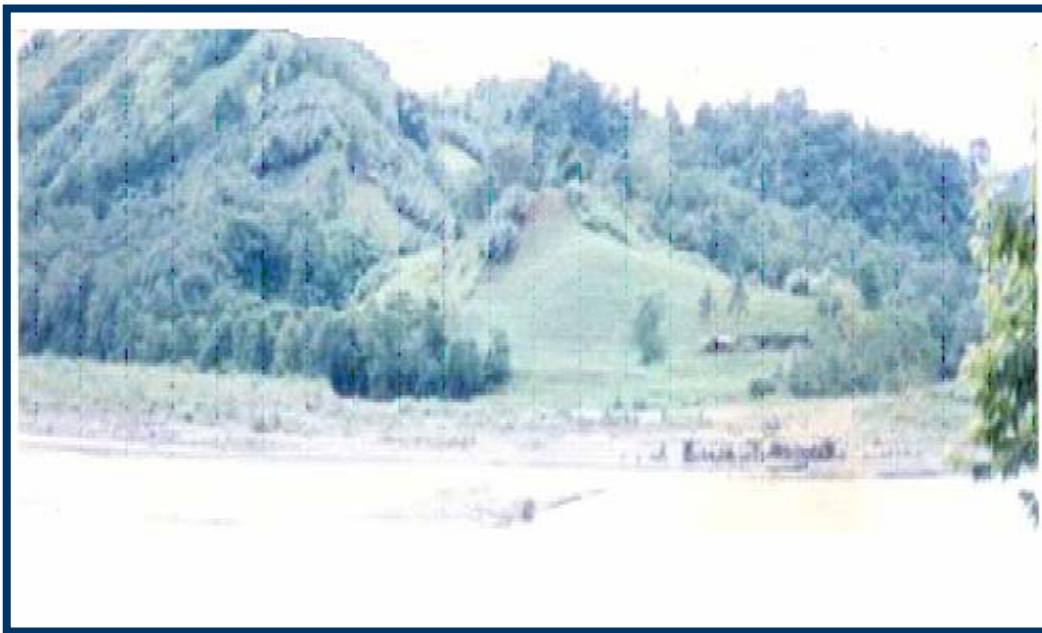


Figure 2. The biophysical characteristics of the area.

