

**ELEMENTS FOR THE EXPANSION OF NRMP
AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL:**

AN IEC-BASED APPROACH

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ACRONYMS

CBFM	-	Community-Based Forest Management
CDA	-	Community Development Assistance
CO	-	Community Organizing
DENR	-	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
HES	-	Human and Environmental Services
IEC	-	Information, Education and Communication
MIS	-	Management Information System
NGO	-	Non-Government Organization
NRMP	-	Natural Resources Management Program
PMO	-	Project Management Office
TA	-	Technical Assistance
USAID	-	United States Agency for International Development

ELEMENTS FOR THE EXPANSION OF NRMP AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL:

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I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Dr. Manzardo, the IEC/Community Development Advisor of Glovis, Inc. came to the Philippines to review community organization activities for NRMP-II and to make recommendations on how Information, Education and Communication (IEC) inputs could be used to help increase the rate at which Philippine forests could be brought under community based management. The current field visit was made between August 30 and September 28, 1995 and consisted of discussions with the NRMP staff, DENR officials and staff, the League of Provinces and USAID in Manila, Provincial Governors and their staff, Mayors, Barangay Captains, community forest participants, members of various participating and non-participating NGOs and others in Regions II, X and XI.

These discussions and visits to various CBFM sites led to the findings discussed below and have resulted in the following recommendations.

- IEC should not be treated as a separate element of NRMP-II, but as an integral part of all project activities. Technical elements should be developed with IEC strategies in mind. Tools, such as the use of community mapping for resource inventory requirements of DENR, which are often used for these projects should be developed in this manner.
- The project should develop strategies to move the community organization effort from an intensive to an extensive approach by setting clear benchmarks for success at each level of organization, using specialized teams rather than a single NGO, and developing exit strategies. Passing of fixed benchmarks should be underlined by joint activities involving the community and officials of the local government and DENR. Ritualization of this will help develop relationships to help maximize chances for a long term sustainable relationship between these
- The project needs to develop different strategies for different regions, using each as a ground for experimenting with community development approaches. It must also develop a method for passing successful strategies to other regions.
- The development of IEC tools should be centralized to ensure its high quality and to take advantage of economies of scale.

- The system developed must maximize the effectiveness of individual community developers (with good training and materials) and maximize their reach through effective placement strategies (such as the "Ripples in the Pond" strategy).
- A three-level structure is recommended for the IEC unit: (1) to work with research and campaigns in Manila; (2) to act in both Manila and interact with the regions; and (3) to work exclusively with regional needs. The latter provides continuous IEC input into the community level activities of NRMP. Occasional TA inputs would be provided to develop special tools (such as community mapping and visioning) as required. Publication/production support and diffusion of regional successes would be supported by the central level community/IEC support staff member.

II. STRATEGYIFOCUS

In general, most CBFM sites were found to be involved in an active and imaginative program. Many of the ideas that were being tried out were effective, but there was very little diffusion of even very successful ideas from one project to another. Meetings with NGOs showed a good knowledge of a range of activities and experience in using these activities. However, different organizations each had their own strengths and weaknesses and seldom was one found which was strong in all areas required for total development of a CBFM area. Still, e all, the Philippines is a place where the field techniques used are those which we often read in textbooks in other countries. The major problem then is to bring all these disparate resources together into a strategic whole to

- quickly expand the area under CBFM management;
- do it within the limited resources available without exceeding human limits.

During the trip, the Consultant came to understand that many of the community development workers involved in the project, although using quite advanced organizational and training techniques, were focused on *intensive organization* (characterized by unlimited and continued improvement of a single community development site) rather than *extensive organization* (characterized by spreading limited organization goals through an increasing number of development sites). Discussion showed that it was necessary to somehow *change the focus* of the current development approach.

