19 Promoting Sustainable Forest Management through Community Forestry in the Philippines

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Abstract: The inability of generally corporate-led, economic development-oriented industrial forestry to benefit the rural poor or effectively address the increasing rate of deforestation in the tropics has led towards a new paradigm in forest management and governance. This shift favours a people-oriented approach generally termed "community forestry" or "participatory forestry". At its core are the values of participation and equity reflecting the need for a more equitable distribution of benefits in tropical forest management. Being one of the pioneers in implementing a nationwide community forestry program in Asia through the adoption of a community-based forest management strategy, the Philippines provides an interesting case that illustrates the challenges of promoting sustainable forest management through the participation of local communities in forest development and protection. Drawing from the three decades of Philippine experience, this chapter generally explores the potential and current limitations of community forestry as a national strategy for promoting sustainable forest management. It explains the rationale behind community forestry; traces the history of community forestry in the country; explains the objectives of community forestry based on existing policy documents and analyses of the factors behind its development; discusses the types of community forestry, its present accomplishments and outcomes; analyses the enabling and reinforcing mechanisms and examines the issues and challenges facing its implementation. Finally, it presents conclusion and lessons learned from the Philippine experience, which may have some applications to other similar developing tropical countries.

Keywords: sustainable forest management, community forestry, forestry paradigm, participation, equity

19.1 Introduction

The inability of industrial forestry to benefit the rural poor or address the increasing rate of deforestation in the tropics has led to a major shift in the direction of forest resource management and governance. This shift favours a people-oriented approach generally termed "community forestry" or "participatory forestry," which is also regarded as a new forestry paradigm (Gilmour and Fisher 1991). The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) defined community forestry as "any situation that intimately involves local people in forestry activities" (FAO 1978). In the Philippines, community forestry has been regarded as a "new approach to forest management" (DENR 1989) with the following policy objectives (Pulhin et al. 2007): 1) improve the socio-economic condition of the participating communities; 2) promote social justice and equitable access to and benefits from the forest resources, including respecting the rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral domains; 3) effect sustainable development of forestlands and resources; and 4) protect and advance the right of Filipino people to a healthful environment.

Being one of the pioneers in implementing a nationwide community forestry program in Asia through the adoption of a community-based for-

est management (CBFM) strategy, the Philippines provides an interesting case that illustrates the challenges of promoting sustainable forest management through the participation of local communities in forest development and protection. Classified on the basis of how they were organised, community forestry initiatives may be self-initiated by indigenous peoples; locally assisted by external entities, sponsors, or facilitators; or initiated by the government as part of national programs and projects (Guiang et al. 2001). In terms of engagement of the local communities, the practice of community forestry can range from "consulting" the local people before a forestry project is implemented in their area, which is typical of most national programs, to actually recognising community control and management of the local forest resources, such as those of the locally-initiated sites (La Viña 1997). Regardless of the types and local people's level of engagement, however, community forestry initiatives have the overarching goal of sustaining the forest resources and their associated benefits, improving the socio-economic welfare of forest-dependent communities, and communities regaining control over their resources and lives.

Drawing from the three decades of Philippine experience, this chapter explores the potential and current limitations of community forestry as a national strategy for promoting sustainable forest management. The chapter is divided into eight sections. Following this brief introduction, section 19.2 traces the history of community forestry in the country focusing on the last three decades. Section 19.3 enumerates the objectives of community forestry based on existing policy documents and analyses of the factors behind its development. Section 19.4 briefly discusses the types of community forestry, followed in section 19.5 by its present accomplishments and outcomes. Section 19.6 analyses the enabling and reinforcing mechanisms, while section 19.7 examines the issues and challenges facing its implementation. Finally, section 19.8 presents the conclusion and lessons learned from the Philippine experience, which may have some applications on developing countries of similar situation.

19.2 History of Community Forestry

Several authors have discussed the evolution of community forestry in the Philippines in the last 35 years (Rebugio and Chiong-Javier 1995, Pulhin 1996, Borlagdan et al. 2001, Guiang et al. 2001, Magno 2003, Pulhin and Pulhin 2003, Dahal and Capistrano 2006, Pulhin et al. 2007). Pulhin et al. (2007) divided the analysis period into "pioneering," "experimentation," and "institutionalisation and expansion."

19.2.1 Pioneering Period (1971–1985)

In the past, there was a general tendency to attribute to shifting cultivation as the primary cause of deforestation in the Philippines. Shifting cultivation was considered illegal and, therefore, logically demanded a legal solution.

A more objective analysis, however, would show that deforestation in the country can be traced to the country's inequitable policies that favoured short-term economic benefits for the government and forest industry, but undermined the welfare of poor forest-dependent communities and other marginalised sectors. These policies led to the rapid exploitation of timber from virgin forests at prices far below real market values and with rents dissipating through inefficiencies in the system. The proliferation of only short duration timber licenses in the past discouraged long-term investments in sustainable forest development and dampened private sector initiatives. This also resulted in conversion of many forested areas into unsustainable upland agriculture, both by the poor farmers and rich entrepreneurs. Forest destruction rose to very alarming levels as poverty in the uplands continued to exacerbate. Meanwhile, forest recovery through natural and artificial means never coped with the forest destruction rate.