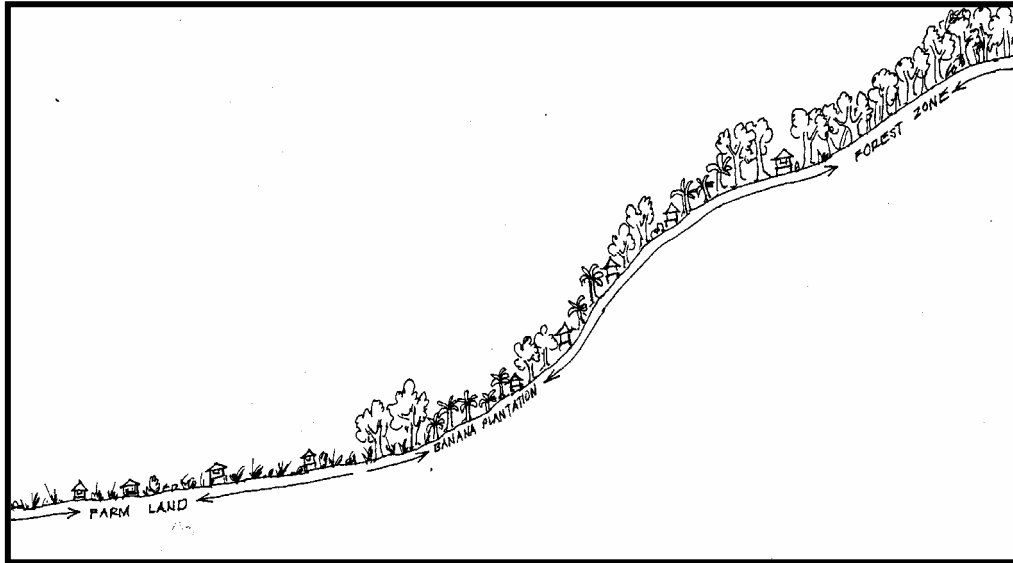


Figure 3. Transect map of community resources, Dizon & Servitillo, 2000

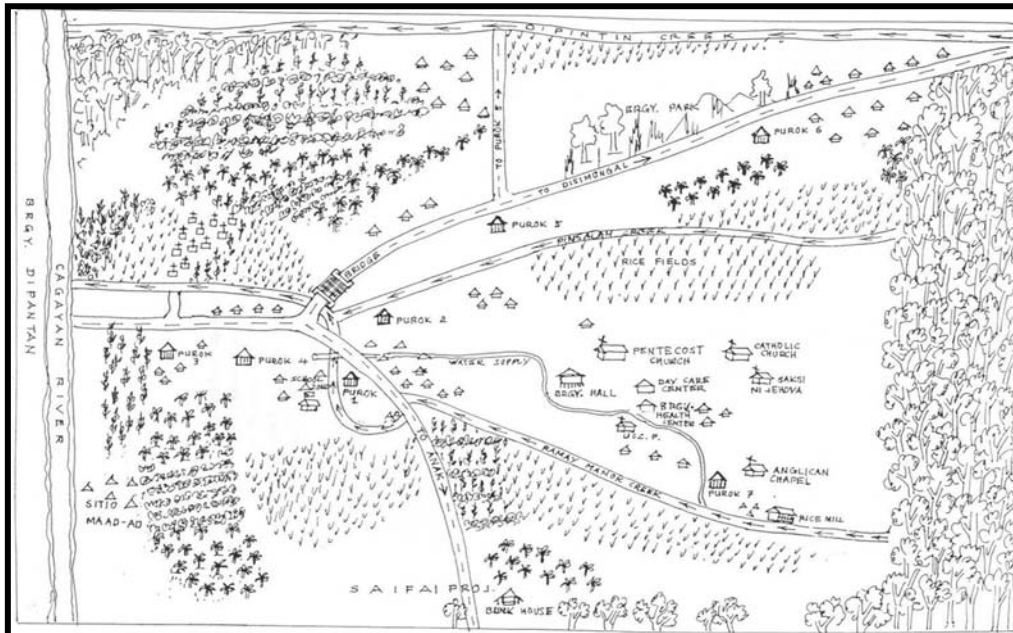


Figure 4. Spot map of community resources, Dizon & Servitillo, 2000

STRATEGIES RELATED TO COMMON RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Long before the end of the logging boom of the 1960s in Quirino province, a number of farmers and logging hands coming from different parts of the country have settled in what is now known as Sangbay, which was classified at the time as forest land. Logging was the main source of income of the community members. Forest was formerly viewed as income sources and open for exploitation.

A number of intervention activities were undertaken by the state to alter the exploitative logging orientation of the people in the community.

Pre-implementation of ISFP

1. The DENR implemented the Upper Cagayan River Basin Program aimed to protect the forest resources in the area. This was done by reforesting all denuded areas using community labor. This reforestation program opened up livelihood options to the forest occupants who were paid on labor rendered and at the same time increased the people's knowledge on reforestation.
2. Resettlement project for kaingineros aimed at providing land for the landless and preventing kaingin expansion. The strategies adopted included land classification, perimeter survey, parcellary survey and issuance of kaingin permit to qualified occupants. The community participated in the activity by providing labor in brushing and carrying the markers used in the perimeter and parcellary surveys.

