

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. The Problem

The issue of scaling up successful local-level conservation programs in developing countries has recently gained attention based on the argument that they should be scaled up to a level that generates larger economic and environmental benefits more rapidly. It is recognised that effective scaling up efforts are urgently needed to relieve food insecurity and environmental stress (IIRR 2000). This has entered the thinking of a wide range of stakeholders as one of the important contemporary challenges in rural development and natural resource management. This thesis examines the issue of scaling up in the context of the Philippines.

More than 50 per cent of the Philippines is classified as upland areas, defined as landscapes with dominant slopes equal to or greater than 18 per cent (Cruz & Cruz 1990). Upland populations rely almost exclusively on agricultural production and gathering of forest products and are subsistence-oriented (Coxhead & Buenavista 2001). Soil degradation and loss of biological diversity are prevailing environmental issues associated with current agricultural development in the uplands (Sajise & Ganapin 1990). Technical solutions are available to address soil degradation problems, but farmer adoption of these technologies has been limited due to various factors, including their inability to invest in conservation innovations, inadequate institutional structures for facilitating information flow, and insecurity of property rights (Arcenas 2002). Cramb (2000c), in a socioeconomic evaluation of soil conservation technologies, adds that fine-tuning the technical solutions to soil degradation is dwarfed by larger problems of regional political ecology, hence the obstacles to widespread promotion of good practices or innovations are formidable. This situation, however, is not unique to the Philippines. In the developing world in general, factors constraining adoption and spread of appropriate conservation technologies are complex, confronting problematic political and economic issues (Blaikie 1985). Thus successful pilot projects “which do not test the implementing capacity of government

institutions nor involve themselves in large-scale politically sensitive issues” are typically not replicable on a scale that matters (Blaikie 1985 p. 4).

The Philippines is one country in Southeast Asia that has received large investments for experimentation and innovation in upland natural resource management (NRM) (Scherr et al. 2001). Government decentralisation, the growing movement of non-government organisations (NGOs), and the influx of donor assistance have intersected to encourage widespread implementation of NRM initiatives (Scherr et al. 2001). However, even if programs and legislation are in place, implementation problems persist (Gollin & Kho 2002; Scherr et al. 2001), and successful projects have hardly endured to deliver impacts beyond the project life. In a review of Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) in the Philippines, Gollin & Kho (2002) found that the bigger constraint to sustainability and scaling up was the inadequate translation of progressive policies and successful programs into broader improvement of livelihoods of rural people and the environment. This is aggravated by lack of capacity to deliver effective extension in rural areas. Bingswanger & Aiyar (2003), in a review of Community Driven Development (CDD) initiatives, found that the reason for poor spread of local success was that local organisations and supporting institutions (e.g., NGOs) lacked the capacity to scale up and governments did not support scaling up efforts.

Scaling up is a complex process, and many ideas have been used to describe it (Uvin & Miller 1994). Many see it as a process characterised by an explicit objective of providing services of national or regional scope, while others see it as a planned expansion, or a natural program evolution (Advance Africa 2004). In some situations, successful local programs scale up spontaneously as they grow to accommodate increasing demands (IIRR 2000). However, the current notion of scaling up denotes a purposeful approach designed to cover more people, over much wider areas, and more rapidly than the normal process of expansion. This implies that scaling up should be facilitated, and should be more predictable (Advance Africa 2004). However, scaling up conservation programs is challenged with the diversity and complexity of local conditions. As a social process, it is confronted with issues of participation and competing values. There is also a concern that successful local programs are scaled up as prototypes and implemented without regard for

local demand (Malvicini & Jackson 2000). Thus scaling up issues need to be addressed in pre-project and implementation phases, requiring detailed planning and coordination of multiple actors (Gundel et al. 2001). While there have been several case studies of scaling up NRM programs, there is a general paucity of research and more work is needed to understand better the process of scaling up and to assess the effectiveness of scaling up approaches (Franzel et al. 2002).

1.2. Aim and Focus of the Study

The aim of this study was to improve our understanding of the process of scaling up successful local-level NRM initiatives so as to be better able to plan and implement scaling up interventions. To address this aim, a case study was undertaken of the Landcare Program, a grassroots NRM initiative in the Municipality of Claveria that was scaled up to various other municipalities in the southern Philippines.

Landcare developed in the mid-1980s in Australia and in the mid-1990s in the Philippines as an approach for mobilising collective action by local communities to deal with land degradation and resource management issues. The landcare approach centres on formation of community landcare groups supported to varying degrees through partnerships with government and non-government agencies (Cramb & Culasero 2003). Community landcare groups work together to identify problems and mobilise resources to solve them.

In Australia, a range of different ideas is attached to Landcare as it has become a pervasive term among those who are interested in dealing with land degradation issues. It epitomises both a government program and a national movement, but the most important dimension is the community landcare group, referring to people who come together to “do something positive for the long-term health of the land” (Campbell 1994 p. 31; Cary & Webb 2000). Community landcare groups are linked to influence resource policy and, with strong federal government support, Landcare has been recognised as a model for tackling land management issues across Australia.

