

**CO-MANAGEMENT OF THE COMMONS: SOME EXPERIENCES
WITH COMMUNITY-BASED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
IN THE PHILIPPINE UPLANDS¹**

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Abstract. In the Philippines during the '80s, a paradigm shift occurred with the management of forest and other natural resources with the birth of people-oriented forestry policies and programs. Before this period, the government took full control of the management of the country's natural resources until the realization that the problems obtaining in the uplands particularly with the forest communities have deep socioeconomic roots. Guided by the philosophy of participation, equitability and sustainability, the government, through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, promulgated policies which provided for the co-management of these resources involving the state, community-based organizations (CBOs), and the private sector.

The paradigm shift towards co-management created space for local communities in the management of the forest resources, which since time immemorial, were considered state-owned by virtue of the Regalian doctrine introduced by the Spanish colonizers. Through devolution of some of the state power and responsibilities over forestland to CBOs or people's organizations (POs), the latter were given the opportunity to become *de facto* forest managers. The impacts/outcomes of devolution have been observed on a number of community aspects, namely, the quality of resources under the community's management, community livelihood and well-being, and political capacity. Conditions which contributed to the creation of this space, include the nature of the community's social capital, stake on the forest, presence of policy, and presence of external agents. The big question, however, is to what extent can the communities maintain this space? Are there long-term strategies to secure this space that they have acquired?

INTRODUCTION

The birth of social forestry as a government policy in the 1970s gave way to various social forestry programs and projects. As a policy, social forestry's main concern is the promotion of productive, equitable, and sustainable forest resource management and development through effective people's participation (Rebugio, 1995). Social forestry as a policy gave birth to the concept of community-based resource management (CBRM) which refers to the "process by

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which people themselves are provided the opportunity and, or responsibility to manage their own resources, define their needs, goals and aspirations and make decisions affecting their well-being” (Fellizar, 1993).

Some of the initial relevant CBRM programs of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) were the Forest Occupancy Management (FOM) in 1974, Communal Tree Farm (CTF) in 1979, and the Family Approach to Reforestation (FAR) in 1976 (Serna, 1993). In 1982, Letter of Instruction (LOI) 1260 created the Integrated Social Forestry Program (ISFP) which consolidated the earlier CBRM programs, namely, FOM, CTF and FAR into one umbrella program. In 1989, the DENR launched the Community Forestry Program (CFP) through the Department Administrative Order (DAO) No. 123. CFP embodies DENR’s commitment to democratize access to forest resources as the program operates on the principles of social justice and resource sustainability by allowing organized rural communities to benefit from the remaining forest resources. In addition to ISFP and CFP, there are nine other Community-Based Forest Management Programs/Projects of the DENR.

The implementation of these people-oriented forestry programs marked a shift in the orientation of government policy from the traditional regulatory-oriented forestry management towards a more developmental, people and service-oriented approach. Through the lessons and experiences for two decades of implementing various people-oriented forestry programs, the government adopted the Community- Based Forest Management (CBFM) Program through the issuance of Executive Order No. 263 in 1995. The CBFM is actually an umbrella program that subsumed DENR’s people-oriented programs in the 1980s.

In 1991, the government issued Republic Act 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of the Philippines. By virtue of this Act, the local government unit (LGU) is authorized to enforce forestry laws within the community-based forestry projects subject to the supervision, control and review of DENR. As the Code provides, the provincial government is considered the area manager of the entire provincial territory and is required to provide the basic services as well as maintain ecological balance within the province.

This paper reports part of the results of the research project “Creating Space for Local Forest Management” which was funded by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The project covers 11 sites nationwide, three of which were under the team leadership of the author, but this paper will cover only two cases.

THE RESEARCH

Objectives

The DENR has implemented various CBRM programs and projects with the promulgation of EO 263. The premise upon which the concept of devolution is used needs to be validated following recent experiences with devolution in the Philippines. There is a need to understand how the policy has either improved or weakened local community control of access to and use of their resources in relation to State governance of the same. The effects of devolution on communities with low capacities to mobilize economic and political assets to invest on new modalities of resource management and/or new responsibilities over resources, and its effects on critical environmental capital in the country, such as the forests, are crucial in understanding the impacts of devolution.

The project had three major objectives, namely:

1. Understand how devolution has improved or diminished the capacity of communities to decide as to how local forests and forest-related resources are to be developed, protected and used;
2. Determine what conditions of communities, local intermediary organizations, the state in relation to its presence in the community, and of forests and forest-related resources, are associated with intensity and direction of the impacts of devolution on the community and its capacity to decide on how local forests and forest-related resources are to be developed, protected and used; and

3. Identify and assess the effectiveness of methods and strategies by which local communities respond to devolution in terms of a) expanding their benefits to control resources, b) mitigating its constraining effects on them, and c) influencing the modification of the policy.

Conceptual Framework

The inquiry into the impacts of devolution was carried out in three domains, namely, examining the nature of devolution, whether *state-initiated* or *organic*; analyzing the impacts of devolution in terms of the spaces created; and studying the causal variables or factors that mediate the impacts (Figure 1). The impacts of devolution are visible in three areas, namely, *biophysical space* (resource quality); *socioeconomic space* (livelihood and well-being of the local communities); and *political space* (decision-making capacities and the influence of the local communities on the policy and on decisions about forest resource management). Factors that mediate the relationship between the devolution and the creation of spaces include the *forest culture* (economic and cultural dependence on the forests), *social capital* (strength of the existing social capital within and outside the community), *policy presence* (policy articulation in local resource management), and *presence of external organizations and stakeholders*. As shown in Figure 1, both the mediating variables and the impacts of devolution can influence the devolution process, and vice-versa.

Methodology

Four study teams were organized to cover the 11 sites. Each team was composed of representatives from the academe, non-government organization or civil society, and community-based organization. A reconnaissance survey was conducted to finalize the sites considering the following criteria: a) reliance of the community on the forest and forest-related resources, in both material as well as symbolic-cultural terms; b) the over-all characteristic of the social capital related to forest management and over-all well-being; and c) the nature of devolution.