Because of the general attribution in the past to shifting cultivation as the main cause of deforestation, until the end of the 1960s, the strategy to halt deforestation focused on the enactment and implementation of forestry laws, rules, and regulations that fined, imprisoned, and evicted shifting cultivators (locally known as *kaingineros*) from forest areas. This punitive legal approach, however, miserably failed to solve the problem because it failed to recognise its socio-economic dimensions. The realisation that deforestation is a complex problem rooted in socio-economics has motivated or encouraged government to adopt policies and programs that address peoples' socio-economic needs and concerns.

In the 1970s, new policies and programs were formulated to address the environmental and political crisis in the country under the Marcos regime through programs that put more emphasis on the socio-economic needs of people and communities, especially those who were poor and directly dependent on the forests for their livelihood. Between 1973 and 1979, three "people-oriented forestry" programs were implemented, namely, the Family Approach to Reforestation (FAR) Program, the Forest Occupancy Management (FOM) Program, and the Communal Tree Farming (CTF) Program. It was in 1974 when the first ever community forestry agreement, with a duration of 25 years, was issued to the Kalahan Educational Foundation, Inc., an organisation of indigenous people in Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines, under the FOM Program. This was a pioneering

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Photo 19.1 Young mangrove plantation in Banacon Island, Bohol, Philippines managed by a Community Forestry organization.

effort resulting from the initiatives of the Ikalahan Tribe to secure from the government an agreement that would give them the exclusive right to use and manage their ancestral lands.

In 1982, the Integrated Social Forestry Program (ISFP) was established; this consolidated the FAR, FOM, and CTF programs, while recognising the vested interests of the forest occupants through the provision of a 25-year tenure security.

The policies and programs developed during the pioneering period opened limited space to accommodate forest occupancy and the involvement of the upland communities in the forest rehabilitation activities. From a political economy perspective, it is obvious that the local communities were involved to serve the interest of the state by using the local people as a cheap source of paid labour. However, the initiatives are considered as "pioneering" because they departed from the traditional punitive approach and became more accommodating for forest occupants and their role in forest management (Rebugio and Chiong-Javier 1995). The pioneering period was also an experimentation of various alternative approaches that focussed on the individual farmer, the family, and the community, respectively. During this period, the need to integrate all these socially oriented approaches to achieve maximum were deemed imperative.

19.2.2 Experimentation and Infusion of Massive External Support (1986–1994)

Under the democratic government of President Corazon Aquino, a number of radical reforms were introduced. With the reorganisation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), corrupt officials were removed, perspectives on forestry changed, and the number of timber licenses were significantly reduced, despite intense opposition from the private logging companies (Korten 1994 in Pulhin et al. 2007). These changes paved the way for liberalising forest access to upland communities and the experimentation with more "people-oriented" forestry programs. According to Korten (1994), these changes were necessary to make the DENR attractive to the donor community. Furthermore, the presence of a vibrant civil society that strongly lobbied for resource access, democratisation, and people's participation in natural resource management (Broad and Cavanagh 1993) offered great potential for policy and institutional reforms. As a result, external assistance for forestry projects flowed into the country. Between 1988 and 1992, the country obtained five forestry-related loans amounting to USD731 million, a more than 10-fold increase compared to previous loans for forestry (Korten 1994). The Ford Foundation, the United States Agency for International

Development (USAID), the German and Swedish governments, and other agencies provided grants and technical support for forestry development.

With the government's thrust on social justice and equity in the natural resources sector, and the DENR's need to maintain political legitimacy in the governance of the country's forest resources (Pulhin 2004), external assistance was directed at "people-oriented" forestry programs. These programs incorporated the core concerns of sustainable development, such as advancement of social equity, poverty alleviation, and environmental sustainability (Pulhin 1996). From 1988 to 1993, at least nine major "people-oriented" forestry programs and projects were initiated and funded through external support. These programs and projects provided fertile ground for piloting "people-oriented" forestry through applying several types of land tenure instruments, and experimenting with different project components and strategies, and various institutional and collaborative arrangements. They also stimulated the entrance of new players in the forestry sector, especially the non-government organisations (NGOs), people's organisations (POs), local government units (LGUs), academia, and research agencies. The first Philippine Master Plan for Forestry Development in 1990 adopted "people-oriented" forestry as a major forestry strategy. The plan stipulated that 1.5 million ha of residual forest (or 54% of the remaining residual forests), plus an additional 5.9 million ha of "open access" areas would be placed under community forest management over a 10-year period (DENR 1990). Corporate or large-scale forestry operations would be confined to 682 000 ha, or barely 24% of the total commercial forests.