Implementation of ISFP

3. Launching of the Integrated Social Forestry Program (ISFP) by virtue of LOI 1260 and CBFMP under EO 263. The program aimed to uplift the livelihood of the forest occupants and at the same time achieves environmental protection. Strategies adopted includes:
 - a. Issuance of Certificate of Stewardship Contract (CSC). CSC legitimized the forest occupants' access to and control over forest resources, giving them a sense of security over their claimed farm lots. The ISF participants were asked to confine their clearings and concentrate on improving their farm lots through agroforestry. Forest utilization was also restricted to the program participants.
 - b. Provision of seedlings. Participants were given tree seedlings for their agroforestry farms.
 - c. Conduct of seminar/training on soil and water conservation. Contour hedgerow planting, bench terracing and riprapping are the measures being adopted by the participants to ensure that no soil erosion and soil fertility will occur in the area. Establishment of

such conservation measures were learned by participants from the various on-site and off-site trainings they have attended.

- d. Provision of technical assistance as to proper handling of seedlings prior to planting. Organizational and training assistance to communities in the performance of forest management duties were also extended.
- e. Capacity building programs. Upgrading the capacity of local people and their organization to govern the forest
- f. Community organizing. Through community organizing activities, the leadership was strengthened. The Peoples' Organization (PO) was able to negotiate a reforestation project with the DENR. The reforestation activity implemented by the members increased the forest cover in the community, fostered unity among the members, and generated income for the members.
- g. Cross-farm visits to other ISFP areas.
- h. Establishment of small water impounding dam along creek traversing the area for irrigation purposes.

Trough the program, the participants improved their farming system and increased their production. There were also times when the participants participated in product competitions sponsored by the DENR.

Post-implementation of ISFP

4. The nationwide devolution in 1991 by virtue of RA 7160 placed the management of the Social Forestry programs under the local government. It was also during this time when the municipal government required all CSC holders to pay tax. This posed resistance among the CSC holders and resulted negatively to opening of kaingin farms in the forest zones and non-improvement of existing farms.
5. A Non-Government Organization (NGO), the Ozone Saver assisted the People's Organization (PO) in negotiating the Reforestation project with the DENR. The project aimed to provide job opportunities for the members and increase forest cover. As implementor, the PO members attended seminars and trainings to enhance their technical skills and provided labor for the different reforestation activities.

Aside from the programs implemented by the state, other indigenous management of the common resources initiated by the indigenous people in the area was also documented.

1. It was noted that farmers in Sangbay irrigate their subsistence, cash and perennial crops from creeks or springs through a system of small canal, wooden culverts and flumes. It is the practice of the farmers to have their individual canals irrigates their farms. In essence, the more water the farmers' need, the more they are prompted to conserve and manage these water sources for their farms.

2. The Ifugaos and Igorots who migrated from the terraced parts of the Cordillera Mountains, brought with them their traditional practices to the Quirino mountains specifically in Sangbay, constructing elaborate rice terraces using stones to stabilize the terrace walls.
3. Farmers plant coffee, banana and other fruit trees in understory of second growth dipterocarp forest which could be found in patches. They also leave some areas untouched such as those along creeks and those with steep slopes. This is their strategy of protecting the forest in the mountains to preserve the water for their fields. They protect these areas by fencing and planting fruit and forest trees. Another protection activities being carried out is fire prevention measures. To prevent kaingin fires when it gets out of control, firelines are constructed in perennial crops.
4. Farmers are not going to clear the kaingin area again once fallowed. This may be attributed to the fact that after harvesting the cash or subsistence crops, the kaingin or “uma” is immediately planted with coffee and banana and in between are native acacia and ipil-ipil. Reason given why they have chosen these species was due to shade and green manure they could get from the leaves of the trees. After that, the farmers leave the “uma” and will be converted into a permanent field.
5. Farmers have the custom of requiring person who harvests wood to replace the trees they harvested by planting new ones in their place. As a result their forests continue to develop rather than be decreased in spite of centuries of use.
6. It is also worth mentioning that management of common resources by the community is attached to the security of tenure for the land they now occupy. Accordingly, they will be much more inspired to protect the land and other resources that could be found therein if they can call it their very own.