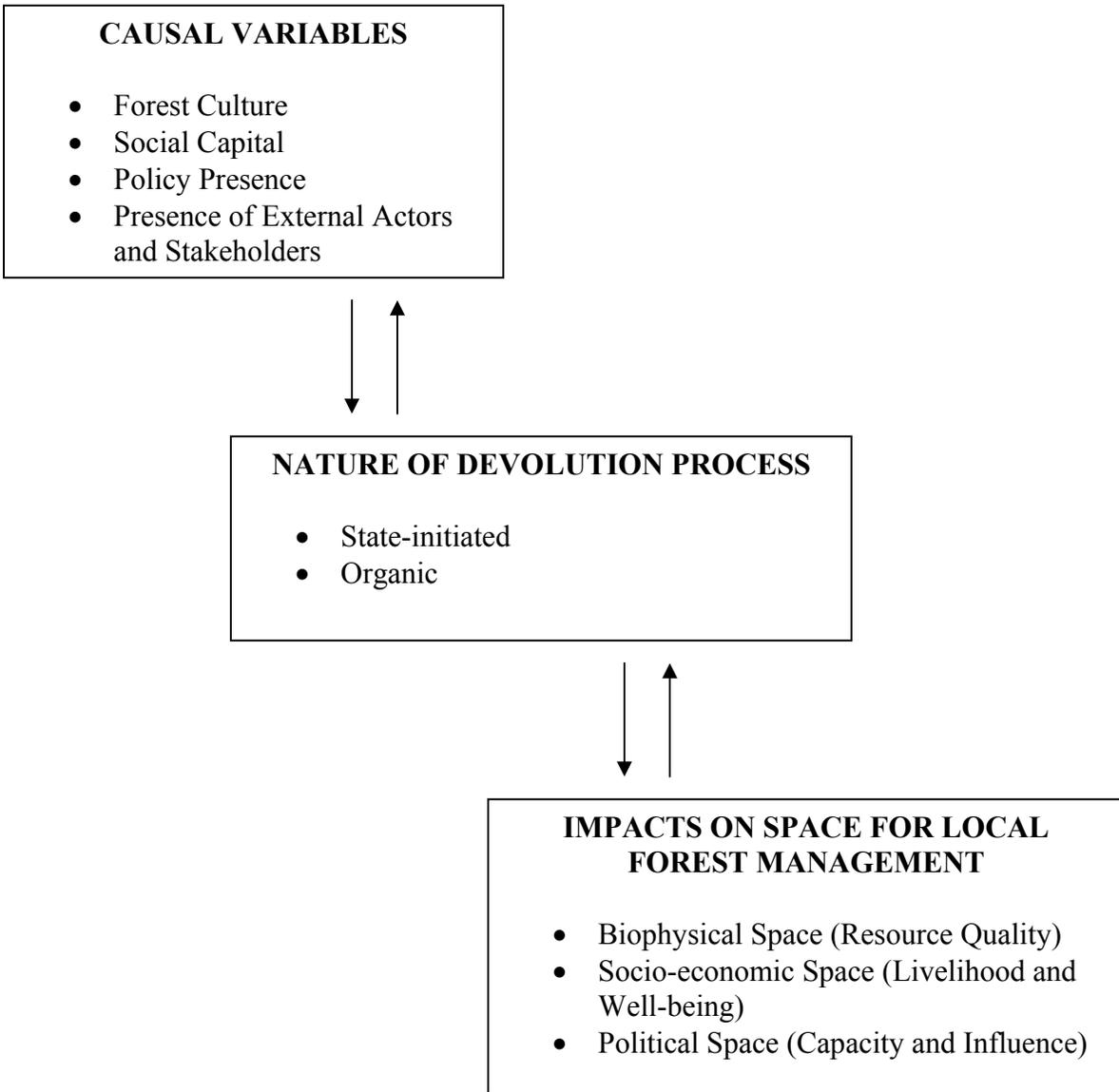


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the research project (From Contreras 2003).

Fieldworks were conducted to generate the primary data needed in achieving the objectives of the study. Data on the impacts of devolution on communities as well as the responses of the communities, including the manner by which the latter influence the reshaping of the policy, were collected. The data collection process was guided by the use of the following strategies:

1. Participatory rural appraisal with a gender perspective
2. “Troika teaming”, with a research team composed of members from the academe, and for each site, a partner from a local civil society organization (NGO partner) and from the local community (PO partner)
3. Triangulation
4. Document survey and analysis
5. Perception survey
6. Resource assessment through the agroecosystem analysis and participatory appraisal.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The Study Sites

Sangbay Integrated Social Forestry Project. Sangbay is one of the barangays³ in the municipality of Nagtipunan, Quirino in Region II. In the 1960s, Sangbay was classified as a forestland by the government. In 1965, about 13 families entered Sangbay to establish *kaingin* (slash and burn) *farms*. In 1972, the Bureau of Forest Development (BFD) resettlement program legitimized the *kaingeneros'* occupancy of the forest areas through the issuance of *kaingin* permit. Those who were given permits were required to plant forest trees on their farms, thereby increasing the forest cover. The farmers generated income through planting of palay, corn, peanuts, and other agricultural crops in the three hectares farm given to each farmer. These aforementioned activities comprised the FOM program of the BFD. In 1984, Sangbay and its surrounding areas comprising about 1,300 hectares, was identified and approved as a ISF site. The DENR parceled out the area to qualified forest occupants and each qualified participant was issued a Certificate of Stewardship Contract (CSC). The CSC legitimized the families' claim

³ Smallest political unit in the Philippines

over the *kaingin* farms. With the 1991 devolution policy, the management of the Sangbay Integrated Social Forestry Project (SISFP) was ceded from the DENR to the LGU at the provincial level.

The land use is divided into secondary-growth and residual forests (10%), *kaingin* farms (74%), grassland (5%), and residential (11%). Rice farms and residential lots are located on the flat lands while *kaingin* farms mostly planted to banana are located on the middle slopes. Forest areas are located on the higher slopes. Houses are concentrated on the flat lands but there are also some that are sporadically scattered in middle and upper slopes (Figures 1 and 2).

The present residents of Sangbay composed of three ethnic groups, namely, Ilocanos, Igorots and Ifugaos, migrated to the area between 1967 and 1997 to look for a land to till as a means of livelihood. They have stayed in the area for 19 years and farming is the principal means of livelihood. Sari-sari stores and furniture shops are other sources of income for some households.

There is a gender division of labor among the households, where the male spouse plays a major role in the production of major crops (banana and corn) and in community work (PO meetings, village activities, *bayanihan* and volunteer work). While significantly contributing to the corn planting, weeding and harvesting, the female spouse is also in charge of reproductive work (food preparation, child and health care, and housekeeping).

Sangbay is a typical male-dominated society where the male spouse has more access to and control of resources. Just as there is differential access to and control over resources, there is also differential access to and control over decisions. The male spouse enjoys more access and control over farm decisions while the female spouse has more access and control over housekeeping and budget allocation (Tables 1 and 2).