19.2.3 Institutionalisation and Expansion (1995 to present)

The need to institutionalise the different people-oriented forestry programs and projects under one umbrella in order to ensure their continuity and enhance their effectiveness and impacts, prompted President Fidel Ramos, on 29 July 1995, to issue Executive Order No. 263, titled "Adopting Community-Based Forest Management as the National Strategy to Ensure the Sustainable Development of the Country's Forestlands Resources and Providing Mechanisms for Its Implementation." Section 3 of the Order stipulates that local communities can obtain long-term tenurial rights to forestland, provided they employ environment-friendly, ecologically sustainable, and labour-intensive harvesting methods". On 10 October 1996, DENR Secretary Victor Ramos issued Department Administrative Order (DAO) No. 96-29 (Rules and Regulations for the Implementation of Executive Order 263) for the implementation of the community-based forest management (CBFM) strategy.

To guide the implementation of the Program, a DENR Strategic Action Plan for CBFM was adopted on 18 July 1997, through DENR Memorandum Circular No. 97-13. The plan envisioned placing about 9 million ha of forestlands under community management by the year 2008, which included 2.9 million ha that were already covered by people-oriented forestry projects, and a further 6.59 million ha considered as open and potentially open access land. Also in 1997, the Philippine Congress passed into law the Indigenous People s' Rights Act (IPRA) through Republic Act No. 8371. The law recognised the vested rights of the indigenous peoples (IPs) or indigenous cultural communities (ICCs) over their ancestral lands, and thus were issued Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) in the name of the community, subject to official delineation and determination by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). IPs/ICCs that were part of the CBFM Program and that had been issued with CBFM Agreements or Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADC) prior to the passage of the IPRA law, were given the option to retain these tenure instruments and remain under the CBFM Program or avail themselves of the CADT.

In 2004, President Gloria Arroyo issued Executive Order No. 318, titled "Promoting Sustainable Forest Management in the Philippines," reiterating the government's confidence in CBFM as a means of achieving sustainable forest management. In the same year, DENR Secretary Elisea Guzon issued DENR Administrative Order No. 29, which replaced the 1996 rules and regulations implementing the CBFM Strategy. The developments of the strategy and program were, unfortunately, accompanied by a decrease in foreign-assisted projects, especially since early 2000. The drying up of funds had particularly affected the participation of NGOs and local government units in CBFM activities. Only a limited number of local government units had started playing a more active role in CBFM since the full implementation of the Local Government Code and the strengthening and institutionalisation of the DENR-Department of Interior (DILG) and Local Government-LGU partnership for devolved and other forest management functions.

Under the institutionalisation and expansion period, CBFM areas increased tremendously, primarily in response to the 1997 DENR Strategic Action Plan for CBFM and the Philippine Master Plan for Forestry Development. From a total area of less than 1 million ha in 1995, CBFM coverage increased by more than six times to around 5.97 million ha (DERN 2010) covered by various tenure instruments, namely, Community-Based Forest Management Agreements (CBFMA), CADC, certificate of stewardship con-

Table 19.1. Changes in forest land area in the Philippines (in million hectares).

Year	Forest Cover	Percent of Total Area
1575	27.5	92.0
1863	20.9	70.0
1920	18.9	64.0
1934	17.8	57.3
1970	10.9	36.3
1980	7.4	24.7
1990	6.7	20.7
2003	7.2	23.9

Source: FMB 2005.

tract (CSC), and Certificate of Forest Stewardship Agreement (CFSA). In principle, these tenurial instruments provided the holders the right to occupy, cultivate, and develop their areas, as well as utilise existing forest resources, including timber, subject to the terms and conditions of the agreement that were agreed upon by both parties.

The CBFM may be viewed as a radical and progressive structural policy reform in the forestry sector (Pulhin 1998) by replacing the century-old timber license agreement (TLA) approach of forest utilisation. Under the CBFM, access to and benefits from forest management were democratised by transferring certain management rights and responsibilities to forest communities. The galloping expansion, especially during the late 1990s, was facilitated by donor funds and the presence of foreign-funded projects. However, it was instilled in the minds of the people that the CBFM was a project instead of a long-term forest management strategy (Pulhin et al. 2007). Hence, when a project was completed, many initiated activities were discontinued.

The historical overview indicates that the willingness to accept local people as forest managers and to set up the CBFM Program was shaped by a confluence of many actors, which included the government, as represented by the DENR, the private sector, civil society, people's organisations, and funding agencies, with diverse interests at local, national, and international levels.[1)]

The heavy reliance of many CBFM projects on development funding that came from international financial institutions, such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), created an impression that participation in the CBFM program was financially rewarding. Although CBFM holders really benefited from financial assistance, it became very difficult for DENR field offices to pursue CBFM in the face of limited personnel available to provide technical assistance and do the monitoring of sites in other areas without funding support. With different levels of support from site to site, the level of development of each peoples' organisation was so variable, that it made even many other sectors doubt the effectiveness of CBFM as the national strategy to empower the communities and to develop and conserve forest resources and the environment. Nevertheless, with the richness of lessons learned from more than two decades of CBFM implementation in the Philippines, its full potential can still be realised through re-thinking it to suit current needs, as well as by addressing its weaknesses through policy reforms.

