Landcare Philippines: What Lessons for Africa?

Joseph Tanui
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1.0 Introduction

The persistent high rates of poverty, food insecurity and declining per capita agricultural productivity in Sub Saharan Africa is a matter of great concern amongst researchers, practitioners and policy makers. Further, attention is being focused on formidable natural resource management problems deemed both as part of the cause and consequences of these ills. Though considerable effort, time and resources over the past decade has been spent in developing farm technologies and natural resource management practices to break the vicious circle of poverty; this has not yielded the expected results. The poor than expected results stems from the low rates of diffusion and adoption of improved agricultural technologies and natural resource management practices. Thus the efforts do not facilitate the required intensification to merit increased agricultural productivity, food security and rural incomes.

It is evident that there are major methodological, process and policy hurdles to be overcome in making integrated natural resource management effective in alleviating rural poverty while safeguarding the environment in the African small-scale farming context. As such in looking for prescriptions for sustainable rural development, there is increased focus on evolving demand-driven, community based approaches to natural resource management, in which those that occupy the land actively participate in management and sustainable utilization of their natural resources.

An evaluation of the conventional extension approaches that have focused primarily on the individual or household level interaction between the extension officers and the farmer has not only been expensive in terms of resources required to make it operational but also delivered little due to its top to bottom approach. Over the last decade, a growing number of organisations and institutions have experimented with promoting the members of the rural community—rather than professional extension agents and researchers—as the principal agents of change. This is based on a voluntary mechanism with few farmer-led extension systems being sponsored by government and non-governmental agencies. The development of a farmer-led approach to technology development and dissemination as exemplified by the Landcare approach in Philippines has resulted in an unexpected boost in farmer adoption of soil and water conservation technology and agroforestry.

Similarities abound between South East Asia and Africa. Both regions are characterized by enormous variability in topography, climate and cultures. This variability in conditions leads to a high degree of uncertainty on approaches for addressing community level issues. In both the African and Philippine set up there is clear evidence of traditional collective action. The different ethnic groups in Central Kenya, Western, Coast and the Rift valley have different names for activities undertaken at community level; this is what gave birth to the spirit of “Harambee”. In Kabale District of Uganda this self-help initiative is termed “Bulungi bwansi”. The traditional community approach is also evident in the Philippine’s Bayanihan or

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1 See Overseas Development Institute, 1997 as quoted in: Enhancing Farmer adoption of simple conservation practices: Landcare in the Philippines: Delia et al
3 See Inculcating Landcare principles in community conservation (Tanui, 2003)
Pahina systems, which are farmer group works based on voluntary work contribution for a common benefit.

In this two regions sloping areas are used extensively for agricultural production, which has resulted in negative impacts such as land degradation through accelerated soil erosion, siltation/sedimentation of rivers and dams, floods during the wet season, drought in the dry seasons, mining of valuable biodiversity encroachment into forest areas, consequent shortage of wood and other forest products. The resulting situation further aggravates the plight of the small-scale farmers both in the uplands and lowlands who have seen their options and hopes for a dignified livelihood dwindle with time.

The African Grassroots Innovations for Livelihood and Environment (AGILE) is an approach to Landcare whose objective is to customize collective action for natural resource management (NRM) in selected sites in East Africa and Ethiopia, and which will act as pilot areas for out scaling once the lessons are learned and experiences shared. These activities have been funded through the able assistance of the Government of Italy and implemented by the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), the African Highlands Initiative (AHI), and partners.

One of the activities in AGILE is to tap from experiences already gained by ICRAF through working with Landcare groups in the Philippines over a ten year period and where currently a dynamic voluntary movement with more than 5000 farmers involved in 250 groups from five municipalities, in the northern, central and eastern Mindanao. AGILE, which draws on Knowledge of African institutions, technologies and enabling policies hopes to integrate this experience into the Sub Saharan Africa setting.