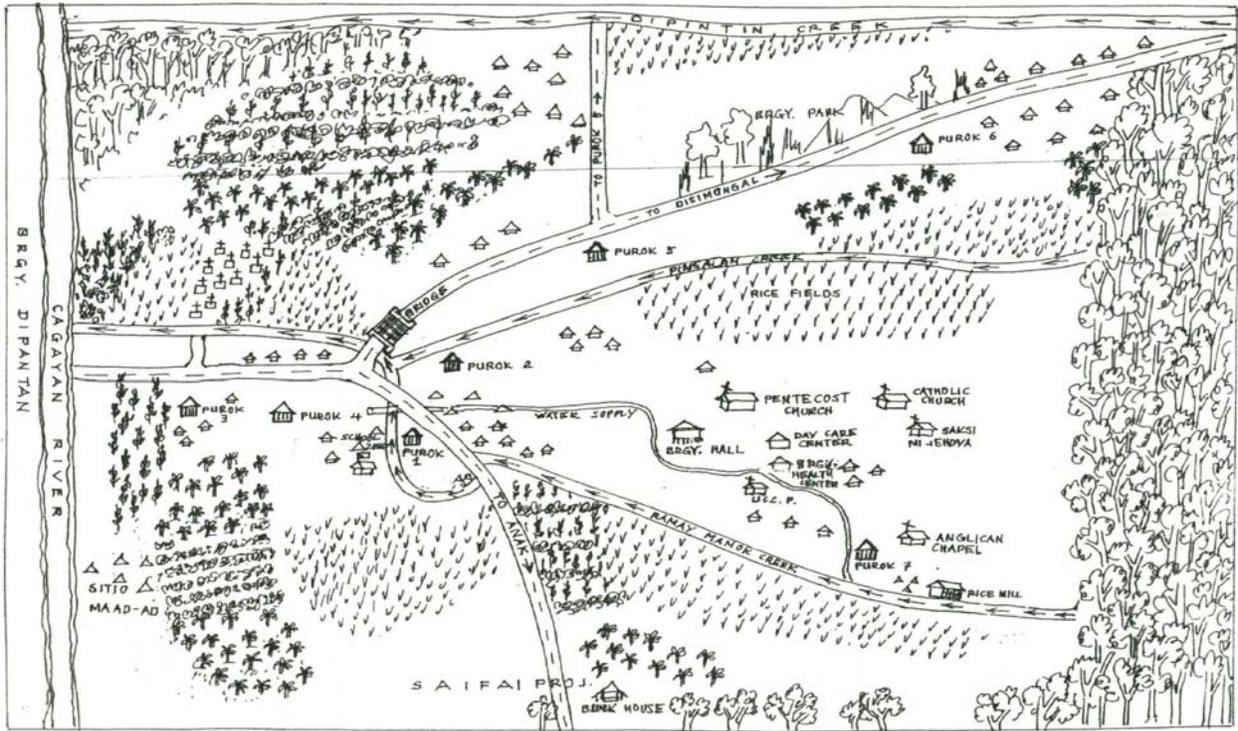


Figure 1. Spot map of Barangay Sangbay, Nagtipunan, Quirino, Philippines.

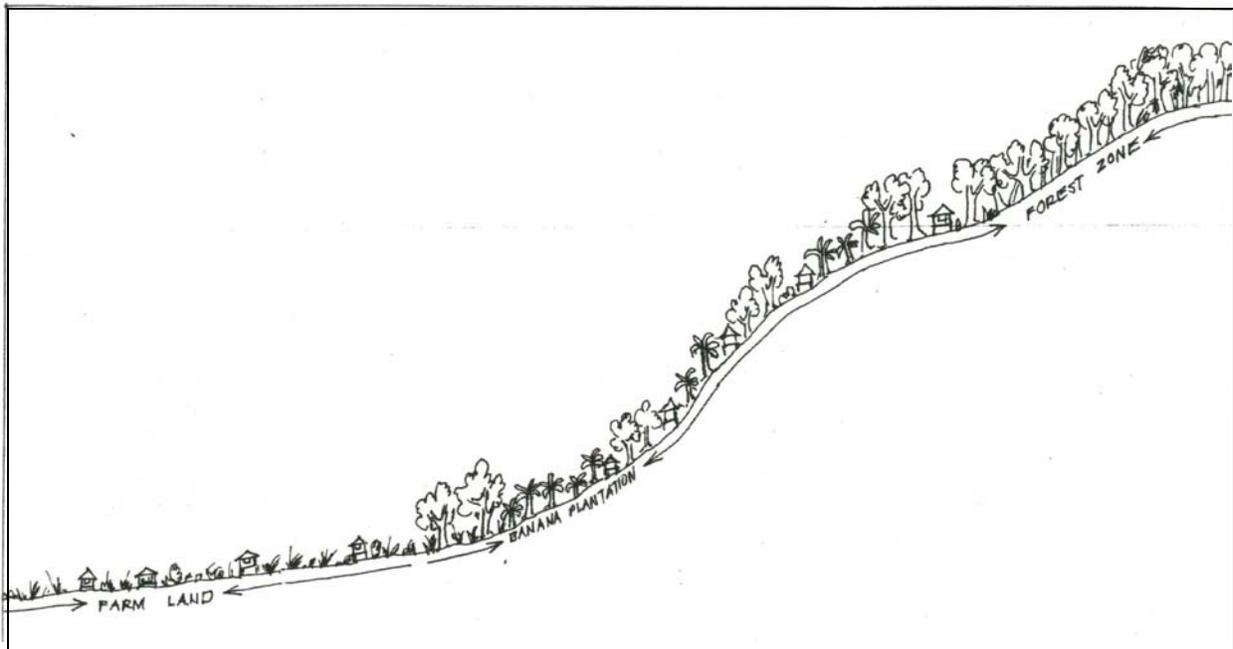


Figure 2. Transect map of Barangay Sangbay.

Table 1. Access and control of resources, Sangbay, Nagtipunan, Quirino (n =20).

RESOURCES	ACCESS			CONTROL		
	MALE	FEMALE	BOTH	MALE	FEMALE	BOTH
Forest farm land	7	-	13	14	-	6
Backyard lot	4	6	6	6	7	4
Farm implements	10	-	10	18	-	2
Farm labor	13	-	3	16	-	2
Farm animals of burden	10	-	7	13	-	5
Household appliances	3	1	6	2	6	3
Capital and credit	6	1	11	7	1	10
Training opportunities	8	1	7	9	1	7
Benefits from projects	10	-	6	12	-	3
Employment opportunities	9	1	8	9	1	8

Table 2. Access and control of decision, Sangbay, Nagtipunan, Quirino (n=20).

