

where the land is greener

case studies and analysis of soil and water conservation initiatives worldwide





land users leading the way in making the land greener



Landcare

Philippines – *Claveria Landcare Association (CLCA)*

Associations that help diffuse, at low cost, soil and water conservation technologies among upland farmers to generate income while conserving natural resources.

In parts of the Philippines, farmers who are interested in learning and sharing knowledge about sustainable land management and new SWC measures organise themselves into the so-called 'Landcare' associations. These self-help groups are a vehicle for knowledge exchange, training and dissemination of SWC technologies. A main objective is the empowerment of farmers' groups in their efforts to improve their livelihoods as well as the environment.

Landcare has three components and aims at strengthening collaboration between those: (1) grassroot farmers' organisations (Landcare organisations); (2) technical facilitators, for example the World Agroforestry Centre (formerly the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry: ICRAF) and government and academic agencies and (3) Local Government Units (LGUs).

The Landcare associations are structured as municipal groups, village groups (*barangay* level or affiliate peoples' organisations), and village sub-groups (*sitio* or *purok* level). This ensures effective dissemination of technologies from the municipal level down to the smallest village. To give the associations a legal status, they are registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Landcare associations conduct regular monthly meetings to promote exchange of information, ideas, and experience, thus promoting spread of SWC technologies. Extension service is carried out through the Local Government Units, which allocate 20% of their development funds for Landcare related activities such as meetings, training and visits, and nursery establishment. Farmers organised in Landcare groups have better access to technical and financial support for SWC activities from LGUs and other technical facilitators.

LGUs also enact local laws to encourage adoption of SWC technologies, such as giving tax incentives, and Landcare members are given priority access to programmes and financial assistance. Landcare acts as a guarantor against loans. The facilitating agencies provide technical assistance, and also help create an environment of dynamism among Landcare groups. A link is created between Landcare associations and these service providers.

Landcare enhances sharing of labour, builds camaraderie, and encourages group decisions on matters relating to SWC. The approach is spreading rapidly: from the original one association with 25 members in 1996, this increased to 45 groups with over 4,000 members by 1999.

left: Farmer sharing the technology with his fellow land users. (Agustin Mercado, Jr)

right: Cutting the natural vegetative strips during maintenance. The cut material may be spread as mulch before being ploughed under to enhance soil organic matter. (Agustin Mercado, Jr)



Location: Misamis Oriental and Bukidnon, Philippines

Approach area: 140 km²

Land use: cropland

Climate: humid

WOCAT database reference: QA PHI04

Related technology: Natural vegetative strips (NVS), QT PHI03

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Editors' comments: The 'Landcare' concept originates from Australia where groups of farmers came together in the 1980s to jointly conserve land for their mutual benefit. Landcare has been modified to the Philippines, and elsewhere, with the same basic principles. This is a case study of how land users within a watershed can organise themselves into self-help groups.

Problem, objectives and constraints

Problem

- lack of appropriate local organisations and institutions
- low adoption of SWC technologies
- financial problems
- food/nutritional insecurity

Objectives

- organise farmers with common concerns, problems, needs and aspirations into self help groups
- establish farmers' groups as conduits for financial and other support for SWC technologies
- empower farmers' groups in their efforts to improve their livelihoods as well as the environment
- strengthen working linkages between farmers and the LGU, NGOs and technical facilitators
- promote sharing of new technologies, information, ideas and experiences about sustainable agriculture and natural resources management among Landcare groups and members
- facilitate collective efforts in activities – which cannot be carried out at household level (eg communal nurseries)
- assist in the marketing of agroforestry-derived products of the members, and to develop links to studies on agroforestry-based farming

Constraints addressed

Major	Specification	Treatment
Legal	Insecurity of land tenure – since some land is classified as forest land and belongs to the government.	Speed up the land reclassification and land registration program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).
Financial	Insufficient capital.	Members of Landcare are recommended to lending institutions for production loans.
Minor	Specification	Treatment
Technical	Insufficient knowledge by farmers about land and animal husbandry.	Farmer training and cross visits to nearby farmers.

Participation and decision making

Target groups



Land users



SWC specialists/
extensionists



Planners



Approach costs met by:

International NGOs	20%
Community/local	80%
	100%

Decisions on choice of the technology: Made by land users supported by SWC specialists.