This report presents a culmination of one of the activities, a field trip to the island of Mindanao in the Philippines and more specifically interactions with the Landcare community in Claveria Misamis oriental and Lantapan. The country visit was geared towards understanding of the Landcare concept and ethic; it's practice in the Philippines and the possible collection of various issue based best practice case studies. This is primarily directed at building a body of knowledge on Landcare movement as practiced in other parts of the world (in this case the Philippines), and which would therefore inform and guide the process of stimulating and facilitating Landcare in sub Saharan Africa. In order to achieve this the visit sought to first understand the farmers and the community to which they belonged, the farming systems and general understanding of the Landcare ethic and concept. Further, it looked at the set up of the Landcare concept, community involvement and resource contribution, their group dynamics and resultant outputs. It sought to understand the facilitative role of the world Agroforestry Centre and the partnerships involved.

This field report briefly introduces the current general status of small scale farming in Sub Saharan Africa. It argues for the need for collective action and introduces the Landcare approach as practiced in the Philippines, as a case study to draw lessons

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4 See (Delia Catactan, 2001)
5 Landcare is a participatory community-based approach and grounded model, designed to effect change in complex and diverse situations (Swete-Kelly, 1998). It is a method to rapidly and inexpensively diffuses agroforestry practices among upland farmers. It is based on the farmers' innate
from, in the effort of improving the situation of small-scale agriculture and natural resource management in selected sites of East Africa and Ethiopia. The second section in the field report details the objectives for the field visit, and issues to look out for during the visit that is pertinent to the situation in East Africa. The third is a summarised general description of Lantapan Bukidnon and Claveria Misamis Oriental region of Mindanao Island, the people and their livelihood activities. In the fourth section a description of the Landcare approach as practised in Lantapan and Claveria is presented. Specific cases and visits are narrated in boxes and inferred to when describing the Landcare activities. Section five is a presentation of stand out issues and their relevance and application to the East African situation. The report concludes in section six with a recount of lessons learned and suggestions.

2.0 The Philippine Landcare experience
The visit involved a week’s travel through Lantapan and Claveria in Mindanao Island of the Philippines. This included farm visits, individual farmer and group interviews, and meeting with the ICRAF staff. It also involved meeting with local government leaders, government extension staff and other Landcare partners mainly from Non-governmental organisations, community based organisations, and church based organisations. Specifically the visit hoped to assess the level of knowledge among the actors in Landcare, the structure and mode of collective action and the nature of involvement of government agencies and other institutions.

2.1 Study framework

Figure 1: Triadic nature of Landcare.

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interest in learning and sharing knowledge about new technologies that earn more money and conserve natural resources (Garry and Mercado, 1998).
The visit endeavoured to explore the facets of Landcare as understood and practised in Lantapan and Claveria. Ideally insights gained from already existing Landcare movements, would assist in determining the intervention areas within our local landscapes in Africa and more specifically in our focus area. The processes of facilitating a feasible Landcare movement within the sub-Saharan Africa as indicated by the preliminary studies undertaken by AGILE\(^6\), need to consider the involvement of various stakeholders. There was need to understand the interaction between the various components depicted in figure 1. The outer (blue boxes) enjoined by arrows to form a triad, depict the elements of the Landcare approach. As illustrated the facilitators influence individual farmers, farmer groups, and are in partnership with other institutions in various aspects of community livelihood. The involvement of the local government and the central government in conservation and livelihood issues is also an important element in the process. Among the questions that needed answers included the functions of the various components of Landcare and their interrelationships. The field visits endeavoured to gather information through specific interviews and also through reports and case studies already documented by the stakeholders in Mindanao.

3.0 General description of the Study area

3.1 Lantapan – Bukidnon

From the airport at Cagayan de Oro city, one and a half hour’s drive on tarmac towards the mountain ranges is Malaybalay town. A further drive on a rough road, 25 kilometres south of Malaybalay, and an incline towards Mt. Kitanglad is Lantapan.

