

Chapter 11

Conclusion

Overview of the Study

Scaling up successful local initiatives in natural resources management (NRM) has gained the attention of a wide range of stakeholders because of the demand to increase their impacts more rapidly over wider geographic areas. Many of these initiatives have not been scaled up beyond their limited domain. Scaling up is a complex process requiring different strategies and participation of multiple actors. This study has sought to improve our understanding of the process of scaling up local-level NRM programs so as to be able to plan and implement scaling up interventions better. To address this aim, the scaling up of the Landcare Program, a grassroots NRM initiative in the southern Philippines, was investigated.

This study was approached from an actor-oriented perspective, one that 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. Multiple case studies were used, including Claveria, the original Landcare site, and three scaling up sites, namely, Lantapan, Malitbog, and Manolo Fortich, all in northern Mindanao. The scaling up sites were selected because each one represents a certain mode of scaling up, characterised by the varying levels of institutional and technical support from ICRAF, the level of local government support, the entry points and strategies used, and the nature of activities involved. The Claveria site was analysed as a prelude case, to understand why the Landcare Program was successful in the original site. The other three cases helped to understand how the Landcare Program has been scaled up to other sites. To investigate how the Landcare Program could be scaled up more widely, the cases were generalised with reference to the broader Philippine context.

While drawing on multiple perspectives of Landcare, to explicate the ways in which different actors viewed their involvement, at the same time, attention was given to documenting the “objective reality” of program implementation in terms of the resources

used, the activities undertaken, and the outcomes achieved. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used. Triangulation of data sources and methods was employed to establish the chain of evidence. My previous involvement in the Landcare Program was an advantage in analysing the case in more depth, although maintaining a balanced perspective was challenging. My involvement in the discussion of issues of scaling up at the international level and my knowledge of other scaling up cases also enriched the analysis of the present case study. The ICRAF database and project documents were rich sources of evidence of the case study, although some limitations in the data were also noted, i.e., lack of precise data on potential adopters and potential area to be applied with conservation technologies, and lack of complete assessment of NRM and economic impacts. Nonetheless, the study provided substantial evidence, and my previous knowledge of the case contributed to the confidence in the conclusions made.

Key Findings

The first objective of this study was to understand why the Landcare Program was successful in Claveria, the original site. The landcare approach was conceptualised by the key actors as it evolved in Claveria. It was a working concept that reflected the current themes of rural development, with emphasis on farmer involvement and multi-stakeholder partnerships. It exemplified a process in which different actors were interacting, negotiating, and sharing resources to achieve a common purpose. As a technology dissemination process, it was in line with the “innovations systems model”, where the actors influence the generation and diffusion of innovations, the objectives and strategies are flexible, and learning takes place along the way.

The Landcare Program worked well in Claveria because of a favourable environment, in which locally adapted technologies had emerged, the political situation was stable and local government support was consistent, ICRAF provided longer-term facilitation and technical support, and there was a sufficient level of human and social capital between and among the actors involved. Landcare had broad relevance in Claveria, addressing issues of community participation, environmental governance, agricultural production, and NRM. Different actors held multiple perspectives about Landcare, reflecting their individual interests and their location in society. Nonetheless, they all agreed on the broader impacts

of the Landcare Program on the larger community. The landcare approach was effective in terms of promoting technology adoption and building institutions and partnerships. The rate of technology adoption was unprecedented in Claveria. Other impacts were also significant, including the involvement of farmers in various activities such as marketing of tree seedlings, networking, policy advocacy, training and research, and water quality monitoring. As an approach, Landcare was found to be affordable, with investments directed to training and capability building of farmers, and the actors involved sharing the costs. The local government thus had the resources to implement a Landcare Program, but needed assistance in training the technicians in new technologies and facilitation skills. Despite this, however, local government officials maintained the need for an on-going partnership with ICRAF and other actors to effectively implement the Landcare Program. Broadly speaking, the Claveria case indicated the potential for Landcare to be scaled up over wider areas with shared problems and conditions.

The second objective of this study was to determine how the Landcare Program was scaled up to other sites. The Landcare Program was scaled up in multiple sites, with different modes of scaling up to adapt to local situations, characterised by differing levels of technical and institutional support from ICRAF, varying levels of funding and involvement of the local government, different entry points and strategies, and different suites of activities. The Landcare Program was scaled up based on the broad relevance of the landcare approach, but local demand and specific conditions were considered. For ICRAF's part, scaling up Landcare was possible with fewer external inputs than was provided in Claveria. The outcomes varied due to varying levels of support provided by ICRAF and prevailing political, economic, socio-cultural, and institutional factors unique to each site. In some cases, local government support was strong, and in others, it was vacillating or absent. Nonetheless, the overall outcomes were substantial relative to the investments made, as seen in the improvement in human and social capital for farmers to adopt conservation technologies and agroforestry practices. In particular, the rapid rate of adoption of NVS, seedling production, and tree planting, and subsequent elaboration to more complex agroforestry systems, and involvement of farmers in community-based environmental projects, capacity building and livelihood activities were seen as key Landcare outcomes.