19.3 Factors Behind Community Forestry

The country's community forestry program, through the CBFM, has set a blend of socio-economic, political, and environmental objectives listed in Section 19.1. Those objectives are based on existing policy documents, particularly the Executive Order No. 263 and its implementing rules and regulations.

As may be gleaned from the historical account and from the following discussions, the above objectives evolved from a given socio-political, economic, and environmental context of forest management in the Philippines. They are shaped by the following factors that paved the way to the emergence of community forestry in the country.

19.3.1 Forest and Environmental Degradation

Table 19.1 presents the declining trend of forest cover in the country, from 92% of the total land area of the country in 1575, to barely 24% in 2003 (Forest Management Bureau 2005). The records of exploitative practice show an annual deforestation rate as high as 172 000 ha from the 1950s through 1973 (Boado 1988 in Pulhin et al. 2007). Under the Marcos regime (1970–1980), the annual deforestation rate was most blatant at 300 000 ha, putting the Philippines in the top list of countries with the worst deforestation rates in the Asia-Pacific region (Vitug 2000 in Pulhin et al. 2007). Hence, from a major exporter of tropical logs in the world market in the late 1950s until the 1960s, the country is now a major importer of wood and wood products.

[*)] For detailed discussions on these actors and their interests, please see Pulhin et al. 2007 and Pulhin and Inoue 2008.

As a result of the continuing onslaught of the forest resources, the ability of the latter to provide environmental services has already been compromised. Recent catastrophic floods and landslides that claimed hundreds of lives and destroyed millions of pesos worth of properties have been associated with climate change due to forest denudation. Typhoon Ondoy, which hit Metro Manila in September 2009, and killed about 500 people, affected approximately 4 million people, caused damages amounting to 10.4 billion pesos (~22 million USD), was a vivid example of these catastrophic floods attributed by many to climate change, forest denudation, and poor solid waste management practices that led to clogging of waterways. Despite persistent policy formulation and reformulation, the past centralised forest management approach was unsuccessful in reversing the trend of forest depletion.

19.3.2 Inequitable Access to Forest Resources and Benefits

The highly centralised forest management has benefited more the privileged few instead of the millions of people living in the uplands, who depend on forest resources for survival. During the Martial period, around 8–12 million ha, or around one-third of the country's total land area, were placed by the central government under the control of about 450–470 TLA holders (Pulhin 1996). Conversely, millions of forest occupants, including the indigenous peoples that resided in forest areas prior to Spanish colonisation, were regarded as squatters in their own ancestral lands. The State treated them as the culprits in forest destruction and, in some instances, evicted them from these areas to make way for reforestation and other development projects.

Recent analysis has traced upland poverty to the concentration of natural resources in the hands of a privileged few (Broad and Cavanagh 1993). This is particularly glaring in the forestry sector, where exploitation has been the privilege of logging concessionaires. Problems of upland poverty and inequity have contributed to a host of other related problems, including increasing insurgency in the countryside (Pulhin 1996). To help address this crisis, the civil society sector and peoples' organisations strongly advanced a new agenda of democratising control of resources by the end of the Marcos dictatorial rule in the later part of 1980s. The new agenda called for a shift in the control of local resources to community-based ventures, which were expected to manage resource use more sustainably (Broad and Cavanagh 1993).

19.3.3 Loss of State Credibility to Manage the Country's Resources

The inability of the DENR to address the twin problems of forest destruction and upland poverty contributed to the erosion of public trust in its credibility and moral authority to govern the nation's natural patrimony. The "culture of corruption" and political patronage that were deeply ingrained into its bureaucratic structure, and which found its greatest expression during the logging years (Vitug 1993 in Pulhin et al. 2007), were also contributing factors. Such malpractices extended to the early years of contract reforestation in the late 1980s, when reforestation contracts became the new tools for patronage. In turn, these activities contributed to further forest depletion and greater alienation of local communities from the government. With the loss of public trust, DENR was forced to search for a new management paradigm to regain political legitimacy as the primary government agency responsible for the conservation, management, development, and proper use of the country's natural resources. An offshoot of this new paradigm was the 1995 adoption of CBFM as the national strategy to achieve sustainable forestry and social justice, which is at the core of forest devolution policy in the country.

19.3.4 Other Factors

A convergence of other factors drove the policy and institutional reform towards the adoption of CBFM as a national forest management strategy (Agoncillo 2000). First is the increasing evidence from many studies (Cernea 1985, Blomley 1989, Ostrom 1990) that common property regimes (CPR) have performed better than the state institutions. This is primarily attributed to the local users' ultimate knowledge of the resource, their relative advantage in monitoring resource use due to proximity, and the high degree of dependence on forest resources. Second are the limited resources available to the government in implementing its institutional mandate. Faced with scarce resources, DENR had to find efficient ways of management and assistance for technical, financial, and human resources from other institutions (e. g., funding agencies, private groups, NGOs, and local communities). Devolution through the CBFM approach is, therefore, a viable institutional strategy both for cost-sharing and cost-cutting of operational expenses. The last factor is the changing priority of the funding institutions, such as the Ford Foundation and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which have focused on policy and institutional reforms, strengthening of civil society, and other "soft side" development

packages. These donors have a strong influence in shaping the direction of the government's policy and implementation relevant to the adoption and institutionalisation of a more people-oriented approach to forest management.