3.1.1 History and geographical location of Lantapan

Lantapan is part of the province of Bukidnon of Mindanao Island, South of the Philippines Archipelago. Bukidnon is an elevated, land-locked area occupying more than 829,380 hectares, making it the eighth largest province in Philippines. It contains the headwaters of six major rivers: Tagoloan, Cagayan, Agusan-Cugman, Davao-Salug, Pulangui (Upper and lower) and Maridugao rivers. Discharge from these river systems drains into 3 cities (Butuan City, Davao City and Cagayan de Oro City). Lantapan was formerly a barrio of Malaybalay, but under the Republic Act No. 4787, Lantapan became a regular municipality on June 1967. In terms of ethnicity the Talaandig were the main inhabitants of Lantapan, then migrants from Visayas and Northern Luzon started to settle during the colonial period. There was more inflow after the Second World War, and this has led to the varied mix of ethnic groups in Lantapan.

3.1.2 Topography, and climate of Lantapan

Lantapan has an elevation of 600 meters above sea level and a maximum of 2938 meters of the Kitanglad range. Its slope is characterized by slight to moderately rolling terrain and hills, where about 70% of the total land area has slopes greater than 18%. The soils are classified first class, suitable for agriculture with aduyuan 50%, Kidapawan clay 24% and undifferentiated mountain soil 26%. Lantapan, which is endowed with rich agricultural and forestlands, has an aggregate land area of

\(^6\) See the three institutional studies conducted under AGILE for Uganda-four districts (Johnson 2003); Western Kenya-four districts (Mango 2003) Mt Kenya region-four districts (Tanui 2003);

\(^7\) See ICRAF – Lantapan leaflet 2003
32970.8926 hectares. It represents 3.9% of Bukidnon’s total land area. Lantapan has a relatively cool and humid climate with winds blowing northward direction. Lantapan has an agro-based economy mainly producing corn, coffee and sugarcane. Cabbage and potatoes are also expansively cultivated in the upper zones. Export quality bananas is also becoming an important commercial crop in the lowlands. The forestlands constitute approximately 40% of the municipal land area with Barangay Basak having the largest share. This forested are limited to high steep slopes with elevation greater than 1800 meters above sea level.

3.1.3 Lantapan Population, commercial and political perspective
Lantapan comprises 14 barangays, 68 sitios and 89 puroks. The population of Lantapan based on the 1995 censuses is 36,943 and projected to be growing at an annual rate of 1.8%. The main trading activities in Lantapan include wholesale buying of corn, coffee and vegetables by traders from within Lantapan and neighbouring towns in Bukidnon, and Cagayan de Oro city.

3.2 Claveria Misamis Oriental
From Lantapan, next to be visited was Claveria, which is situated 42 kilometers northeast of Cagayan de Oro City. It is the provincial city of Misamis Oriental and was the first ICRAF-Philippines research site having started research activities in 1993.

3.2.1 History and geographical location of Claveria
Claveria has a total land area of 82,500 hectares and is the biggest among the 24 municipalities of Misamis Oriental. 57% of the area is classified as forestland. In the post World War 2 to the mid 60’s much of Claveria’s large holdings were used as grazing land; the dominant grass species is Imperata. The late 1960’s to early 1980s saw increased crop production of cereals (rice and maize), banana, cassava, vegetables, fruit trees, timber trees, coffee and cacao in lower Claveria (below 600 metres above sea level) while upper Claveria (600-1200 metres above sea level) saw the increase in vegetables (especially tomatoes), fruit trees, timber trees, coconut, coffee and cacao. Upper Claveria experienced more intensive farming. The ethnic groups in Claveria include migrants from Visayas (Cebu, Bohol), neighbouring coastal towns of Jasan and Villanueva. The indigenous people are the Higa-onons.