The scaling up process was relatively simple in its general outlines, but adaptation to each site was more challenging. Some characteristics of the Landcare Program inherently favoured scaling up, namely flexibility, effectiveness, relevance, and relative affordability. However, the scaling up process did not come easily. In adopting the Landcare Program in various sites, some characteristics that made it distinctively successful in the original site were relegated. Essentially, the landcare approach was modified as it was adopted in each local situation. Hence Landcare could only be partially scaled up where the conditions of the original site were not fully replicated. Some factors that enhanced or limited the success of Landcare were site specific, but the most common factors were (1) the local context, characterised by the economic, political, and institutional conditions of the area, (2) the broad relevance of Landcare, (3) ICRAF's capacity to scale up the program, and (4) the implementation strategies employed.

Some broad generalisations were made regarding the preconditions for effective scaling up. Efforts to scale up the Landcare Program are likely to succeed when (1) a set of widely adoptable technologies are available and promoted; (2) farmers are focused on farming and freed of the adverse effects of uneven rural development; (3) the political environment is stable and local government is able to provide consistent support; (4) a committed and competent agency is able to provide technical assistance and facilitation; (5) an initial level of human and social capital or social bonding is present; and (6) training, communication and facilitation are provided. The relative importance of each precondition depends on local realities, but these preconditions could be used as an initial set of criteria to identify potential sites. In addition, these preconditions could be utilised for benchmarking the selected sites as part of the process of planning the scaling up of Landcare.

The third objective of this study was to investigate how the Landcare Program could be enabled to scale up on a much broader scale. The apparent success of the Landcare Program in northern Mindanao raises the prospect of further scaling up. However, the greater challenge in further scaling up would be to replicate the conditions that made the Landcare Program work in northern Mindanao. It appears that scaling up the Landcare Program requires a similar mechanism to that provided in northern Mindanao, namely, the facilitating role of ICRAF as the "sponsoring agency" or "initiating actor", but since

ICRAF has geographic limitations, the degree to which it sponsored scaling up efforts in northern Mindanao is unlikely to be replicated. Hence, scaling up beyond this point would require another sponsoring agency that is similarly competent and committed to create a new node of diffusion for the Landcare Program. This would be an important requirement for scaling up the Landcare Program more widely.

An enabling environment is desirable to promote broader scaling up at the national level, but in the absence of such an enabling environment, there is potential for the Landcare Program to be scaled up with different modes and greater involvement of multiple actors. Hence different modes of scaling up, characterised by the “initiating actor” were identified. The initiating actor plays the role of a sponsoring agency, but partnerships or coalitions with other actors remain central and should be continually sought.

The problem with scaling up is that sponsoring agencies have a “universalist” view of the relevance of the scaled up program to wider areas, undermining local contextual differences. Often the desire to increase impacts through scaling up behoves the sponsoring agency to scale up programs without regard for local demand. The conceptual framework of four key factors--the characteristics of the scaled-up program--the local context--institutional capacity to scale up the program-- implementation strategies, addresses this issue. The analysis of the interplay of these factors and their essential fit in the scaling up process provides a balanced treatment of the universalist and contextualist perspectives. The framework helps to determine the mode of scaling up that is appropriate for a particular situation, and improves the process of planning a scaling up intervention. The success of a scaling up process is likely to be a function of the interaction and complementary fit of the four key factors.

Concluding Comments

The complexity of the social arena in sustainable agriculture and NRM extension makes scaling up local-level initiatives challenging. Scaling up Landcare within and beyond northern Mindanao requires flexible strategies and appropriate modes, and a competent agency that is committed to scaling up efforts. Broader policy support is needed to achieve a national scaling up process. However, the absence of consistent support from national or

local government requires a different scaling up strategy. A regional approach, in which the Landcare Program is developed at the regional level by a committed sponsoring agency, may be a viable alternative scaling up strategy. This would make the scaling up process more dynamic, engendering greater participation of multiple actors, and building a critical mass through horizontal spread or “scaling out”. However, ICRAF might be needed to facilitate this process until the Landcare Program is able to take root in different regions. Thus the success of scaling up the Landcare Program on a much broader scale is likely to be related to the commitment and resources available to ICRAF and its partners, or some new agencies to continue supporting this process.

Scaling up the Landcare Program needs to be carefully planned by the key actors. The planning process would involve three major elements or steps: (1) identification of potential sites using the preconditions as an initial set of criteria; (2) analysis of the interaction of the four key factors in scaling up; and (3) identification of a preferred mode of scaling up. The analysis of four key factors should provide substantial input into a well crafted scaling up plan for the Landcare Program. A better understanding of the application of this framework would address the potential problems of scaling up at the planning stage, thus increasing the likelihood of success or reducing the risk of failure in scaling up sites.

Because of the diversity and complexity of different situations in various Philippine locations, it is not possible to prescribe a single strategy or framework for scaling up the Landcare Program. Instead, a general process has been conceptualised to develop an appropriate scaling up plan to improve the effectiveness of efforts to scale up. This would make the scaling up process more purposeful, where the pre-requisites are addressed at the pre-implementation phase. This process could be applicable to the scaling up of other local-level NRM initiatives. The effectiveness of this process in other contexts constitutes a research agenda for the future.