19.4 Types of Community Forestry

Existing community forestry schemes may be classified based on how they were originally organised. A Ford Foundation-funded research project on the "Assessment of Community-Based Natural Resource Management in the Philippines," came up with three categories of CBFM in the country on the basis of three criteria (Guiang et al. 2001). These are:

1. *Self-initiated sites*. This category consists of indigenous management systems predating any CBFM interventions in the area. Examples of these are the *muyong* system of the Ifugaos, the *tayans* of Bontocs, and the *sagudays* in Sagada, all in the Cordillera region. The well-known CBFM initiative of the Kalahan Educational Foundation also belongs in this category. In general, documentation on this category is as yet very limited, compared to the national CBFM programs and projects initiated by the DENR.
2. *Locally assisted sites*. This covers site-specific CBFM initiatives in which the development of CBFM efforts could be largely attributed to partnerships with external entities, sponsors, or facilitators such as LGUs (barangay, municipal or provincial), local or foreign NGOs, academic or research institutions, or locally based national government agencies (NGAs). Prominent examples under this category are the Barobbob project in Nueva Vizcaya province; the Landcare movement of the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) in Claveria, Misamis Oriental, and Lantapan, Bukidnon; and the ASPECTS of the University of the Philippines Los Banos Agroforestry Institute in Benguet, Iloilo, and Misamis Oriental. With the recent interest on decentralisation in the forestry sector, there has been increasing documentation about these initiatives although, like the self-initiated sites, the extent of its coverage nationwide is yet to be determined.
3. *National programs*. This category includes all the CBFM sites under the nine national programs and projects unified through Executive Order 263 and DENR Administrative Order No. 96-29, under the broader CBFM Program. These are the Integrated Social Forestry Program (ISFP), Upland Development Project (UDP), Forest Land Management Project (FLMP), Community Forestry Program (CFP), Low Income Upland Communities Project (LIUCP), Regional Resources Management Project (RRMP), Indigenous Rainforest Management Project (IRMP), Forestry Sector Project (FSP), Coastal Environmental Program (CEP), and Recognition of Ancestral Domains/Claims. Included also under this category are watershed management and protected areas, which, according to DENR Memorandum Circular 97-31, could also use CBFM as a strategy for managing certain areas, such as buffer zones. Available records indicate that the total area under this category ranges from around 5.3 to 5.5 million ha (Tesoro 1999, DENR/FMB 2000 as cited by Guiang 2001). Probably excluded in these estimates are some watersheds and protected areas that use CBFM as a management strategy. Most literature on CBFM tends to focus on this category.

19.5 Accomplishments and Outcomes

The accomplishments and outcomes of community forestry in the Philippines may be gauged on the basis of its expressed policy objectives, which are as follows:

19.5.1 Improvement of Socio-Economic Conditions

Under the CBFM program, socio-economic improvement was realised through provision of temporary employment and additional income, but to a limited number of participants. In a number of cases, these benefits were not sustained after the project completion. One of the challenges for CBFM, therefore, is to sustain and spread the benefits to a greater number of poor people in the forest communities. There is a need to further develop viable and resilient enterprises and other economic opportunities, particularly for forest-dependent communities (Guiang et al. 2001, Pulhin 2005 in Pulhin et al. 2007).

19.5.2 Promotion of Social Justice and Equity

It may be argued that social justice and equity have been addressed by CBFM at the national level through transfer of access and management of 5.97 million ha of forestland to local communities and individuals. Under the old forest management policy, the rich TLA-holders monopolised this privilege.

However, the unstable policy on timber harvesting, cancellation of CBFMAs nationwide, and the complex procedures and requirements of timber utilisation have jeopardised the early gains of promoting social justice and equity. At the local level, social equity and benefit sharing remain important concerns (Miyakawa et al. 2005, 2006; Pulhin 2005, 2006). It has been observed that the village elites, who were mostly the leaders and the more educated members, have benefited mainly from CBFM (Dahal and Capistrano 2006). Hence, strategic interventions are still needed to achieve the social justice and equity objectives of CBFM.

19.5.3 Sustainable Development of Forestlands and Resources

Several studies have discussed the positive contributions of CBFM towards the sustainable development of forestlands and resources in the Philippines (e.g. Guiang et al. 2001; Miyakawa et al. 2005, 2006; Pulhin 2005). These include increase in forest cover, adoption of improved farming technologies, and sustained collective action in forest protection. For instance, DENR records indicate that CBFM efforts have contributed to the establishment of about 0.5 million ha of agroforestry, tree plantations, and mangrove rehabilitation within the 5 503 CBFM sites over the last decade. Similarly, participating communities in CBFM areas were central in the protection of close to 5 million ha of forest lands under various forms of tenure. However, the continuing pressure among the CBFM participants to engage in illegal and destructive practices to generate income in the absence of sustainable livelihood, and the pressing need to install effective local management by strengthening POs' capacity and institutional support, remain as challenges in attaining sustainable forest management.