In the Philippines, Landcare developed quite independently of the Australian model as a grassroots initiative based on a three-way partnership of farmers, local government units (LGU), and the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF).¹ This grew out of efforts to disseminate soil and water conservation technologies in Claveria, Misamis Oriental, where soil erosion and low production were the major issues. The Claveria Landcare Program focuses on promotion of conservation farming practices for improved agricultural production and NRM. It involves training, farmer-to-farmer extension, facilitation, and networking. This resulted in rapid adoption of conservation technologies and agroforestry practices, and as a consequence has been scaled up to various sites in northern Mindanao. The rapid growth of landcare groups, their diversification into a range of other activities, including participation in municipal NRM planning, and the development of municipal Landcare Federations influencing watershed and protected area management, has sparked widespread interest regionally and nationally, and has also generated much interest globally (Garritty 2000).

The apparent success of the Landcare Program in northern Mindanao raises the possibility of further scaling up. In addressing this issue, it was important to understand how the Landcare Program had worked at the local level, and how it might work on a much broader scale, considering the great diversity in farming systems and in socio-economic, political, and institutional environments in the Philippines. The study, therefore, focused on three major objectives:

1. To understand why the Landcare Program has been successful in the original site;
2. To determine how the Landcare Program has been scaled up to other sites; and
3. To investigate how the Landcare Program could be enabled to work on a much broader scale.

¹ The World Agroforestry Centre, formerly the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) facilitated the development of the Landcare Program in the Philippines. For brevity of discussion, the acronym “ICRAF” was used throughout this thesis.

1.3. The Approach

This study was approached from an actor-oriented perspective, in which scaling up is viewed as a social process. The actor-oriented approach recognises the central role of various social actors and their different perspectives, and that emphasises the dynamic interaction between internal and external factors in any process of social change. A case study design was used to address the objectives of the study. This involved four embedded cases, comprising the original site and three scaling up sites.

The first objective of the study was addressed by analysing the development of the Landcare Program in Claveria. This involved documenting the evolution of the landcare approach, including the activities and impacts, the roles and perspectives of different actors, the resources used, and the factors that promoted or constrained success.

The second objective was addressed by examining the implementation of the Landcare Program in three scaling up sites in relation to the original site. This examination was based on two key questions: (1) How did the implementation of the Landcare Program in scaling up sites compare with the original site? (2) What conditions enhanced or limited scaling up efforts in the study sites? Specifically, the case studies focused on the modes of scaling up, the activities and outcomes, and resources used. The factors that enhanced or limited the success of the Landcare Program at each site were analysed and similarities and differences were identified across sites. The preconditions for effective scaling up were generalised from these cases.

The last objective of the study was addressed by generalising the four cases based on two questions: (1) What are the key factors in planning a scaling up intervention? (2) What are the potential modes of scaling up, and the conditions that would enable the rapid scaling up of the Landcare Program beyond northern Mindanao? Building on the analyses of the four cases, a conceptual framework of the interplay of key factors in a scaling up process was developed to guide the planning of a scaling up intervention. The potential modes of scaling up and the elements of an enabling environment that would promote the rapid scaling up of the Landcare Program were also examined.

The case studies were based on a variety of quantitative and qualitative data derived from documentary sources, key informants, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation. My previous involvement in the Landcare Program in the Philippines, was an advantage in analysing the cases in more depth, and contributed to the confidence in the conclusions made.

1.4. Overview

This thesis consists of eleven chapters organised into four main parts. The first part reviews the literature, describes the background, and details the methods of the study. The second, third, and fourth parts of the thesis, successively address the three objectives of the study.

The first part of the thesis includes Chapters 2 to 4. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature, including a discussion of the actor-oriented paradigm, the evolution of rural development strategies, the concepts of scaling up, and lessons learned from other cases. Chapter 3 provides a review of the context of Landcare in the Philippines. Chapter 4 describes the research design and methodological approach.

Chapter 5 constitutes the second part, which addresses the first objective of the study. It provides a detailed description of the evolution of the Landcare Program in Claveria, including the activities and impacts, management, and costs of implementation, concluding with a discussion of actors' perspectives of the benefits and success factors.

The third part of the thesis, comprising Chapters 6 to 9, addresses the second objective of the study, regarding the process of scaling up the Landcare Program to three other sites. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 describe the development of the Landcare Program in each site, emphasising the modes of scaling up employed, the activities and impacts, and actors' perspectives. Chapter 9 presents a cross-case analysis of all four cases. The enhancing and limiting factors to success were identified, and broad generalisation of the preconditions for successful scaling up was made.

Chapter 10 constitutes the fourth section of the thesis and addresses the third objective of the study. It presents a conceptual framework of four key factors in the scaling up process, the alternative modes of scaling up, and the enabling environment needed to promote scaling up on a much broader scale.

Chapter 11 summarises the key findings of the study with a discussion of implications and concluding comments.