Such change of focus can involve merely a small shift in strategy, yet such a change can have tremendous effects. Take the example of the World Bank's Agricultural Extension Project in Turkey. In that project, control of extension was shifted from the Ministry of Agriculture to the farmers themselves, making them the effective employers of the extension agents. The effect has been tremendous in terms of creating responsive and relevant programs. In NRMP, a shift of focus from an intensive to an extensive approach will have similar results. An *extensive approach* has the following features:

- Clear and limited goals for development in each target community;
- Benchmarks for recognizing success and completion;
- A distribution (diffusion) strategy which maximizes the reach of limited staff;
- An exit strategy for each community;
- Provision for on-going monitoring and refresher training as necessary.

In discussions with many NGOs, it is apparent that most are still thinking intensively. When questioned about up-coming activities after three years of organizing, most groups said that the fourth year would provide more of the same, although there were exceptions. Most of the exceptions were found in Region II. In this area, members of both communities interviewed said that they felt ready to do it alone without the help of the NGO and would prefer that the NGO be on call if problems developed. In one case the local Project Monitoring Officer of DENR was already using committee members to spread the community forestry approach to other nearby areas outside the NRMP. It is clear that in many cases, it was time for NGO community organizers to be shifted to other tasks.

One NGO seemed already to be working on developing an extensive approach and claims that it is awaiting a signal from NRMP. It is interested in such an approach, along with further guidance on how it would like to proceed. Discussions about a similar shift were held with other NGOs and all seemed willing to shift to this approach and were ready to look at the problem in a new way. NGOs were ready to look at an approach which aimed at:

- shorter yet more focused stays in communities;
- more reliance on demonstrations and people-to-people training methods;
- more reliance on DENR and local government staff;
- increasingly specialized training tasks.

Similarly, it was found that many of those interviewed felt that IEC was something separate from the project itself. A unit to handle something called "IEC Problems" is meant to help the community development people put out fires which develop from time to time, but is outside the day-to-day technical scope of the project. Here, too, a change of focus is necessary for NRMP is largely a community-focused project, judged in the end by its grassroots effect. Each project element, even those that are very technical, must be developed at least partially with an IEC strategy in mind.

Two examples should serve to explain this change in focus. MIS is a useful tool to help mid-level managers understand the potential effects of their decisions. If properly designed, MIS methods could be also made into a useful tool to help forest group members (not only their officers) to understand and participate in decision-making and resource inventory work. Similarly, if the DENR requirements (resource inventories, management plans) are redesigned to be more participatory and user-friendly, they could provide a means not only

for the DENR to get its required data, but would enable the rank and file members to better understand and manage their resources.

III. EXPANSION: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

To carry out such a change of focus into a more extensive approach, three areas had to be explored:

- resources
- planning
- framework

Great variations were found from region to region in terms of the availability of potential community development resources. In the context of NRMP, this means a small staff managing the work of a number of NGOs which carry out the actual organization tasks. Most of these NGOs appeared to be working quite satisfactorily, some even quite superior within an intensive organizational mode (to be fair this was all that had been asked of them and all that they were trained for). Some had failed either through mismanagement or poverty brought on by the long period required for reimbursement. Although some were quite active, others clearly had overstayed their welcome.

Admittedly, the consultant had an inherent prejudice against NRMP-I's reliance on using NGOs as a primary organizational tool because:

- NGOs greatly vary in quality from each other and therefore quality assurance is difficult to maintain;
- NGOs can only function as long as they are funded and thus are not sustainable and will not continue the organizational task after the life of the project;
- Some NGOs tend to adopt a paternalistic attitude and attempt (consciously or unconsciously) to situate themselves as permanent go- betweens between the community and the government.

The consultant was thus on the prowl for alternatives to the standard model. The following are some of the potential resources:

Region II: The PMO of Cagayan Valley Resources Development and Protectors Federation in Baggao, Amlung is using its members to spread the community forestry approach to other surrounding areas. COs are being trained by the Bureau of Industrial Workers of the Department of Labor and Employment. Similarly, the Mayor of Isabela is trying to get a decision out of the Department of Interior and Local Government which would enable him to use the HES (Human and Environmental Services) section of his budget (mandated as 4% of the total) to pay for support to community forestry project activities,

especially the hiring of local COs. Materials and training support are both necessary to further this work.