19.5.4 Promotion of Healthy Environment

The impacts of CBFM on environmental quality are positive in many areas (Pulhin et al. 2008). The people point out soil and water conservation efforts that purportedly have improved water supply, soil fertility, and microclimate. Lasco and Pulhin (2006) also concluded that CBFM and technologies, such as agroforestry and tree-farming, have led to the conservation of natural forests and biodiversity. While the planting of more trees undoubtedly has conservation and carbon sequestration effects, these have yet to be quantified.

In summary, achieving socio-economic objective is CBFM's key challenge. At the national level, CBFM has contributed significantly to promoting social justice and equity, but much work is needed to improve its impact at the local level. In terms of environmental objectives, it has been advancing forest development and protection, and promoting a healthful environment, although social and institutional threats to sustainability remain to be addressed.

19.6 Enabling Environment and Reinforcing Mechanisms

While community forestry has significantly contributed to improving the forest condition and to promoting the socio-economic well-being of the local communities, a number of important factors were observed to either facilitate or hinder the potential of community forestry in achieving its goals and objectives. These are as follows:

Policy

Policy-wise, there are enough supporting policies for the implementation of community forestry in the country. All the different programs and projects listed above are supported by appropriate policy pronouncements. Pulhin et al. (2007) provide a comprehensive list of these policies from the 1970s to the present. In general, these policies provided the legal framework and enabling institutional mechanism that provided the political space and support to local communities to participate actively in forest management initiatives by providing them with the opportunity to benefit in the process while promoting sustainable forest management. However, as will be discussed below, the instability of a variety of policies also works against the achievement of CBFM objectives.

Land Tenure

The CBFM program in the Philippines is considered progressive because of its land tenure and resource use rights features (Utting 2000 in Pulhin et al. 2007). In theory, the issuance of various tenure instruments under CBFM promotes a "win-win" strategy for both the government and the local communities. Granting of tenure to communities terminates the open access nature of forestlands. At the same time, it devolves the responsibilities of management and protection to the local communities at minimal costs. In principle, the "bundle of rights" associated with the issuance of land tenure instruments includes the right of ac-

Bruno Locatelli

Photo 19.2 The instability of CBFM policies and complex regulatory environment undermine the achievement of CBFM objectives (north Luzon).

cess, use, management, and exclusion of others in a given forest area, which promises to provide substantial benefits to communities. However, withholding this bundle of rights in the course of implementation results to further burden the communities with the tasks of forest development and protection, which, in the long run, is counterproductive to the achievement of community forestry objectives. A recent study by Pulhin et al. (2008) involving four CBFM cases showed that much of the control still remains with the DENR. While in theory, CBFMA allows the transfer of rights to its recipient POs in terms of access, use, management, and exclusion, in reality, these rights are very conditional and subject to bureaucratic procedures and regulations. For instance, the cancellation of CBFMA by the DENR Secretary in 2006 deprived the PO members of the full bundle of rights. Likewise, harvesting of forest products like timber requires a Resource Use Permit (RUP), which takes a long time (2–6 months) to acquire and involves a high transaction cost, especially if the PO is far from the DENR Central Office where the RUPs are processed. In addition, CBFMA holders are required to prepare management plans, such as the Community Resource Management Framework and Five-Year Work Plan, which are very technical and beyond the capacity of many POs.

Institutional Linkage

The institutional linkages and partnerships created through the different CBFM initiatives provide important support mechanisms for effective implementation. For instance, the USAID, through the Philippine Environmental Governance (EcoGov) Project, was very instrumental in strengthening and institutionalising the DENR-DILG-LGU partnership through policy support and on-the-ground implementation of forest devolution initiatives supportive of CBFM implementation.

Financial Support

Liberalising forest access to upland communities and the experimentation with more "people oriented" forestry programs caused external assistance for forestry projects to flow into the country. Between 1988 and 1992, the country had obtained five forestry-related loans with a total amount of USD731 million. This represented a more than 10-fold increase in comparison to prior loans for forestry (Korten 1994 in Pulhin et al. 2007). In addition, an undetermined amount of other external assistance, e.g., grants and technical support, were provided by the Ford Foundation, USAID, the German and Swedish governments, and other agencies.

Box 19.1 Ngan, Palansalan, Pagsabangan Forest Resource Development Cooperative's (NPP-FRDC's) experience with cancellation of Resource Use Permit due to the absence of a legislated law that supports CBFM

The success of CBFM is hinged on a stable policy that ensures the protection of communities' rights over their forest lands and resources. However, there were several instances when the different secretaries of the DENR (Antonio Cerilles, Elizea Gozun, Michael Defensor) suspended the issuance and implementation of RUPs. The actions of the former DENR secretaries had adverse effects on the livelihood, income, and forest protection efforts of the CBFM participants nationwide. They have also contributed to the demoralisation and continuous erosion of trust by the local communities as to the DENR's sincerity to implement an honest-to-goodness community forestry program. This is best illustrated by the case of NPPFRDC, which experienced the adverse impacts of the three national RUP cancellations/suspensions on its livelihood, forest development, and forest protection activities. The unstable tenure and resource use policy can be attributed to the absence of a legislated law that supports CBFM. Since Executive Order 263 is just a Presidential issuance, and its implementing rules and regulations are issued by the DENR secretary, the CBFM policy is very vulnerable to political pressures and the whims and wishes of whomever occupies the top DENR position. The way to stabilise tenure and resource use policy is to enact a forestry law that supports tenure security. (Source: Pulhin et al. 2008.)