COMMUNITY-INITIATED STRATEGIES: THE CASE OF THE CENTER FOR PEOPLE EMPOWERMENT IN THE UPLANDS (CPEU) OF VILLA VENTURA, AGLIPAY, QUIRINO

Some Information on the Site

Villa Ventura CPEU is formerly known as Magalsing ISFP when it was established in 1988 at the municipality of Aglipay, province of Quirino, in Region 02, Philippines. Once a timberland, the project now covers a total area of 348.65 hectares, the largest among the CPEU in the region. It is approximately 4.5 kilometers away from Cordon-Maddela National Highway and could be reached by any form of vehicle during summer time. However, during rainy days, the project is accessible only through hiking. Inhabitants of forest vegetation who resorted to swidden farming for livelihood later cleared the area, which was formerly a timberland. This area is undulating to rolling (8-18% percent) in

topography, and with an elevation of 100-250 meters a.s.l, and is moderately eroded. The soil texture is clay. Residual forest abounds at slopes greater than 18 percent.

STRATEGIES RELATED TO COMMON RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

All activities in the area related to common resources management were initiated through the concerted efforts of the local community. These developmental activities include:

1. **Land Security.** In 1987, the area was surveyed and parcellarized for ISFP. Certificate of Stewardship Contracts were issued to 170 participants. To avoid land conflict, the participants resorted to corner and boundary planting. There were also issues on Certificate of Stewardship Contracts (CSCs) being used as loan collateral but was later solved upon knowing that such transaction would mean forfeiture of their CSC by the DENR.
2. **People's Participation.** The participants are actively involved in the activities of the project. Every first Monday of the month, the participants conduct a whole day mass work and every last Saturday one regular meeting is being conducted. One meeting session was documented as shown in Figure 5. Eventually, these activities bonded the participants together which made it easier for socio-economic reforms to be initiated.



Figure 5. Community meeting

- Land Productivity.** Prior to actual land utilization, the participants with the assistance of their Project Site Leader prepared their farm plans which were made more realistic through their exposure to various cross farm visits to other areas. They were likewise trained on various agroforestry technologies and soil and water conservation measures and such skills are what they applied in their farms. As a result, all of the 170 participants were able to have permanent cultivation. More than 32 percent of the whole project is planted with cash crops. Existing crops in the area are corn, banana, peanut, beans, and rice. Trees such as Gmelina (*Gmelina arborea*) are mostly planted along farmlot boundaries, while fruit trees like avocado, mango, jackfruit, and papaya are being maintained in the area (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Farmlot being maintained in the area.

- Ecological and Environmental Management.** Having realized that development without precautionary measures would endanger the land, the participants adopted various soil and water conservation measures through the use of rocks (Figure 7) which are indigenous the area, ipil-ipil (*Leucaena leucocephala*), kakawate (*Gliricidia sepium*), malunggay (*Moringa oleifera*) and grasses. Other measures evident in the area include contour hedgerow planting, bench terracing, mixed planting, multi-storey, intercropping and sequential planting (Figure 8). Likewise, two small impounding dams were constructed by the farmers to serve as irrigation and fishpond.



Figure 7. Rocks are abundant in the area and are used as rockwalls



Figure 8. Contour planting using rocks and Ipil-ipil as hedgerows

5. **Socio-economic Advancement.** Basically, farming is the main source of livelihood in the area. However, during lean season, participants engage themselves into carpentry and backyard livestock raising to augment their income. They likewise resort to loan/credit for farm inputs, which is being managed by their association. An income-generating project was initiated by their cooperative. They entered into contract with the DENR to buy and

- sell farm products in the area. The proceeds will be used as capital for any income generating project the cooperative would like to venture later on.
6. **Marketing.** Most of their produce is sold individually to traders and nearby buying stations except for banana, which is disposed through middlemen.
 7. **Sustainable Community Organization.** Aware that unity bridges strength, the participants formed themselves into an Association called Magalsing Upland Farmers Association now registered as a cooperative under the Cooperative Development Authority. Through the cooperative, the participants were able to reach out other institutions for assistance. For instance, through resolutions, the LGU in Quirino provided them road improvement, barangay hall renovation, multi-purpose pavement; pump wells, school building and electricity. Likewise, they were able to established link with the Department of Agriculture in the acquisition of certified corn seeds; Department of Health for a free medical check-up; and Department of Social Welfare and Development for pre-marriage counseling.
 8. **Political Will.** Most of the members of the association are elected barangay officials. This established and strengthened their working relationship with the LGU both municipal and provincial.

