

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community-Based Forest Management Program (CBFMP) revolutionized forest development and rehabilitation efforts of the government when it was institutionalized in 1995 by virtue of Executive Order No. 263.

Before the adoption of the CBFM approach, the sole motivating factor of contract reforestation awardees was primarily financial gains. With the implementation of the Forestry Sector Project (FSP) using CBFM as its main strategy to rehabilitate the upland ecosystem, it empowered beneficiary communities economically, socially, technically and politically while transforming them into environmentally responsible managers. The tenurial right to develop subproject sites alongside the various inputs from the Subproject deepened their commitment to collaborate with other stakeholders in the implementation of these subprojects.

The Itogon Watershed Subproject is located within Barangays Tinongdan, Dalupirip, Ampucao and Poblacion in the Municipality of Itogon, Benguet. The Subproject is significant for its role in providing water to local and downstream communities of Benguet and Pangasinan for domestic and irrigation purposes and in empowering as well as improving the socio-economic condition of project beneficiaries.

The Agno Conservation Development Inc. (ACDI) was commissioned to do community organizing (CO) but the entire exercise was an uphill battle for the Assisting Organization for its lack of technical capability that resulted in failure to train the People's Organizations (POs) in financial and management aspects. But the basic preparation, which should have been handled properly, was the conduct of an intensive information, education and communication. Insufficient IEC caused limited understanding of the project that in turn resulted to lack of commitment and poor performance of PO members.

On the other hand, three POs handled the Comprehensive Site Development (CSD): Colos Land Owners Association (CLOA), Payket, Asin, Sayo, Salapsap Tree Farmers Association (PASSTFA) and Tinongdan Tree Growers Association (TTGA).

From a total of 7,733 hectares targeted for rehabilitation, only 4,982.12 hectares with a weighted average survival rate of 80.43% were accomplished. Scarce labor force was one of the main causes of low performance as well as the simultaneous conduct of community organizing and comprehensive site development activities. This subsequently brought down the cost from PHP88.12 million to PHP81.01 million.

CLOA, PASSTFA and TTGA were still able to get their retention fee and a performance rating of satisfactory because of their accomplishment in spite of social, technical and organizational problems these POs have encountered.

Involvement in Subproject activities, share in retention fees as well as income from harvest of agro forestry crops raised the residents' annual average household income by 62%, from PHP24, 574.00 when the appraisal was conducted to PHP39, 897.38, during project implementation. On the other hand, a total of PHP2.26 million Community Forestry Development Fund (CFDF) has been generated and will be used for livelihood activities and plantation enhancement.

Subproject activities like CSD and infrastructure works gave employment to members as well as non-members registering a total of 321, 791 mandays.

Inclusion of the Infrastructure Component boosted the livelihood initiatives, increasing the probability of sustaining them. The 2.0 kilometer-farm-to-market road now facilitates convey of agricultural products to place of commerce with ease. The footpath and hanging bridges provide ease in mobility for the community while the irrigation systems boost maintenance of agro forestry plantations as well as provide potable water to residents.

With the increase in income that came with employment and complementary infrastructures to make life a lot easier for them, the members are ready to stand on their own feet probably with just a minimal supervision from the SUSIMO. The trainings that they have availed of have prepared them for the eventual project expiration inasmuch as these were not only on plantation matters but also included practical training on business planning and other relevant subjects.