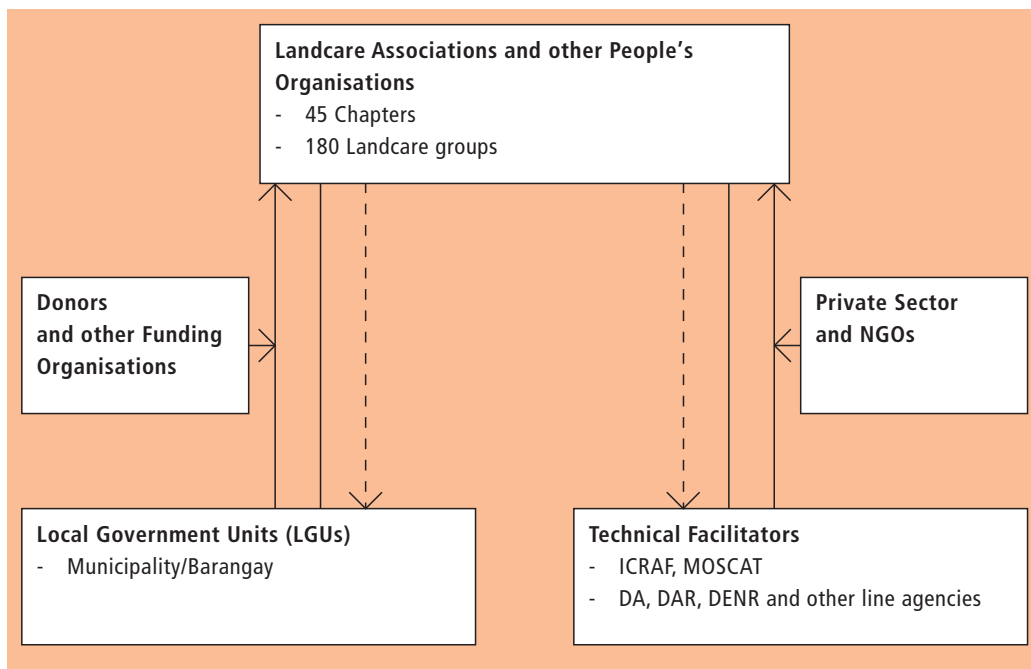
Decisions on method of implementing the technology: Made by land users supported by SWC specialists through the Landcare associations.

Approach designed by: National specialists, international specialists and land users. ICRAF facilitated the organisation of farmers. Specialists established the linkage between Landcare and LGUs/NGOs.

Community involvement

Initiation	self-mobilisation, interactive	public meetings, rapid/participatory rural appraisal, workshops/seminars
Planning	interactive	public meetings, rapid/participatory rural appraisal, workshops/seminars
Implementation	self-mobilisation	organisation of major and minor activities: coordination of casual labour
Monitoring/evaluation	interactive	measurements/observations, public meetings, interviews/questionnaires
Research	interactive	on-farm research (supported by LGU, academics, ICRAF)

Differences in participation between men and women: Men attend public meetings and make the major decisions regarding field activities. Women carry out home-related/domestic tasks.



Organogram

The diagram demonstrates the collaboration, complementarity, interdependence and synergism between the actors.

Explanations:

—> Support (technical, financial, policy)

- -> Demands, requests, feedback

ICRAF: International Centre for Research in Agroforestry
 MOSCAT: Misamis Oriental State College of Agriculture and Technology.

DA: Dept. of Agriculture

DAR: Dept. of Agrarian Reform

DENR: Department of Environment and Natural Resources

(Jose Rondal)

Extension and promotion

Training: Training (by LGU, ICRAF, academics) is given to land users, extension workers/trainers, and SWC specialists (at different levels) in tree nursery establishment and seeding, soil sampling and soil fertility assessment, layout of contours for natural vegetative strips, and pest and disease control in the farm. This has been through on-the-job training, while also using farm visits and specific demonstration areas. The training has generally been effective; in the case of SWC specialists it has been 'excellent'.

Extension: The key elements of extension are 'training and visit', formation of Landcare groups and technical backstopping to these groups. Some farmers are trained and used as extension agents, especially for layout of contour lines. The extension service of the government is now carried out through the LGUs. Its functioning is adequate, but most of the staff tend to be poorly motivated and are lacking in direction. Planning is still 'top-down' from national/regional level. Activities and projects are target driven and set by the national/regional office. The effectiveness of extension on farm management, however, is good.

Research: On-farm research on sociology and technology is an important part of the overall approach. ICRAF has been conducting research in the area on SWC for more than ten years. This includes understanding the biophysical and socio-economic factors that influence adoption or non-adoption of SWC technologies. The effectiveness of the applied research is considerable. Research results are fed back to the Landcare groups to meet their needs. Farmers accept or reject technologies on the basis of joint evaluation.