19.7 Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities

After almost 30 years of implementation, several authors have identified a number of issues, challenges, and opportunities associated with community forestry implementation, which include the following:

- *Insufficient number of qualified staff*. The shift in forest development from being technical to one that is more social or people-oriented (Rebugio 1998) necessitated for DENR and LGU staff who had knowledge and skills on community development and related social science disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, economics, to name a few. During the early period of community forestry implementation, the DENR and the LGUs did not have this personnel complement. Hence, the DENR added in its roster of personnel, Community Development Workers and Community Development Assistants, who were assigned to work with the community forestry projects. Exacerbating the personnel problem was the shortage of resources, incentive/reward systems, and logistical support to provide adequate and meaningful assistance to participating POs (Miyakawa et al. 2005, 2006; Pulhin 2005).
- *Unstable policies on CBFM*. Specifically, the series of suspensions of resource use permits (privilege to extract and utilise forest resources inside CBFM areas) nationwide, as well as the temporary cancellation of CBFMAs, have resulted in loss of livelihood and forest destruction in many areas (Pulhin and Inoue 2008). These arbitrary suspensions of RUPs and temporary cancellations of CBFMAs were due to reported abuses of some CBFMA holders apparently allowing other parties to do harvesting for them. Similarly, complex procedures and requirements on timber utilisation results in inefficiency, high transaction costs, and graft and corruption at the local level (Dugan and Pulhin 2006). Such is the case of the Ngan, Panansalan, Pagsabangan Forest Resources Development Corporation (NPPFRDC), which had experienced the adverse impacts of three national RUP suspensions (Box 19.1).
- *Limitation of the government to implement the IPRA Law*. In the case of the Ikalahan Educational Foundation (KEF) in the Northern Philippines, Pulhin et al. (2008) cites that as government's gesture to uphold the rights of the Iklahans over their ancestral land, the government promulgated the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act. However, the government seems to lack the commitment to fully implement the law, as shown by the minimal budget received by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, the agency mandated to oversee the concerns of the indigenous peoples.
- *Livelihood support was ill-conceived and often not sustainable*. Various livelihood projects have been identified and tested in all the CBFM areas, including both forest- and non-forest-based income-generating projects. These include, among others, agroforestry, reforestation contracts, timber harvesting and sale, livestock raising, mushroom production, food processing, cooperative stores, credit assistance, etc. Most initiatives,

however, were ill-conceived, short-lived, and were discontinued due to a combination of technical, financial, marketing, social, and managerial problems, as well as natural calamities like typhoons and drought.

- *Weak development of timber processing and market integration*. Agroforestry products and timber harvested from natural and plantation forests are rarely processed locally, thus can hardly generate added value for the POs. Similarly, products are usually not linked to viable and stable markets, which prevents POs from obtaining adequate benefits from these products.
- *Monitoring and evaluation usually stops with the expiration of project assistance*. The existing management information system (MIS) at DENR was not designed to support decision making at various levels of DENR to assist local communities and other stakeholders in the continuation of monitoring and evaluation activities (Pulhin 2005).
- *Lack of appropriate mechanisms for community-private sector partnerships*. There are no adequate incentives yet to encourage private sector partners to invest in CBFM areas. At the same time, there are also no safety nets in place that will guarantee the protection of the community interests in case such partnerships materialise (Miyakawa et al. 2005).
- *Limited organisational capacities of POs*. Community activities that are part of state devolution policies only generate superficial organisational capacities and alliances among the POs due to the fact that they are not organically based on natural processes, and due to their reliance on bureaucratic parameters (Contreras 2006).

19.8 Conclusion and Lessons Learned

In the Asia-Pacific region, the Philippines is among the few countries that are at the forefront of developing innovative and pioneering policies to advance the goal of sustainable forest management through community forestry. Analysis of various community forestry initiatives in the country indicates that CBFM may be viewed as a radical and progressive structural policy reform in the forestry sector by replacing the century-old TLA approach of forest utilisation. Under the CBFM, access to and benefits from forest management were democratised by transferring certain management rights and responsibilities to the forest communities. The historical overview indicates that the willingness to accept the local people as forest managers and to set up the CBFM Program was shaped by a confluence of many actors with diverse interests at the local, national, and international levels.