3.2.2 Topography, and climate of Claveria
Claveria municipality is a volcanic plateau ascending abruptly from the west about 350 metres above sea level, to about 1200 metres above sea level in the east. It is characterized by rugged terrain, erosion, low temperature, poor soils and sedimentation. The annual rainfall is about 2200 mm this is for a period of 9-10 months, though the rainfall patterns vary with elevation. The soils are Jas-an clay, with low pH (4.2-5.2) and low phosphorous.

3.2.3 Claveria Population, commercial and political perspective
The population of Claveria is 39,000 as per the 1995 census the current annual growth rate is about 4.6%, which is attributed to both natural population and in-migration. The population density is 61 persons /Km². Approximately 79% of the population are

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8 See Claveria Forest Land use plan, 1998
engaged in farming activities while 9% are employed in public and private sector establishments. The rest have no permanent occupation. Commercial opportunities do exist in the trade of minor forest products (rattan, resins, and medicinal plants); others include apiculture, cut flowers, livestock, fruit production high value vegetables and Ecotourism.

4.0 The Landcare Concept and practice in the Philippines

4.1 Introduction
Landcare in Lantapan started in 1999, in a scaling-out process from the activities in initiated in Claveria in 1995. Lantapan currently boasts of more than 50 active groups operating in the entire municipality. During the Claveria visit it was quite evident that majority of the community regarded soil erosion as a serious problem. Most members of the farming community were clearly aware of reasons why they had declining yields with time. They also viewed Landcare as a vehicle for not only addressing their most pressing land degradation problems, but to also propel themselves towards bettering their livelihoods in the process.

4.2 Organizational structure of Municipal Landcare
There are four levels/groups involved in Landcare; among these are farmers, students, religious groups and out-of-school youths.

![Organizational structure diagram]

The village Landcare association is composed of village -level chapters integrated into a municipal –level association. Each village may have its own conservation team, while some villages have organized sub-chapters in Puroks or Sitios (See organization structure below-which gives an example of the organization at the village level.)
Out of the seven Puroks making the Landcare chapter, two of them have junior Landcare groups.

The Purok (Sub-village) conservation team is composed of a technologist, farmers, the Purok leaders and the district councillors. They are expected to be backstopped by the municipal and Barangay conservation team, though I never got evidence to this effect. The Purok conservation team is composed of all interested household members of the Sitio or Purok. The structure illustrated is the vehicle with which the tenets of Landcare are carried out in both the two areas of Claveria and Lantapan. The most touching issue amongst the communities in the two areas is the level of awareness. Most of the farmers were very much informed on the ethics and practice of Landcare. They were also very clear and sure of the constraints that they experienced at the farm and group level. There was still a very big reliance of the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) in terms of facilitation and providing of the lead for Landcare.

4.3 Landcare and technology adoption.

The most obvious practices evident in the sloping lands of both Claveria and Lantapan were the use of natural grass strips within the hillside terraces. ICRAF statistics on adoption based on a study carried out in August of 2002 (see box 1) showed a marked increase of adoption of contour farming amongst the Landcare members. This was attributed to the training and facilitation they received and which enabled them better appreciate their farming systems. It further assisted them to plan and prioritise their activities more clearly.

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9 See study: Adoption of contour farming in Barangay Sungco, Rob Cram and Zorina Culasero.
Box 1

A housed survey was conducted in Barangay Sungco, which is located in the municipality that occupies a transect from the left bank of the Manipal River to the buffer zone of Mt. Kitanglad Natural Park. The survey that was conducted in August of 2002 was made to assess the extent of adoption of advocated technologies and factors associated with the growth of the Landcare approach to environmental conservation. The study involved a stratified random sample of 104 households drawn from all Sitio in the Barangay. Sixty two of the respondents (60%) had adopted contour farming measures which included natural vegetative strips, hedgerows, narrow and broad based terraces) on part or all their farips while forty two respondents (40 %) had not.