DECISION	ACCESS			CONTROL		
	MALE	FEMALE	BOTH	MALE	FEMALE	BOTH
What to plant	8	-	8	17	-	2
When to harvest	10	-	6	13	1	5
Marketing of produce	7	2	7	9	3	6
Child welfare & education	2	2	12	1	4	10
Housekeeping	1	14	1	-	16	1
Budget allocation	1	12	6	1	13	4
Adoption of technology	13	-	4	16	-	-
Involvement in community activities	13	-	7	14	-	5
Involvement in project activities	12	1	6	12	2	5
Political issues	8	-	11	10	-	9

Obo Integrated Social Forestry Project. The Obo ISF was established in 1989 by virtue of LOI 1260 in the municipality of Dalaguete in Cebu province, Region VII. When the DENR devolved some of its social forestry projects with the implementation of the 1991 Local Government Code, Obo ISF was one of the ISF projects which was retained with the DENR to serve as a Center for People's Empowerment in the Uplands (CPEU) through DAO No. 05, Series of 1993. But prior to its declaration as an ISF/CPEU project, it was occupied by a number of households which cleared parts of the forest for slash and burn or *kaingin* farming. During this period, however, the households' forest occupancy was considered illegal and they were branded as squatters in public forestlands owned and managed by the state⁴. Their occupancy was legalized with the establishment of the Obo ISF in 1989 through a CSC which gives them the right to cultivate the land for 25 years renewable for another 25 years, subject to compliance with the rules and regulations stipulated in the contract.

The project covers 52% of the total land area of barangay Obo which has a hilly to mountainous terrain and slopes ranging from 30 to 65 degrees. The Dalaguete River, which skirts the barangay, has been noted to have a stable streamflow. The Dingayop Springs in Obo supplies water to 10 other barangays in Dalaguete, and is considered a valuable resource in the municipality. Of the barangay's total land area of 866 hectares, 69% (595.5 has) is forestland while 31% (270.5 has) is alienable and disposable (A & D). However, only 52% (449 has) is devoted to ISF (Figures 3 and 4).

The community is highly dependent on the forests for its economic survival and productivity. Households rely on agricultural and/or agroforestry activities for their subsistence needs. With regard to crop production, majority of the households plant corn, sweet potato, gabi (taro) and some vegetables (carrot, beans, green onions, and cabbage). Obo is also a strongly male-oriented community observing the typical gender division of labor where the men dominate in the productive and community activities, while the women predominate in the reproductive work.

Table 3. Summary of background information of the project sites.

Characteristics	Sangbay Integrated Social Forestry Project	Obo Integrated Social Forestry Project
Location	Sangbay, Nagtipunan, Quirino (Region II, Luzon)	Obo, Dalaguete, Cebu (Region VII, Visayas)
Nature of Devolution	State-initiated	State-initiated
Tenurial Instrument	CSC	CSC
Administrator	LGU	DENR
Date of ISF Establishment	1984	1989
Land Use (Has)		
Timberland/forestland (includes settlement and agricultural land)		595.5 (69%)
Residential land	143 (11%)	
Grassland	65 (5%)	
Second-growth forests	130 (10%)	
Agroforestry farms	962 (74%)	
A & D		270.5 (31%)
Total	1,300 (100%)	866.0 (100)
Ethnic Group	Ilocano, Igorot, Ifugao	Cebuano
Main source of income	Farming	Farming
Major crops	Banana, corn	Corn, sweet potato, taro, vegetables
Gender relations	Productive work – male dominated	Productive work – male dominated
	Reproductive work – female dominated	Reproductive work – female dominated
	Community work – male dominated	Community work – male dominated

Impacts of Devolution

In both project sites, the impacts of devolution on resource quality, livelihood and well-being, and influence and political capacity were analyzed. The following discussions are based mainly on the final reports (Dizon and Servitillo 2000) and (Chiong-Javier and Dizon 2000) submitted by the author and her co-authors to CIFOR.

Impacts on Resource Quality

The establishment of the ISF projects in both barangays has created several favorable impacts on extent and quantity of forest cover in the areas. In Sangbay, the ISF implementation abated opening up of forestland for kaingin purposes since the farmers were required to confine their cultivation in the CSC area. Organized into the Sangbay Integrated Social Forestry Association (SISFA), the community members prohibited illegal cutters from entering the forest zone. In effect about 10% (130 has) of the total land area of Sangbay remains to be in tact as second-growth forests while 74% (962 has) has been planted to perennial crops. The maintenance of forest cover plus the farmers' practice of soil conservation measures (such as terracing, riprapping, and rock walling) contributed to the sustainability of the Ramay Manok watershed which is the main source of water for the whole community and nearby areas.

In 1991, the Sangbay ISF was devolved to the provincial LGU. But having received a number of assistance in the past⁵, it became a less priority area. Hence, for some time, the community was left on its own and would only consult the Provincial Natural Resources and Environment Office (PNREO) or the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO)⁶ when needed. In 1996, Ozone Saver, an NGO, assisted the community members to contract a 180-hectare reforestation project from the DENR. Since the area covers not only Sangbay but includes another barangay, the people within the project area were organized into the Sangbay-Anac Integrated Farmers Association, Inc. (SAIFAI). The PO implemented the reforestation

⁵ The FOM in 1972 gave them kaingin permit after a parcellary survey of the occupied lots while in 1976 FAR provided opportunities for the families to be contracted by the DENR to produce seedlings, establish forest plantations, and maintain these plantations, which were all paid activities.

⁶ This is the DENR office at the community level.

project with the participation of members in seedling production, plantation development and plantation maintenance.

In Obo, the ISF project placed about 52% (499 has) of the total land area of the barangay under some form of protective maintenance by parceling it out and granting farmers individual stewardship over the parcels⁷. A major part (369 has) of the 499 has is timberland/forestland, which in effect is placed under management and/or protection by the CSC holders. This implies that the remaining 38% remains to be a common property and is completely vulnerable to exploitation of other stakeholders. This is where the PO's (Cancabalong-Obo Farmers' Multipurpose Cooperative or COFAMCO) role as the state's partner in forest management becomes critical. COFAMCO's assumption of the role of local manager and keeper of the forest has had palpable effects on the quality of the forest in the area. The organization succeeded in stopping the entry of at least two mining operations and in checking illegal logging activities. In effect, Obo residents continue to enjoy abundant and safe drinking water and a healthy watershed.