Despite wide coverage of areas devolved to local communities, totalling close to 6 million ha, current nationwide outcomes of state-initiated national community forestry programs and projects in the Philippines are still far from achieving their stated objectives. While regime change from authoritarianism to democracy has had a great influence in democratising resource access in favour of local communities, decision-making power on the use and control over forest resources in the post-authoritarian regimes by and large remains at the central DENR bureaucracy level. Recent experiences in the suspension of resource use rights and cancellation of more than 1000 CBFMAs nationwide (Pulhin et al. 2007) have resulted in loss of livelihood and forest destruction in many areas, and have threatened the achievement of sustainable forest management. The frequent change in the top leadership of the DENR is one important reason for its failure to transform into a supportive mechanism. With every change in the leadership, program priorities are likewise changed, thereby jeopardising the successful implementation of the CBFM program. This has also dampened the enthusiasm of the local forest communities that have proved themselves to be potential partners in forest development when fully empowered.

Notwithstanding its limitations, the Philippines' community forestry initiatives have a lot to offer to other countries as lessons in promoting sustainable forest management. Some of these key emerging lessons are as follows (Pulhin et al. 2007):

The foundation of sustainable forest management is an enabling legislated policy.

The presence of legislated policy on community forestry and secure land and resource tenure provides more stability and clear direction in implementing, as well as securing, an incentive system for the participating communities. "Soft rights" embedded in some land tenure instruments that are not legislated do not provide sufficient incentive to encourage communities to invest their human and financial resources into forest management. These rights are very vulnerable to political pressures and changes, and can easily result in adverse socio-economic and environmental impacts when immediately suspended or withdrawn. Moreover, legislated community forestry policy should be "enabling" rather than "enforcing." It should be flexible enough to accommodate varying local conditions, facilitative rather than restrictive, and simple enough for communities to understand and enforce.

Pursuing sustainable forest management through community forestry requires the reinvention of a forestry agency.
The adoption of community forestry strategy requires a whole new set of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes within the forestry bureaucracy. This means a major departure from the traditional regulatory or policing function that the forestry agency has been playing for centuries towards a more supportive and facilitative role to assist communities to improve their livelihood and the condition of the forests. As such, the forestry agency has to reinvent itself to be able to cope with this new role, and maintain relevance. In terms of governance, this requires devolving not only responsibilities but also authorities to local communities, changing outmoded regulatory policies and procedures, and retooling of staff to effectively perform negotiation, conflict resolution, extension services, and related developmental skills to better serve the local communities.

Sustainable livelihood is a pre-requisite to the achievement of sustainable forest management.
In countries like the Philippines, where a significant number of people depend on the forest as major or supplementary sources of livelihood, it would be illusory to even think of sustainable forest management unless it is linked to the promotion of livelihood. This implies that in forest-rich areas, imposing a log ban is not a viable option in the absence of viable alternative livelihood sources for the local communities. Similarly, in marginal sites and in protected areas, where forest harvesting is not possible or allowed, community forestry efforts should have a strong livelihood component. People can only accommodate high objectives of biodiversity and climate change mitigation when these can demonstrate direct and tangible benefits to the people's livelihoods, or if the costs are minimal.

Capacity building goes beyond the community level to include the major supporting agencies.
Communities as *de facto* forest managers need comprehensive and continuing capacity building encompassing the whole range of technical, managerial, financial, and organisational aspects of sustainable forest management. Necessary support systems should likewise be provided, such as appropriate policies, incentives, and logistical support to better perform their forest management responsibilities. The challenge of continuing capacity building, however, goes beyond the community level. The extent to which the capacity of the local communities may be built can only go as far as the capacity of the supporting agencies allow. This implies that the competence of support-providing agencies, such as the forestry department and the LGUs, should likewise be continuously enhanced. Adequate resources should, therefore, be allocated towards this end in planning for community forestry programs.

While sustainable forest management is a long and costly process, the availability of financial support by itself does not guarantee success.
Sustainable forest management is a long and costly process, and there is an almost universal lack of resources needed to properly manage tropical forests. The International Tropical Timber Organization adds that the most debilitating weakness in tropical forest management is the "failure to develop an adequate and reliable system on a global scale for funding the additional costs involved in putting sustainable forest management into practice in the forest." However, while secured funding support is indeed necessary, it does not ensure the achievement of sustainable forest management. The major challenge is to effectively use these resources to build the local capacity and to put in place the necessary policy and institutional support systems to effect more sustainable and equitable forest management and governance. Also, CBFM approaches should be developed to be based on mobilising local resources, including harvesting forest resources, instead of being fully dependent on external financial assistance.

Social processes that ensure greater participation of local communities and other legitimate stakeholders in the management and sharing of benefits from forests should be adequately developed.
One of the unique features of forest resources is that multiple stakeholders are associated with its multiple uses and represent local to global interests. Thus, efforts towards sustainable forest management need to consider these varying interests, without marginalising the concerns of the local communities, especially those whose lives depend on these resources for survival. This calls for the development and institutionalisation of social processes that will ensure that the local communities and other legitimate stakeholders are able to participate meaningfully in decision-making concerning forest management and benefit-sharing from forests. It also requires the development of a strong social movement (such as the Federation of Community Forestry Users in Nepal-FECOFUN) to provide countervailing force against the overly bureaucratic and centralised decision-making processes of the state, which can work against the interests of the local communities.

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