The farmers further requested a retinue of technologies especially those that involved conservation farming. They emphasized their preference for conservation farming technologies that resulted in savings through less usage of inputs such as inorganic fertilizers and agrochemicals. Most of the farmers interviewed during the visit ranked training on new technologies as a major benefit from Landcare. Other benefits were the sharing of information and other resources amongst community members, the farming development they achieved, planting of trees and environmental conservation. Some of the constraints cited were lack of participation or cooperation amongst members in the group activities, lack of resources to finance some of the group activities and management problems.
5.0 Examples from the Philippines and emerging issues for Landcare in Africa

5.1 Introduction
Various issues emerged during the visit and which served as examples and lessons for Landcare in Africa. Amongst the issues discussed during the visit was the nature and mode of entry for Landcare in Africa. How was the bottom-up approach going to be made operational, and who would be the stakeholders and how would they be involved. There was also particular concern on the nature of government involvement, both centrally and locally. This was of particular concern as various governments in Africa had different set-ups, though some had embraced devolution to some extent while others are still centrally governed. During the visit constraints and benefits accruing to the farming community as a result of the Landcare approach were explored.

Henry, a successful and knowledgeable farmer and Landcare member in Lantapan described the institutionalisation of Landcare from households to municipal level. At the sub village level farmers influence other farmers to adopt recommended practices and also to join the Landcare communities. The sub village level is composed of less than ten groups in most sub villages and where the group membership is usually composed of 5 to 10 members. Within the sub villages are Landcare groups whose members are related by the clan, religion and circumstances. Where the men folk have left their individual farm holdings to work in Plantations, the women have had to carry on with the land care activities. The individual farmers referred to Landcare as a farming system hinged on conservation. Their major worries were on the availability and supply of inputs e.g. seedlings; they also needed information/education on advocated technologies. Group level concern was mainly on what would be their direct individual benefits emanating from group work. There was also a need to have Landcare respond to their most immediate needs? Some of the constraints amongst the Landcare groups included the following:

(i) Landcare groups have the basic knowledge on conservation but lack the organizational skills.
(ii) Groups in the Barangay level have little information about Landcare as a strategy, Landcare as movement, and as institution.
(iii) The use of the PAHINA system considered as community obligation within the government could turn to be a negative action especially for the regular absconders.

Some of the opportunities evident in Landcare included the following:

(i) Direct benefits from group work,
(ii) A much wider range of technologies on offer that even attracts other members of the Pahina who are not LANDCARE members.
(iii) Involvement in legislation and ordinance formulation on soil and water conservation.

On example in collaboration/partnership building, farmer Henry described the relationship in existence in Lantapan between a church based NGO (Advocates for organic production of rice and maize), ICRAF and the Landcare groups. He defines the various interests and responsibilities amongst the partners as follows: The NGO has interests to:

- Providing a grip training centre (venue)
- Demonstration farm for organic maize production
- Start reforestation processes.
- Jointly meeting between NGO groups & ICRAF.

While ICRAF’s responsibility is the following; Assisting in documentation; Guiding the registration process e.g. group needs and activities; providing the technical backstopping on available technologies Landcare groups responsibilities:

i. To link with municipal government unit of Lantapan on where to have a municipal forest and fruit tree nursery, to be managed by the Landcare group.

ii. Collaborating with NGO’s and the agricultural department to do organic farming.
From discussions with some of the ardent Landcare members within the community (See box 2) it was evident that to achieve a buy-in within the community, there was an attempt to partnership development. Partnership development requires total commitment amongst the stakeholders. Non-performance by any of the stakeholders, or misunderstanding amongst them could seriously jeopardise the Landcare process. Another important issue is that of inculcating livelihood measures in Landcare. This could not only serve to provide the members with their most immediate needs, but strengthen them economically hence be in a position to participate better but also make a better contribution. The example provided in box 3 of Arsenia Tahuran best suits this scenario.