The Obo ISF project also resulted in the control of *kaingin* farming which was very rampant prior to 1989. The COFAMCO president reported that *kaingin* expansion has been tremendously reduced due to the vigilance and information campaigns launched by their organization. Restricting *kaingin* activities might have decreased the people's economic space, but the PO tries to introduce and teach farmers more environment friendly technologies to maximize land productivity.

In addition, the project supported the development of tree farms and/or tree plantations in the ISF areas. As mandated by DAO No. 38, farmers should devote at least 20% of the CSC area to tree farming/plantation. In compliance, COFA⁸ converted two deforested patches into tree plantations and CSC holders also devoted a part of their farm parcels to tree planting using forest and fruit tree species. At the time of the field survey, these plantations were still being maintained by COFAMCO.

⁷ Community members were organized into the Cancabalong-Obo Farmers' Association (COFA), which was later transformed into Cancabalong-Obo Farmers' Multipurpose Cooperative (COFAMCO) in 1994. Each individual member is granted a CSC as a form of land tenure over claimed areas.

⁸ Cancabalong-Obo Farmers' Association is the previous name of COFAMCO before it became a cooperative.

Lastly, the project supported and enhanced the farmers' traditional practice of using rock walls to stabilize the slopes of the farmlands. According to the respondents, rock walling was a natural response to the problem caused by the abundance of rocky limestones in the soil. To render the farmlands cultivable, farmers removed the rocks, but rather than simply discarding them, they used them as rock walling materials. With the entry of ISF, the rock walling practice was improved as the farmers were taught to use the A-frame in locating the contours of the slopes where the walls would be placed. In addition, the farmers were also taught hedgerow planting as a soil and water conservation measure through field visits exposing them to the Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT).

The aforementioned activities have definitely brought positive impacts on the environment and quality of forest resources in Sangbay and Obo, but quantitative determination was not possible in the absence of an actual forest resource inventory.

Impacts on Livelihood and Well-Being

The impacts of the ISF project on the farmers' livelihood and well-being in Sangbay are positive. The issuance of CSC to 90% of the households legitimized the farmers' access and control over forest resources, giving them secured land tenure. Before devolution there was open access to forest resources, but with the issuance of CSC, forest utilization was restricted to the program participants. Use of timber resources within the forest zone is limited to the participants' household use, particularly for house construction and cutting of timber for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited.

The implementation of ISF has changed the local people's destructive ways of earning a living. Before devolution, the residents engaged in *kaingin* making and illegal logging as their main sources of income. But with the implementation of ISF, they were asked to confine their clearings and concentrate on improving their farms through agroforestry. These farmers depend solely on their income derived from the sale of products for their basic needs, education of children and maintenance of family health. The participants' high dependence on the ISF farms

is a strong motivation among them to conserve and develop their lots, as these are their main source of livelihood. As migrant landless farmers whose main reason for settling in the area was to obtain land, the ISF lot is a very precious possession for them. In fact their continued payment of tax as required by the LGU is a mechanism by which they can bolster their stake on the land.

However, the present practice of issuing CSC to the household head is biased in favor of the male spouse and does not give importance to the role of the female spouse in the household farming system. Results of the household survey indicate that 50% of the interviewed households (n = 20) have CSCs under the name of the male spouse, despite the fact that female spouse contributes to the household economy by providing labor for the productive and community work and taking charge of the reproductive work. Consequently, the women have less access to project benefits such as training and employment opportunities. The household survey showed that more of these benefits accrued to the male spouse.

Similarly, the effects of the ISF project on Obo farmers' livelihood and well-being are very positive. Some 152 farmers and their families, which represent about 69% of the total number of households in the barangay, have benefited from the ISF project. Thus, for the majority of Obo farmers, their occupancy and use of some 62% of the classified timberland in the barangay have been legitimized by the project and they have come to possess farmlands through project participation. Results of the household interviews indicate that almost all respondents (n = 20), had obtained their farm parcels through ISF, with size ranging from 0.25 to 7.0 hectares, or an average 2 hectares. Considering that the average family size is around seven, perhaps this farm size may appear inadequate to support the family. But the relative advantage lies not in the farm size but in the family's feeling of security that comes from holding a CSC, which affirms one's stake in the occupied forestland.

After the formation of COFAMCO and selection of the ISF project as a CPEU, the farmers gained access to funds for income-generating projects from DENR through the Community Development Assistant (CDA) assigned in the area. In 1996, DENR provided a P100,000 grant for a cattle fattening project which distributed several heads of cattle to the COFAMCO members. Along with the financial grant was a three-day onsite training on livestock production

and management, and a one-day field exposure/cross visit to livestock farms for selected farmers and leaders. In 1997, COFAMCO sourced another P100,000 from DENR for goat dispersal and swine production. However, the El Nino phenomenon in 1998 severely affected the availability of fodder for the cattle and goats. To avoid huge losses, the organization sold the cattle and reportedly managed to somehow break even. During the field visit, goat dispersal has been discontinued and only the swine production remains.

As in Sangbay, the benefits of the ISF project accrue directly more to the menfolk in Obo. CSCs were usually issued in the name of the male spouse and this was true in 85% of the cases. In addition, there were more male farmers who attended seminar-trainings or who were sent for cross-farm visits. This partiality towards the male gender is favorably embedded in the male-oriented culture of Obo and is reflective of the rest of the country, where the man is the acknowledged household head and therefore the household's representative to the external social world. It can thus be deduced that the ISF mode of creating access for local forest management reinforces the existing cultural gender differentials. Since the CBFM works under the principle of equity and participation, the present implementation strategies should be sensitive to these gender issues.

Impacts on Influence and Political Capacity

In 1997, the Sangbay-Anac Integrated Farmers' Association, Inc. (SAIFAI), composed of interested CSC holders from Sangbay and from the neighboring barangay of Anac, implemented a 180-hectare mahogany-gmelina reforestation cum agroforestry project. With the assistance of an NGO, SAIFAI was able to negotiate this project with the DENR. As part of its forest protection activities in the project site, SAIFAI regulated forest use by banning *kaingin* making and tree cutting in the project area. However, the organization has no influence over land use regulation and choice of species planted in the area since these were all packaged by the DENR. As project implementor, its control is over labor provision for seedling production, plantation establishment, and maintenance and protection. In 1998, when the Ozone Saver phased out from the community, SAIFAI was left with the implementation of the project under the supervision of

DENR. In 1999, the project was formally turned over to the community, thereby providing SAIFAI autonomy in decision-making with regard to maintenance and harvesting.