SUCCESS CONDITIONS

The various strategies to common resource management as adopted by the government and the participants have success conditions:

On biophysical

1. the co-management program helped decrease forest cultivation since the local community were prevented from entering the forest zones and were required to plant trees in their farms and confine their cultivation in their farms as well. Opening of additional areas for kaingin purposes was banned thereby decreasing forest cultivation and increasing forest area
2. forest formerly viewed as income sources and open for exploitation are now protected
3. the practice of agroforestry and other soil and water conservation measures prompted the participants to always keep the site free from destructive activities. The more diverse the crops planted in the area, the greater the farmers' stake over the site. Thus, there is an increased care and maintenance of the crops planted.
4. previously logged-over areas are now regenerating and forested

On socio-economic capacity and political will

1. unity among the participants is fostered through community organizing and community meetings

2. conflicts are being settled by the group before it gets worst
3. people now have alternative livelihood options reducing their dependency on the forest through agroforestry
4. food shortage is slowly minimized
5. well-organized community have taken initiatives to protect the forest and forest related resources
6. the exploitative logging orientation of the people is slowly turning to conservation
7. the program greatly increased the participants' social capacity since they were provided house lot, tools, other inputs, and farm lot through stewardship contract
8. Certificate of Stewardship Contract provided security of tenure thereby assuring access to resources and securing property rights.
9. formal organization of the community members developed self-reliance among them.
10. participants developed confidence in any transactions with the local government unit and even to higher authorities

LESSONS GENERATED

The experience gleaned from the Integrated Social Forestry Program and the Center for People Empowerment in the Uplands gives us a clear picture of the strengths of both strategies as well as their possible complementation. Some significant considerations are presented at this point based from the case studies. Some of them might be trivial and common but they are included here for emphasis.

1. Community-based Resource Management programs changed the local people's destructive ways of earning a living.
2. There exists a locus of possible combinations between the strength of the state-determined and community-driven initiatives in managing the common resources. Hence, it needs further strengthening.
3. Presence of supportive line agencies at the front line and the supportiveness of the participants are critical to the success of these people-oriented projects.
4. The member of the communities should be treated as stakeholders of the resource and indispensable partners in the management of these resources.
5. Sustained physical presence of the project in-charge in the communities promotes oneness and unity among the members.

6. The main contributions of these common resources management strategies to the environment are the established tree plantation, fruit orchard, and hedgerows developed for soils and water conservation. These permanent crops are properly managed by the participants to enhance environmental restoration.
7. With some intervention activities, participant can become self-sufficient.
8. Resource management relies on good relations between government personnel and local people.
9. The role of the community development worker is crucial to technology transfer. Likewise, the effectiveness of the strategies employed by the state depends largely on the mode and channel of transfer.
10. Capacity building programs are needed to upgrade the capacity of local people and their organization to govern the forest.
11. Devolution is empowerment. It is not a mere transfer of right and responsibility to communities in managing the forest resources. Empowerment could be achieved through Information, Education, and Service.
12. Holding a meeting regularly helps generate openness, which is mutually beneficial to the state and the community.
13. The involvement of the local people in all extension activities related to resource management will enable them to grasp the real meaning and intentions of the program.
14. Strategy that is driven by the felt needs of the people is more sustainable than a state-determined strategy that sometimes is cash-induced.

In conclusion, the state as represented by the DENR should take the role as facilitator that provides the enabling conditions for the different stakeholders of the community-based resource management program to bring about harmonious collaboration. Likewise, the local people as future managers of the resource should bear some costs that are commensurate to their resource capacity. This would strengthen their stake over the resource in the long run.

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