Box 3
Arsenia Tahuran joined the Landcare group 4 years ago. As a Landcare group member she is involved in tree planting and production of cabbages for sale in the local market and also in Cagayan de Oro City. Some of the group members were also engaged in chicken production. There are various benefits that Arsenia enumerated as she considered her life before and after joining Landcare. These include the following:

- The wood fuel collection is now on-farm and little is collected from the forest; hence the farmer (usually male) uses less time and energy in collecting firewood.
- Arsenia’s cabbage productivity per unit area increased from 5 bags to 20 bags after the introduction and maintenance of natural vegetative strips (NVS). She believed that contour farming taught through the Landcare activities, not only reduced soil erosion, but gradually restored and maintained soil fertility resulting in good quality crops and higher yields.

Prior to joining the Landcare group, Arsenia belonged to the SIAKE women group where members received individual loans from the department of social work and Development (Government institution). The groups collapsed after some of the members were unable to repay their loans. The failure among a big number of members to repay their loans was attributed to the fact that though there was some training done on elementary business management, some of the members never used the loans for the purpose intended. In her case she opened a grocery store which stocks some of her farm produce, which include bulb onions, sweet potatoes, black beans and eggplants.

On being asked how better facilitation could be achieved for Landcare development Arsenia suggested the following:

- Focuses on livelihood issues since this at times were of the highest priority.
- The women folk.

The importance of Landcare facilitators in catalysing activities in Landcare and their efforts in bridging group verses individual aspiration was noted during the visit. The facilitators’ ability to work within the community and provide the general direction is necessary for the success of Landcare. The example provided in Box 4 illustrates the evolving role of the Landcare facilitators

Box 4
Moses from Migdaha Chapter of Barangay Sungeco has been a member of Landcare in this chapter. Through the training on farm management received from ICRAF, he has influenced neighbouring farmers to join Landcare and to also adopt Conservation Agriculture. The entry of other farmers into the movement and their interest in adopting technologies on offer has been stimulated by the examples offered by other Landcare members. Moses notes that there are various constraints both at the farm household level and group level experienced by members. Some of the household constraints include:

1. Shortage of capital to purchase inputs such as fertilizer, seeds.
2. Marketing of some of their farm products.

Constraints in the operationalizing of Landcare include; the need for monitoring and follow up amongst the facilitators. There is need for good documentation of Landcare activities even at group level. The involvement of NGOs has not been as per expectation. The Kitagland Integration Development NGO that had partnership with Landcare groups has since ceased to exist.

Together with establishment of partnerships concerted effort should be made for support for livelihood activities. He quoted the heifer project as one example of a livelihood project holding promise for the farmers. Raised expectations of further external support slowed down some of the members when they realized that this was not forthcoming. Leadership was also seen as a major problem amongst the Landcare groups especially at levels above the sub village.
Land Tenure and the land use history are crucial in determining the mode of involvement, the pace and the activities to be undertaken through the formation of Landcare groups. Boxes 5 and 6 illustrate through examples how land tenure and individual history of the members shape their attitude towards community activities and their individual attempts at self-improvement.

**Box 5**

George Lamera is a member of the Bargon began Landcare subchapter, he joined the group in 2000, through invitation to a Landcare meeting (Landcare officials sent an invitation letter). George’s expectation joining Landcare included the following:

- To learn and improve on his measures for slope stabilization
- To be able to propagate fruit trees.
- To be able to address livelihood issues.

The original owners of Bargon begun are two families, Arguson and Salba families, who sold part of their land to other people. Some of these lands belong currently to absentee landlords and who rent it to others.

The rent arrangement is usually for a 2-3 yrs contract, which is usually 1500 Pesos/ha/year. The pricing is usually dependent on the nature of the land. The cost of the land based on current pricing is Pesos 80,000/ha. The provincial govt handles the sell process. Tax on land is also usually paid. George has managed to plant trees and make terraces but maintenance, is a problem due to attack by goats, and also dry season’s drought. George gets visits from farmers from different Barangais who are fascinated by his work.