Importance of land use rights: Ownership rights have helped implementation of the approach. Land tenure is still an important factor in adoption of SWC technology.

Incentives

Labour: There has been no payment for the labour involved in SWC activities under the approach. Voluntary labour by land users includes that for land preparation, laying out contours and maintenance of contour strips.

Inputs: Coffee and tree seedlings, seeds and fertilizers and breeding animals have been provided to some farmers.

Credit: There has been no credit provided directly for SWC activities (some land users may have obtained credit but not directly for SWC activities, although SWC practitioners were given preference for loans for fertilizers, seeds – see comment below).

Support to local institutions: Landcare is very supportive to local institutions, and to SWC activities in general. The local government enacts laws to support SWC implementation. Among the incentives are endorsement to lending institutions for production loans, tax credit and, in some cases, the provision of seeds, fertilizer and breeding animals to the land users.

Long-term impact of incentives: The impact of incentives has still to be reviewed and evaluated. Although incentives certainly hasten the adoption of SWC technologies, in some cases interest is not sustained once these incentives are discontinued. There should perhaps be some system of preferential assistance to those who adopt technologies without incentives.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitored aspects	Methods and indicators
Bio-physical	regular observations of improvement in crop yield
No. of land users involved	regular measurements of numbers of groups and farmers under Landcare

Impacts of the approach

Changes as result of monitoring and evaluation: There have been no significant changes in the approach itself due to monitoring and evaluation.

Improved soil and water management: The approach has greatly helped land users in the implementation of soil and water management technologies. Farmers now adopt 'natural vegetative strips' (NVS). Large farms (> 3 ha) have generally evolved into commercial production of tree crops (coffee) and trees (timber).

Adoption of the approach by other projects/land users: Many other NGOs, local government units (LGUs) and line agencies have adopted – and further adapted – the Landcare approach in their respective areas. The approach has been proven effective and it is now being looked upon as a model for the implementation of SWC and other related activities, particularly in Mindanao.

Sustainability: Landcare has become an integral part of civil organisation. It is characterised by a triangular relationship between grass-roots organisations (farmers), local government units (LGUs), and technical facilitators. The financial resources required for this approach are embedded in the regular budget of the municipality or *barangay*. The LGUs (politicians) consider Landcare groups as political voting blocks: if they are to stay in politics, they are obliged to sustain Landcare. The Landcare groups have learnt to demand technical backstopping, financial support and policy support from line agencies such as the Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment and Natural Resources – and LGUs.

Concluding statements

Strengths and → how to sustain/improve

Promotes rapid adoption of SWC technologies. Provides easy and fast access/implementation of SWC technologies → Encourage meetings and cross-visits between Landcare groups to share knowledge, ideas and experience. Encourage Landcare members to participate in information and education campaigns.

Encourages farmers to gain access to services and financial support from LGU, technical facilitators and service providers → Promote strong leadership among Landcare groups. Encourage Landcare groups to be very open in requesting financial and technical assistance.

Provides a vehicle for participatory research and technical interventions and ensures that newly-developed technologies are appropriate → Encourage expression of needs by different Landcare groups.

Makes extension activities cost-effective → Encourage farmer-to-farmer transfer of technology. LGUs to share the cost of technology transfer.

Ensures sustainability of actions → Continue to strengthen Landcare groups. Develop leadership skills.

Promotes social integration and addresses other social issues which are beyond individual household capacity to solve (burials, weddings, etc) → Encourage regular meeting and conduct activities to enhance social integration.

Makes farm work easier → Encourage workgroups.

Weaknesses and → how to overcome

Over-emphasis of political patronage by some LGUs alienates people of different orientation/background → Encourage more transparent government at LGU and particularly at barangay level.

Some farmers join Landcare expecting handouts or grants → Project objectives and strategies should be explicitly explained to farmers.

Lack of leadership and organisation skills of some Landcare leaders, who are unable to guide groups into cohesive, dynamic organisation. It takes time to get consensus and to make them work together → Landcare group leaders need to be better trained in leadership skills group facilitation and participation.

Over-reliance on ICRAF for technical innovation → Encourage farmers to conduct farmer level experimentation.

Participation entails time away from farm work → Meetings and discussions should be scheduled during evenings or holidays.

Individual problems not easily addressed, as few members are frank and open → Encourage everybody to share their problems and concerns.

Key reference(s): Mercado Jr A, Patindol M and Garrity DP (2001) The Landcare experience in the Philippines: technical and institutional innovations for conservation farming. *Development in Practice*, Vol. 11, No. 4

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