Another positive impact of devolution in Sangbay and in Obo is the development of the people's technical capacity in forest resource management through conduct of trainings as part of the ISF program package. In Sangbay, the farmers were taught the agroforestry technology which they have aptly adopted in their *kaingin* farms. In addition, the program participants underwent DENR-sponsored trainings on seedling production, plantation establishment and maintenance and protection. SAIFAI members in particular, have applied what they have learned from these trainings when they established the plantation which they contracted with the DENR.

In terms of impacts over policy, the community has very little influence over the devolution policy since it was implemented via top-down approach. The whole package was designed by the DENR and implemented through its regional, provincial and community offices. Program participants were more often than not passive receivers of the policy.

However, there was one instance when the community reacted to a policy imposed by the local government. In 1990, the Municipal Assessor's office imposed real property tax on forestlands covered by CSC pursuant to Section 4 of Presidential (PD) No. 853⁹. The farmers were quite surprised when they were issued tax declaration papers requiring them to pay real property tax for their ISF lots without them applying for it. This LGU policy became a disincentive for the participants to improve their land since they would pay higher tax with a more improved land. As a negative consequence, some participants illegally opened up additional areas in the forest zones where they can have additional planting. The SAIFAI leaders meanwhile sought the advice of the Regional Technical Director for Forestry and attended meetings with the Municipal Assessor. Their complained reached the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Policy Studies (PPSO) at the DENR main office in Quezon City. In a Memorandum dated April 3, 1991, the PPSO Assistant Secretary clarified that areas covered by CSCs are exempted from real property tax since they do not fall under taxable forestlands.

⁹ PD 853 dated December 19, 1975 provided for the classification and valuation of timber and forest land for purposes of real property taxation.

It was further explained that while the ISFP grants the beneficial use of the timber and forest lands to CSC holders, they are not allowed to cut and remove timber on a commercial basis. By definition, a taxable area refers to “portion or portions of the entire concession where the concessionaire is granted the authority to cut and remove timber for a given year.” Despite the clarification made by the Assistant Secretary, the participants continued to pay their taxes.

In Obo, there are a number of positive indications and concrete evidences to support the observation that the ISF project had enabled COFAMCO to evolve from a loosely organized farmers’ group to a relatively strong formal organization capable of influencing decisions and actions concerning local forest management.

The ISF project had enhanced the COFAMCO leaders and members’ internal capacity to care collectively about the forest environment and to unite their efforts in taking appropriate action to protect this environment. This enhanced collective concern for their forest resources was traced to the training-seminars they received, which not only strengthened communications and interpersonal relationships within the membership, but also awakened or heightened their awareness for the need to conserve and sustain the resources through proper local forest management. With support from the Barangay Development Council (BDC), the PO had advocated for the passage of an ordinance affecting quarrying activities in the area. Under DENR supervision and through close coordination, COFAMCO had organized a forest foot patrol to spot and apprehend illegal cutters and *kaingin* expansion, lobbied for the cessation of mining operations perceived to be inimical to the environment, and fought to have a CSC canceled due to misuse and the lot turned over for development to the organization.

Causal Conditions for the Occurrence of Impacts

Evidently, the devolution policy implemented in Sangbay and Obo has created a space for the local communities to manage their local forest resources. However, the space is far from ideal, as it tends to be vulnerable due to the communities’ dependence on the state bureaucracy.

Institutional and Policy Presence

The stakeholder identification and analysis conducted among the focus group discussion (FGD) participants in Sangbay pointed out four external mediating state institutions, namely, the DENR-CENRO, Provincial Natural Resources and Environment Office (PNREO), Department of Agriculture (DA)-LGU, and the National Council of Indigenous People (NCIP). As the implementing agency, the DENR provided an ISF package which included community organizing, provision of farm inputs (seedlings, tools, fertilizer), conduct of seminars on soil and water conservation, and provision of technical assistance. As the DENR flagship program at that time, the CENRO provided full technical and administrative support to the participants. In fact, the project was once a model site in the province of Quirino. These benefits, however, were not sustained when the project was transferred to the local government unit by virtue of the local government policy. The PNREO, which was supposed to take over the implementation of the project had identified other priority areas. The people did not like the idea of transferring the project to the PNREO but could not do anything. This attitude among the people was an indication of the latter's dependence on the DENR.

Assistance from other government agencies was likewise not realized in Sangbay. The DA's municipal office, which was devolved to the LGU, was also one of the external government agencies that should be providing assistance to the community. The DA-LGU tried its best to help the program participants in their farming needs by implementing the program "Plant now, pay later". This scheme enabled the farmers to loan from the DA-LGU seeds that they planted and the cost to be repaid after the harvest. Some farmers, however, complained that the technician assigned to the area failed to remit to the office his collections and this put the farmers in the bad light. Some housewives also complained that the technician would go to the area just to have a drinking bout with some of the men.

While the policy provided for the participation of a number of government agencies¹⁰ in the ISF implementation, the program has failed to provide the community, particularly the tribal people groups, basic services.

As shown in the discussion above, despite the presence of policies that will ensure the success of devolution, Sangbay farmers have not been fully successful in enlarging the space they have created due to the very limited assistance provided to them.

In Obo, COFAMCO undoubtedly possesses the legal personality by virtue of LOI 1260, EO 163 and DAO No. 5 Series of 1993, and is thus recognized as DENR's PO partner in local resource management. As DENR's partner, COFAMCO has been empowered to manage, develop and regulate access to the ISF area. It has also been empowered financially with its receipt of development funds from the state. While it is evident that the Obo farmers have benefited greatly program and that they have participated actively in enhancing the space they have created, the people's continuing dependence on DENR for devolution intervention raises a concern. Will the space persist without DENR to help prop it up? There are some indications pointing to the possible strength of social capital but this has yet to be fully tested. This strength appears to be incipient and tentatively shows some promise in advocating changes in local ordinances and in pursuing a strict application of state policies, but it is still a long way from really influencing other key management conditions such as stewardship rights, prices of agroforestry products, or forestry laws and regulations which are controlled by the state or by non-marginalized groups in the community.

By making the Obo ISF project a center for people's empowerment in the uplands, DENR has also deepened the community's dependence on the benefits of the state-civil society relationship in carrying out local forest management. The process of weaning the community from state dependence has always been an issue and a problem in community-based forest management programs.

¹⁰ These agencies included the Ministries of Agrarian Reform, Agriculture, Education and Culture, Health, Human Settlements, Local Government, Public Works and Highways, Social Services and Development, and the National Economic and Development Authority.