George’s group members are scattered and involved in different activites. They have had no meeting for about two years. George has learnt more from the Landcare facilitator than from the group. Some of the reasons for resistance in the group formation cited by George include the fact that most of his fellow farmers work as labourers, also most of them are Tenants and do not own the Land.

The illustration made in both boxes 5 and 6 does not only give specific farmer land tenure situations, but also explains the farmers situation and describes his association with Landcare. In both cases the two farmers found Landcare helpful and were able to make use of the land development options offered.

**BOX6**

Before acquiring land in Tangul, Farmer Alejandro was a tenant farmer. He currently owns a 1.9 ha. Farm, which he bought in 1990. The area was opened up for migrants under the Agrarian reform programme whereby the former owner Dr. Togole offered 128 hectares of land for sale with easy terms of payment of 5000 pesos annually for 30 years. The land was fragile pastureland with no trees. The new migrant farmers therefore faced a number of challenges in their attempt at resettling in their new farms. Some of the constraints experienced by Alejandro include:

i. No timber for house construction.
ii. Soil fertility degradation.
iii. Low productivity per unit area therefore low income.
iv. Soil erosion
v. Poor rainfall

On being introduced to Landcare by a Landcare facilitator, farmer Alejandro’s expectations were as follows:

i. He wanted to learn appropriate technology to suit his farming situation.
ii. He wanted to plant more trees.
iii. He was informed that through the Landcare groups the government could assist him in livelihood issues.

But though he was informed that Landcare was a time consuming activity and he found it so, it still was favourable to him as it managed to meet his expectations. He even got involved in the government assistance program that involved distribution of dairy cows & goats. There are some missed expectations though, this include:

i. The group hoped to demand water supply for domestic use and power supply
ii. Expected seeds and other inputs through local government system but their initiative was too small a scale to reach many people.

Current pressing problems:

i. Issue of income and livelihoods
ii. Shortage of cash for purchase of inputs.
iii. Market accessibility and post harvest related technologies/facilities.

Alejandro feels that facilitators are very useful and support technology adopting they should continue updating farmers on technologies.
The involvement of the local Government unit was discussed both in the positive and negative sense. The local government was very instrumental in the creation of awareness on Landcare issues. The community also expected the local government to contribute substantially to the Landcare group’s activities. There was also danger though in the local government usurping the ownership and stewardship of the Landcare activities from the community. This is very well illustrated in Box 7 where officials of the local government, who also happen to be the leaders in Landcare were intent in making Landcare provide for some of the local government’s own responsibilities such as building of a recreational centre.

**Box 7**

**MANOLO FORTICH BARANGAY**
The Landcare group project started in 2002, made up of 16-40 (25% females) members and the officials of the Barangay. Some of the activities include;

(i) Plant trees in the barangay area
(ii) Rehabilitation of forest areas
(iii) Advice farmers farming on steep slopes
(iv) Establishment of germplasm centres, and to specifically establish nurseries in every zone.
(v) Need for the introduction of fodder trees, as this is a livestock area.
(vi) The need to foster team building and encourage working as a team basis.

 Plans for the group:

i. Planning for PAHINAS at meeting shed and nursery.
ii. Establish a Sitio site with plaza and basketball court
iii. They held farm trials last season and the current activity is to disseminate the results – corn, cowpeas, rice and beans.

In terms of Leadership, the President of Landcare sub chapter group was also sub village group Sitio president.

The local government leadership were very enthusiastic about Landcare, this yielded good results, as it was a motivating factor amongst the Landcare groups. Though this was the case there was need to have a well-informed division of tasks. This was imperative due to the fact that some of the issues being handled by the stakeholders could be counterproductive if not very well thought out. An example was the issue of denying assistance to farmers who were not adopting land conservation measures (See Box 8), this would affect the free participation of farmers in Landcare as expounded in the ethic and principles of Landcare.