Region X: The DENR has developed a series of "regular program" community forestry activities which use Philippine government funds to place contracted COs in approximately four ISF project areas. These COs are hired by the Regional Technical Division and are supervised by the Region's Chief of the Social Forestry Division. The COs were trained by an NGO called UGMAD in Cebu. Further funding to permit the hiring and training of more COs, materials and training support are both necessary to further this work.

Region XI: Meetings with the Provincial Government in Mati, indicated a potential use for the CDAs devolved to local government from the DENR some time ago. However, these are still not properly put to use. It was made clear to the consultant both by the local government and the DENR that the use of these CDAs has still not been clarified and a case can be made for establishing a role for the IEC unit of NRMP in facilitating information flow in this area. The Governor expressed a desire to have CDAs take a stronger role in Community Forestry organizational development and offered participation of Davao Oriental State College to help train and supervise their work. Materials and training support are both necessary to further this work.

Similarly, several specialized NGOs were found in Davao, one was reputed to be especially good at financial training for community organizations, another produces excellent materials and has a fine training facility. Other specialization and talents could also be found. A strong case could be made for having the proposed regional IEC unit spend a great deal of time simply collecting resource data bases.

In each case, specific resources and potential models for experiment may be found only in a single region. Each region also has its own particular environmental features. To take advantage of this, it means that some of the program of each region will have to be "tailor made" and thus regional focus must be a feature of the project's IEC strategy.

On the other hand, the economy of scale makes it attractive to produce tools wherever possible on a project-wide basis. Part of the IEC units task will be to sort out what can best be locally produced and what is best produced for the sector (not just the project) as a whole. Fora will have to be established to bring together potential users, technical advisors and IEC staff for visioning and production workshops both nationally and regionally on a regular basis, as well as ensuring that news of ideas and models being tried in one region be passed on to those working in other regions on a regular basis as well. Wherever possible needed materials, methods and training programs should be combined and made available to as large a segment of the sector as possible. Regional experiments need to be supported as well. Such support can also be given to private sector approaches as well (such as to the LandBank, Nestles etc. which have already made linkages with existing community organizations) to improve their ability to communicate with our groups. In return, it is hoped that they can contribute to offset production costs for materials.

IV. EXPANSION: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: PLANNING

The Community Developer must be looked upon as an effective medium to reach those primarily used to face-to-face communications. Considering that this is the most effective medium we have available to us at the community level, and this is a community-driven project, in some ways there is very little effective difference between community development and community level IEC. An effective community organization strategy is also an effective communications strategy. To make organization activities more effective, IEC should plan to:

- Maximize the effectiveness of the messages to be delivered by the community organizer by providing or improving:
 - ↗ good materials development and distribution
 - ↗ effective training of community developers and adequate supervision in the field
 - ↗ liaison with potential partners in the private sector and other areas to provide for smooth information flow
 - ↗ liaison and feedback between information providers (technicians etc.), trainers and users to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of communication
 - ↗ create supporting communications in other media
- Maximize the reach of existing communications by working with the Community Development unit to:
 - ↗ develop strategies for effectively maximizing the geographical coverage of a limited number of COs (See Figure 1.)
 - ↗ support and evaluate alternative regionally-based models for community development
 - ↗ develop goals, strategies and benchmarks, as well as exit plans for community organizers
- Maximize the sustainability of the communications system by exploring various long-term approaches for community development to establish and maintain a stable interaction between DENR, local government and the communities in the area of community forest development.

The establishment of regionally-based programs which reflect the differences between the available needs and resources of these different areas to focus on supporting the production of visual aids and other tools, training programs, monitoring and supervision of programs for community action is supported by the approach outlined in Figure 2. This approach utilizes a series of working sessions to carry out formative research, create a unified strategy for

community organization, develop strategies and design tools. The IEC unit will then take these designs to the best potential producer and have them made. The IEC will then provide pre-testing and training for users and carry out evaluation for further development. This is an iterative procedure, repeated yearly, or as needed. Where concerns and needs develop beyond the regional- level, national-level programs can be established through combination of regional actors and allow them to be able to produce materials for the country as a whole, and to take advantage of economies of scale.