Social Capital

Internal social capital. In Sangbay, all sectors in the community are under one goal of protecting the forest. Although cultural differences may arise among the three ethnic groups comprising the community in Sangbay, they agreed to help in preventing illegal entrants into the forest zones. However, they have not been successful in this endeavor since according to some respondents, the individual nature of the tenurial instrument does not provide them a sense of communal responsibility. Contribution to forest protection and conservation is in the development, maintenance and protection of individual ISF lots. The people felt that they have no authority over other forest areas that are not covered by their CSCs.

Although the key informants claimed that as a community they are united, the regionalist attitude among the Filipinos is still manifested in their settlement pattern. The Ilocanos who comprise majority of the population occupied five out of seven *puroks*¹¹ while the Ifugaos and the Igorots settled in *Purok 6* and *7*, respectively. Theoretically, the Barangay Council should have full jurisdiction over its constituents. But this is not the case in Sangbay. As their culture dictates, the Ramay Manok Tribal Association has its own tribal leaders and set of rules and regulations in managing their conflicts.

The presence of conflicts in the context of community resource use is another manifestation of the weak internal social capital in Sangbay. Among the Igorots and the Ifugaos, conflicts that ensue into a cold war, arise from overlapping boundaries due to movement of ISF lot monuments. In one of the focus group discussions conducted, a latent conflict between the indigenous peoples and the Ilocanos surfaced. This was regarding the day-care center, which according to the members of the Ramay Manok Tribal Association, they asked from the provincial government for the children in *Purok 6* and *7*. These two *puroks* are quite far from the present location of the barangay day-care center and it is very difficult for the children to attend classes especially during rainy days. Hence, they thought of requesting for another day-care center. When the

¹¹ *Purok* is the smallest geographical subdivision within a *barangay*.

request was approved, they were quite surprised when the Barangay Chairman constructed the day-care center in the main barangay and not where it was planned to be built.

In the course of its more than a decade-long alliance with DENR, COFAMCO has undoubtedly developed as a strong internal social capital. The history of the organization reveals its resilient and creative nature: from COFA it has merged with a local family cooperative to form COFAMCO. This very nature had attracted DENR to designate it as a showcase for model upland technologies in the entire province and award it with the CPEU status. Organizational experiences point to COFAMCO as a better organized farmers' group among the internal forest user groups that is partial to consultative and participatory modes for making collective decisions and actions. This local PO has also emerged as a relatively strong lobby group advocating forest protection and conservation with the backing of DENR and BDC. Perhaps because they feel assured of state support, their leaders have flexed whatever power they possess at their command to widen the space for managing their forest resources. It is evident that COFAMCO can and does handle resource use conflicts quite well although very much in tandem with DENR.

It was disturbing to note, however, that not all Obo farmers are ISF participants and not all ISF participants are members of COFAMCO. This raises the possibility that dissension from or violation of the space could originate from this minority group (estimated at around 31% of the total number of Obo households), which falls outside COFAMCO's sphere of influence. The PO may hold its members and other ISF farmers to keep the terms of the CSC but it can at best only plead with non-COFAMCO members to cooperate. In others words, the sphere of COFAMCO's effective influence does not appear to encompass all actual forest users in Obo. It has no authority to monitor and check the kaingin and forest use practices of the earlier group of Obo farmers who had refused to join ISF in 1989 and the later group of ISF farmers who had refused to join COFAMCO in 1994.

External social capital. In its management of the local resources, SAIFAI has established alliances with organizations and people groups within and outside the community. As an external state mediator, the DENR-CENRO interacts directly with SAIFAI because the latter has an existing reforestation project with the former. Further, it provides financial, technical and

administrative support to project implementation and influences SAIFAI in deciding the use of forest resources. The Ozone Saver, which was responsible for organizing SAIFAI, provided administrative support, seminar/training and linked SAIFAI with other organizations. It influenced to a large extent SAIFAI's decision-making.

Being a devolved project to the LGU, the PNREO has jurisdiction over the project area but it extended very minimal development assistance to the project. PNREO's role is in monitoring transport of lumber and other forest products by the furniture makers.

Likewise, the Ramay Manok Tribal Association, a community organization composed of the Igorots and the Ifugaos in Sangbay, has established a strong linkage with the NCIP which has a provincial office in the nearby town of Cabarroguis. This agency is the primary government agency responsible for the formulation and implementation of policies, plans and programs to promote and protect the rights and well-being of indigenous peoples. NCIP was the one instrumental in putting up a day-care center and a water system that benefited not only the tribal people but other community members as well.

Perceived as an external state mediator, DENR is the government agency given the most credit for making space for local forest governance in Obo. It is viewed as the most dependent on forest resources and has received the rating of most important, most effective and most trustworthy institution. Through Executive Order 192, the agency was empowered by the state to manage, develop and protect the country's natural resources, including forestlands. Among its primary tasks is the formulation of policies, rules and regulations governing the proper use, management and disposition of forests, including who can become forest stewards and by what manner. The policies most applicable to the case of Obo are those governing the ISF, CPEU and CBFM programs.

Another institution with which the COFAMCO has established a strong linkage is the BDC. This state institution has extended its cooperation to COFAMCO whenever the latter sought its help in safeguarding the forest. By its cooperation, BDC has mediated in creating space for local forest management.

Forest Culture

Among the residents in Sangbay and in Obo, the stake on the forest is one that is at the level of the household by virtue of the CSC issued individually. Their livelihood depends on the forestland, but not necessarily on the forest. Although located in areas classified as forestlands, their existing modes of production are basically small-scale agriculture. Among the 20 households surveyed in Sangbay, the average farm size was 2.37 ha, the smallest being 0.25 ha. and the largest, 5.0 ha. Banana and corn are the major agricultural crops which constitute about 40 and 30 percent, respectively, of all agricultural crops found in the area. Other crops include fruit trees, coffee, upland rice, root crops, vegetables and ornamentals. Farming technologies used are of the manual type (animal-driven plow and harrow) and use of fertilizers and pesticides is limited to corn.

Project participants in Obo are predominantly farmers engaged in the production of corn, taro and vegetables in their ISF lands. Farm parcels range from 0.25 to 7.0 hectares, or an average 2 hectares. Though the soil in their hilly farms are dominated by limestones, they have managed to render the soil fit for agriculture through rock walling. Recognizing the importance of trees in maintaining the ecological balance in their environment, the project participants have developed tree farms within their claimed area.