**Box 8**

**DISCUSSION WITH BARANGAY CAPTAIN**
The Barangay highlighted the functions of the Claveria Landcare farmers association as a potent farmer association whose activities included soil and water conservation, seed stocking, germplasm propagation and dispersal amongst many programs. He highlighted the local government programs for the community, which included the following programs:

(i) Identifying areas to grow high value crops.
(ii) Involvement of Landcare groups, in creating government programs.
(iii) Use of resident chapters as farmer training centres
(iv) Enactment legislation that restricted assistance to farmers who were not undertaking soil and water conservation measures.

Further the Barangay captain pointed out that the Landcare approach was included in the Barangay development planning. Amongst the Municipal development planning activities of the council was the identification of Markets and other complementary programs from the local government.

The council viewed the following as constraints that needed urgent attention:

(i) Marketing constraints that included poor produce quality, and lack of market promotion of the farmers products.
(ii) High cost of production, that made it difficult for the small-scale farmers to afford inputs, coupled with an over reliance on imported inorganic agrochemicals.
(iii) Poor infrastructure in the farming areas.

The councils viewed Landcare as an approach that combated against the ill effects of environmental degradation globally as well as through beneficial activities initiated locally by the Claveria Landcare association and by the Local government.
The examples of the visit sites clearly indicate that the organisation of Landcare becomes more complex as it involves more groups and as it moves into higher level. During discussions with group members it become very clear that they was need to have management and leadership training amongst Barangay level members and leaders at the association level. There was a request for further urgent measures to strengthen the association since there was a feeling that it was becoming complex with time. There was also concern about the cancellation of scheduled meetings at the association level especially in the last two years.
6.0 Conclusion: lessons and recommendation for action research in Landcare

There are various issues involved when envisioning a sustainable Landcare approach. This includes various steps. The understanding and awareness amongst facilitators, farmer groups or communities and other agencies such as the local government and Non-governmental organisation on social issues is crucial if social capital has to be realised. There is need to aim for providing increased access to livelihood opportunities, market support, training and technology options for a useful and valuable Landcare approach.

The African perspective calls for dialogue among the community members and the advocates of Landcare on land use and conservation related issues. The discussions should be guided towards providing a lasting solution to land degradation through investing in the principles and ethics of Landcare.

The enhancement of the capability of communities in the areas of leadership, planning, decision-making, conflict resolution, monitoring, research, extension, networking and business should an important elements of the Landcare approach. In East Africa this will involve joint planning workshops between the community members, the researchers, government agencies, non-governmental organisations and the civil society. The partnerships developed should be active such that the various commitments made during the planning workshop are fulfilled. Among the activities necessary for AGILE is training on technologies on offer in the area of Agriculture and natural resource management. There is also need to enhance, recognise and disseminate farmer innovations through encouraging and providing for support in information sharing amongst members. There should be training on group dynamics and financial management to improve the capacity of community groups to handle even tougher challenges as they grow into bigger organisations. There should also be concerted efforts in maintaining participation amongst the stakeholders through regular meetings and having a good monitoring and evaluation regime.

In order to facilitate farmer livelihoods, there should be emphasis on community level infrastructure. Micro financing of rural projects should be encouraged and training of group members in Marketing is essential. There is a continued need of support from the government, both at central and local level. This should be in terms of supportive local and national policies and also through continued resource and institutional assistance at the local level. In the African context there is need to have a study on the implementation of Landcare amongst governments with different frameworks. The lessons learned would help inform the different countries during the scaling out process.

Awareness should be created on the issue of environmental services provided by the rural communities, this should be acknowledged especially by the urban dwellers and the government and a rewarding system development. There is also need within the Landcare approach to recognise the role of women and to encourage their efforts in development. The gender perspectives are important in ensuring sustainability of the Landcare initiatives.
Finally from the field visit it became evident that the operationalizing of Landcare in Africa needed to be initiated at three levels in order to have an impact. This would be at the site levels, the national levels and the regional levels. All the three levels would serve specific purposes but would also have complementary elements in the development of the various components of AGILE approach in Landcare.
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