Figure 1. Maximizing the Reach: Placement of Organizers and Expanding the Number of CFDA Sites - "Ripples on a Pond"

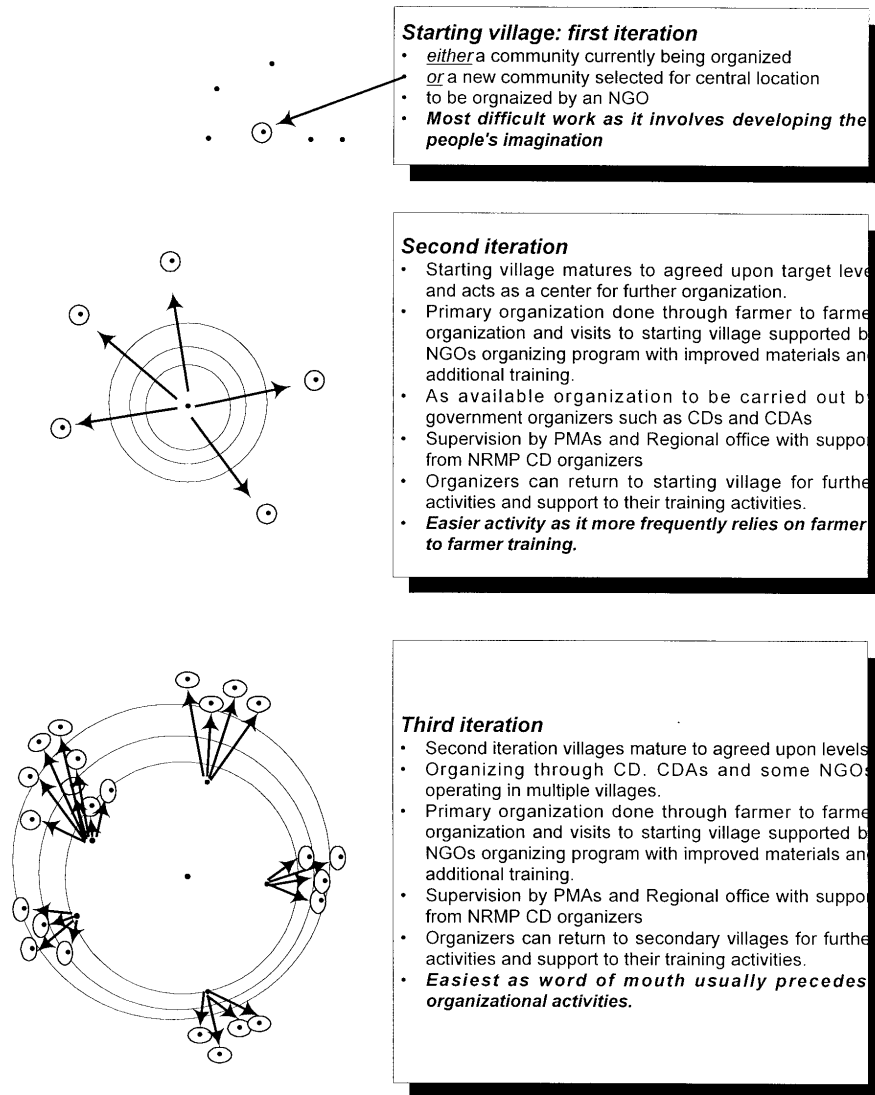
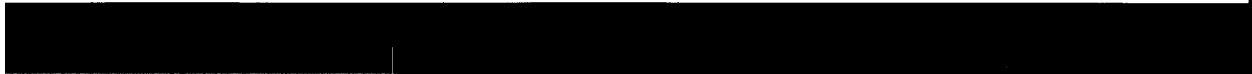
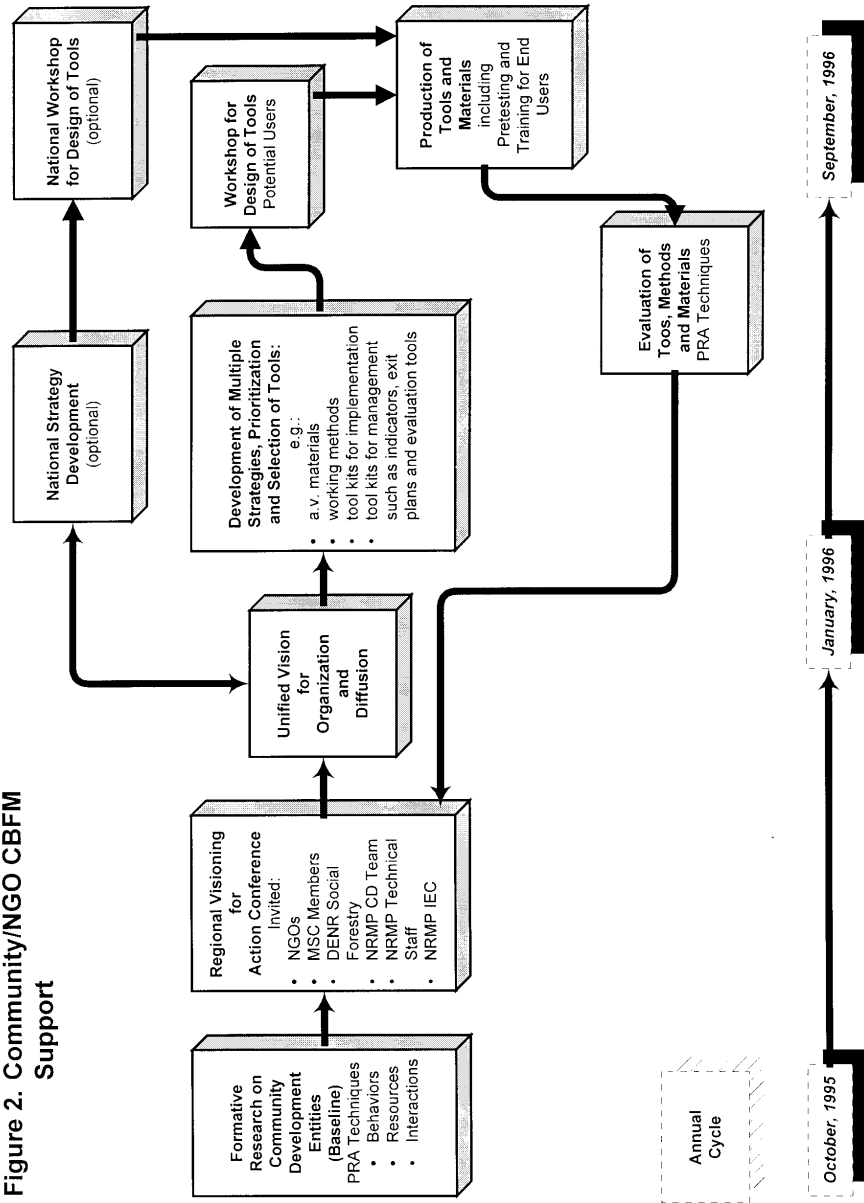