Strategies of Local People in Creating Space

The Sangbay Experience(Dizon and Servitillo 2000)

Generally speaking, the community's influence on key management conditions such as property rights, prices, laws and regulations, and gender equity is low as it has not been fully empowered to do so. However, it has achieved some small successes through actions of the local leaders, particularly that of SAIFAI. This is clearly seen when the local leaders brought to the attention of the municipal assessor their protest against the collection of real property tax from their ISF farms. The actions they have taken as described earlier resulted from the leaders' initiative to

improve the communication and awareness about the issue they were confronting. But despite the settlement of the issue by the DENR, the farmers continued to pay their taxes as a strategy to legalize their land claims. To them, a tax declaration certificate is a much stronger proof of ownership than a CSC.

Approaching the appropriate agencies was also one of the community's strategies in soliciting the much-needed services that the ISF program was not able to provide. The Ramay Manok Tribal Association, through its tribal political machinery, successfully sought assistance from the NCIP and from the Office of the Congressman in putting up a water system and building an additional day-care center, respectively. The tribal leaders prepared resolutions explaining the need for a water system for the whole community and a day-care center particularly for the tribal people. With the proper endorsement of the regional NCIP office, the resolutions were filed at the Office of the Congressman and were acted upon favorably. The community now has a water system supplying potable water to the households. Although the request for the day-care center was also approved, it was not constructed in the *purok* where it was intended.

The perennial problem of transporting people and products from the barangay across the Cagayan River, has been solved temporarily by the community by establishing SANDIMPCI, a multipurpose cooperative. The cooperative bought three small boats which are being used as a means of transportation in the area. As a benefit, members can ride free of charge while non-members are charged from ₱10 to ₱ 40, depending on the water level and the risk involved. Collection of fares is done by the Coop officers themselves who take turns based on a schedule. As mentioned, this is just a temporary solution to the problem since during the rainy season when the river swells, the bancas can not be used also because it is very risky. According to the farmers, there were instances when they were trapped in the community and cannot even buy their basic needs.

Aside from running the transportation business, the cooperative also provides agricultural loan to its members many of whom are also ISF participants. SANDIMPCI has exerted control over the use of the loans it is providing its members. For example, a member who availed of a "pineapple loan" can only use the money for growing pineapple and not for other purposes. This is a great

help for the farmers since as mentioned earlier, there are no government institutions that provide loan/credit services in the community, except for private money lenders who charge very high interests accordingly.

To some extent these strategies enabled the community to respond to their needs but a lot of things have to be achieved yet in order to sustain the space they have created. They have to have a strong political capacity and a strong internal and external social capital to change the management conditions which are state-determined.

The Obo Experience (Chiong-Javier and Dizon 2000).

A number of local strategies have been noted in COFAMCO's experiences with regard to creating and enhancing space for local forest management. The farmers practice the traditional cooperative systems in their endeavor to manage the use of forestland. They voluntarily join *alayon* groups which are instrumental for accomplishing certain major farm tasks on a rotation basis, such as land preparation, planting, and harvesting which the family could not undertake on its own. The *alayon* is most beneficial for the construction and repair of rock walls, a normally strenuous activity for any one household to undertake, which is an effective soil and water conservation measure in the area. Participants work for the *alayon* for free but take turns in feeding the group on the day work is done on their farm. *Bolhon* is a contractual farm labor system organized by one person who becomes the leader. Participants of the *bolhon* are contracted by the leader for a fee, usually approximating if not lower than the prevailing daily wage rate. Payment is not usually immediately done but is given around a year later during which time the leader would have been paid by the farm owners who have contracted his *bolhon* services. Thus the leader records the members' every participation for future payment purposes.

During the implementation of the ISF project, COFAMCO organized a forest foot patrol for forest protection purposes. The patrol's task is to investigate and act on reports of illegal logging and illegal *kaingin* practice. Incidences of violations are brought by PO members to the attention of the patrol or to the COFAMCO president who, in turn, informs the DENR-CENRO. Together, they combine forces to apprehend as well as admonish the violators. When the violation is

considered small, as in illegal *kaingin*-making, the president and other leaders would immediately go to the concerned site to stop the violators, advise them about the evils of forest destruction, and solicit their cooperation in forest protection. The president admits to having problems in the case of illegal logging whose perpetrators are allegedly not from within their own barangay. But their way to address this problem is to exercise vigilance and coordinate with DENR whom they expect to follow through with an arrest and conviction.

In two past cases during its early years as COFA, the organization was able to successfully block mining operations involving the extraction of coal and guano (1993) in the area. One involved a coal mining company known as KINWAY; the other, the Manguerra Mining Development Corporation which extracted guano from the Dingayop Caves. In both cases, the organization then known as COFA lobbied and aligned with the Barangay Development Council (BDC) and the DENR to oppose the operations for these were perceived to cause adverse effects on or to endanger the supply and quality of water in the barangay as well as in the entire municipality.

COFAMCO has also lobbied for the BDC to pass an ordinance that required all quarrying activities in the community to be first brought to their attention for approval. Hence even the DPWH now seeks their permission before chipping at the mountainsides of Obo to obtain materials for road construction and maintenance.

In another case illustrating the extent of the space it has been able to create, COFAMCO played an instrumental role in solving a problem brought about by the sale of a CSC lot the size of 1.16 hectares to a rich and influential family. This was a highly anomalous transaction since the CSC is not transferable by sale and since any transfer has to be coordinated with the DENR. The organization once again linked up with the DENR-CENRO office to prevent the lot's transfer to its new owners. Eventually it succeeded to get the CSC canceled and the lot assigned to COFAMCO to be developed into a Tree Park.

CONCLUSION

It is quite evident that the primary impacts of devolution in Sangbay and Obo have been on attainment of tenurial security for the program participants and their legitimization as forest stakeholders. These positive impacts were basically brought about by the policy embodied in LOI 1260 and EO 263. However, the program's broader social impacts have been limited in the sense that the primary support services such as infrastructure, market assistance, and financial/credit support were lacking, particularly in Sangbay.

The biophysical objective of the program has been achieved to some extent by prohibiting the forest occupants from *kaingin* making and illegal tree cutting, establishing tree plantations, and practicing soil and water conservation measures. However, preventing the practice of *kaingin* making has some economic trade-offs on the part of the farmers. Protection of the remaining forest areas is still a major concern due the lack of sense of communal responsibility. This is basically due to the individual nature of the tenure instrument and the weak internal social capital brought about by ethnic heterogeneity as in the case of Sangbay.

In Obo, there are two major concerns that may pose some threats to the maintenance of the space that has been enjoyed by the people so far. First, is the continuing dependence of the PO on the DENR; and second, non-involvement of some community members in the ISF project and non-membership in the COFAMCO.

Creation of space for local resource management is essentially providing the community power to manage the local resources. But the forest users should be made to understand that power to manage does not only involve utilization, but protection as well. #

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