Figure 2. Community/NGO CBFM Support



V. STRUCTURE

Figure 3 presents a possible structure to enable the IEC to carry out its proposed activities at three levels: the national, regional and the community.

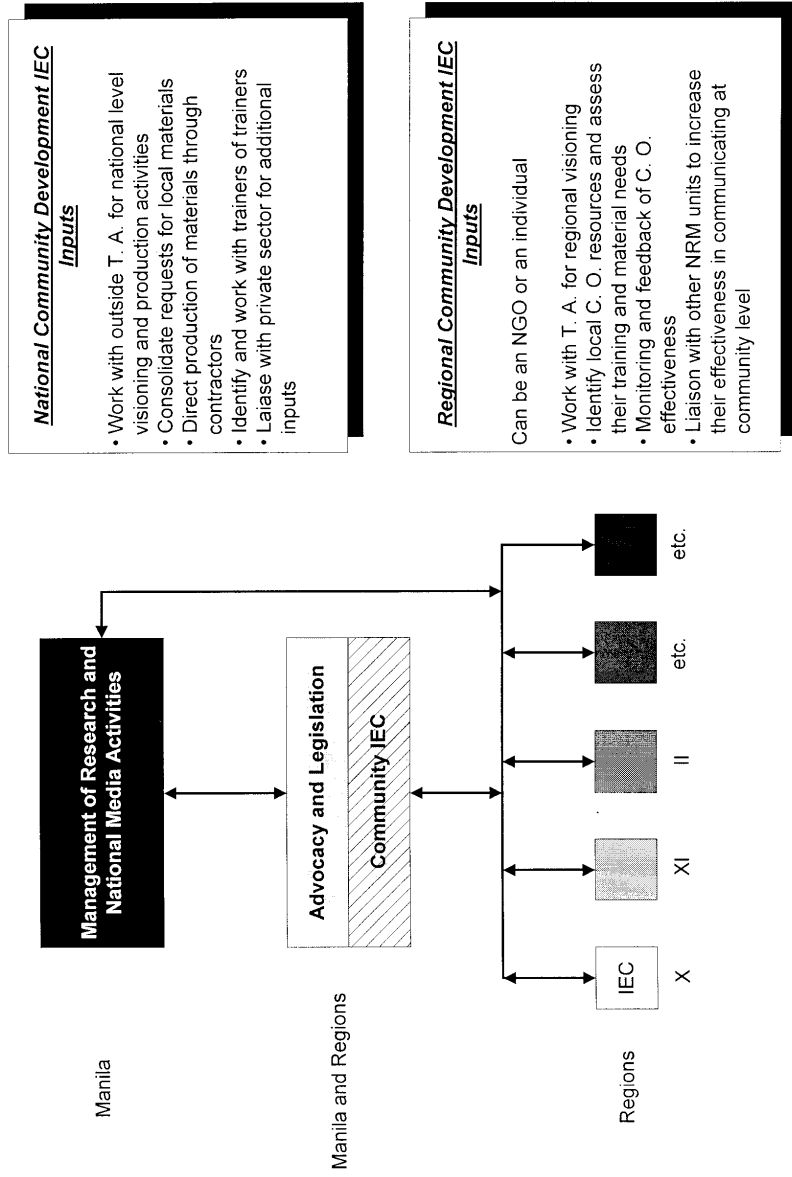
Figure 3 tentatively proposes a three-tiered system with no intent to yet establish the relationship as hierarchical. For the moment, this should be seen as a collaborative relationship.

The Management Research and National Media activities is meant as a means to handle the contracts for opinion research, public relations and larger media campaigns and do not directly concern us in the community sector except in so far as they prepare a proper institutional and public opinion environment for activities at the community level to flourish.

The second level is concerned with advocacy and legislation activities at the national level, naturally tied to the community-level public opinion of the legislators' constituents. Other activities are tied directly to the improvement of community development. Those working at this level would be concerned with the following activities in IEC Community-level support activities:

- Work with the project level staff to develop strategies and activities to enhance the importance of community development activities and to support the development of local strategies;
- Supervise and train regional level IEC Community Development Support Unit staff;
- Work with outside TA for national level visioning and production activities and consolidate requests for localized material;
- Act as national and regional producer of materials;
- Provide liaison with private sector for additional inputs and to help ensure technical correctness of their materials;
- Work to improve communications flow between the national, regional and community levels;
- Collect and maintain data on national and regional sources for Community Development support, e.g., media production, training.

Figure 3. Proposed Institutional Framework of IEC Unit: "Who will do what."



National Community Development IEC Inputs

- Work with outside T. A. for national level visioning and production activities
- Consolidate requests for local materials
- Direct production of materials through contractors
- Identify and work with trainers of trainers
- Liaise with private sector for additional inputs

Regional Community Development IEC Inputs

- Can be an NGO or an individual
- Work with T. A. for regional visioning
 - Identify local C. O. resources and assess their training and material needs
 - Monitoring and feedback of C. O. effectiveness
 - Liaison with other NRM units to increase their effectiveness in communicating at community level