

# **Role of Philippine Secondary Local Organizations in Negotiating Land Rights and Natural Resource Management**

**Ma. Elena Chiong-Javier, Ph.D.  
Professorial Chair in Community Development**

# Introduction

**Dramatic changes in resource governance in the watershed areas of the country opened up opportunities for self-organization and collective action.**

**Factors such as:**

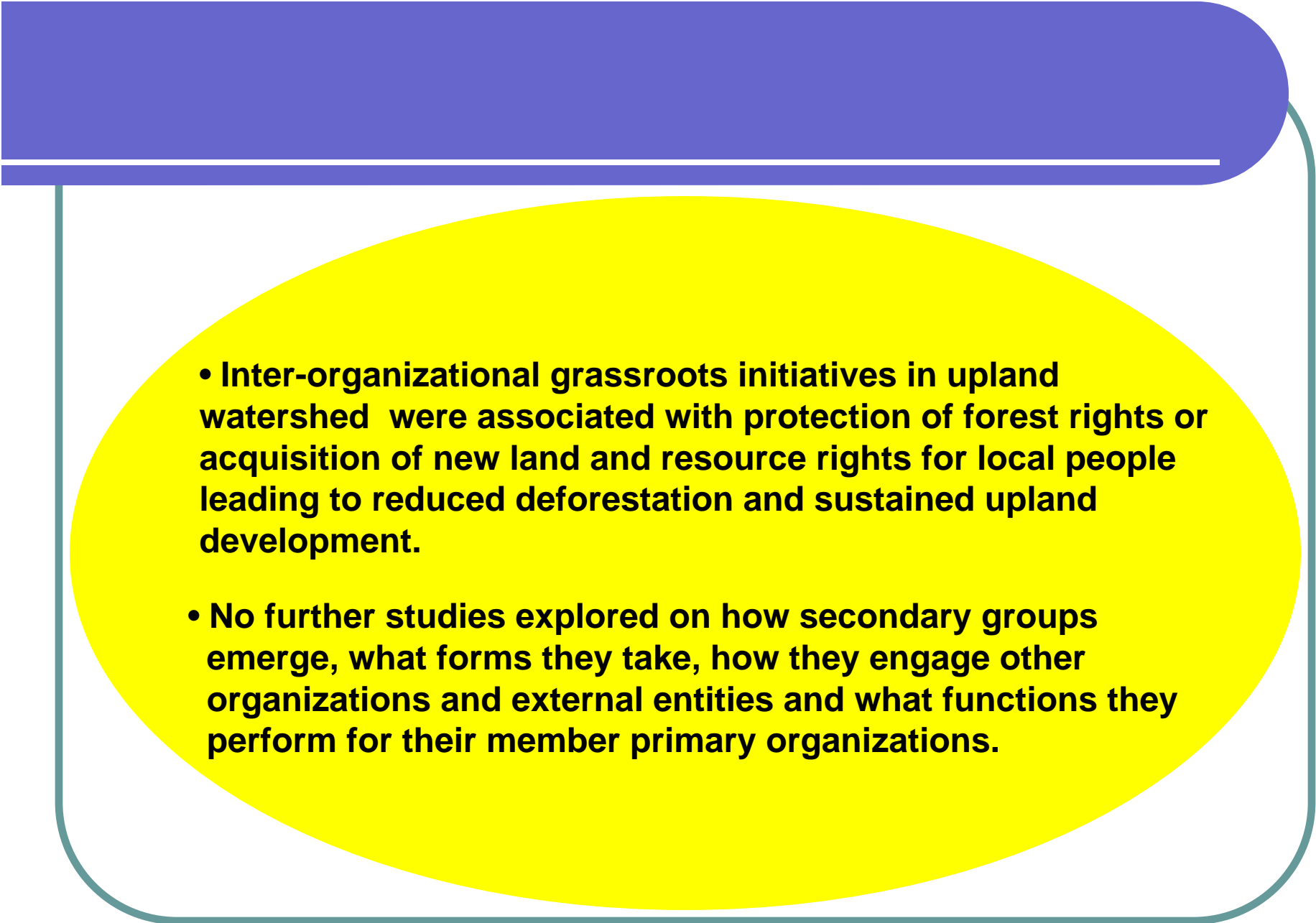
- **critical state of imbalance in the uplands**
- **national participation in global assemblies that pledged to address poverty through increased democratized polity**
- **major policy shifts and approaches toward decentralized forest management**
- **rapid growth of NGOs and other civil societies**
- **people's paradigm of development**

**Supported grassroots empowerment and encouraged formation of local community-based organizations**

## **SECONDARY ORGANIZATIONS**

**Coalitions and alliances formally structured into broader-based or large-scale representative organizations and federations.**

- Have the potential to bridge small or intra-group ties or interactions into large-group networks with a greater capacity to coordinate landscape-level concerns, improve local resource management and influence resource regulation policies.**

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- **Inter-organizational grassroots initiatives in upland watershed were associated with protection of forest rights or acquisition of new land and resource rights for local people leading to reduced deforestation and sustained upland development.**
  - **No further studies explored on how secondary groups emerge, what forms they take, how they engage other organizations and external entities and what functions they perform for their member primary organizations.**

# Literature on National Federations

- Federation of Free Farmers –1953.
- Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (National Movement of Peasant Organizations) – 1986.
- Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform (CPAR), 1987
- Nationwide Coalition of Fisherfolks for Aquatic Reform (NACFAR), 1990
- Katutubong Samahan ng Pilipinas (KASAPI or National Forum of Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines), 1996
- National Federation of Community-Based Forest Management-Peoples Organizations (CBFM-POs), 1999



World Agroforestry Centre  
TRANSFORMING LIVES AND LANDSCAPES

**World Agroforestry Centre conducted a country study in Southeast Asia (Indonesia and Philippines) on secondary local organizations (SLOs)**

# Objectives of the SLO Study

- understand the rationale and processes of primary local organizations involved in upland natural resource management (NRM) that developed into secondary organizations;
- identify conditions and mechanisms that primary and secondary organizations influence: the formulation and implementation of NRM policies, rights and regulations in different policy environments;

- identify conditions and methods that will enable or facilitate members of secondary organizations' implementation of better NRM practices;
- assist secondary organizations to identify their own strengths, weaknesses and opportunities to influence NRM policy and provide member services more effectively.

# Methodology

- Used triangulation method, combining several quantitative and qualitative techniques in gathering data:
  - Literature review
  - Survey
  - Informal and semi-structured interviews
  - Focus group discussion (FGD)
  - Case study



# Preliminary Findings

- Two surveys, semi-structured interviews and FGD were conducted
  - 1<sup>st</sup> survey: 12 SLOs (52% of a total of 23) in Nueva Vizcaya and Bukidnon.

(Provinces were chosen from informal interviews that showed that the 2 Provinces top the highest concentration of SLOs with at least 1 active upland federation. Provincial government supported the federations.)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> survey: 27 MOs (36% of a total of 70) of 1 SLO per province chosen for the case studies.

(MOs are primary organizations, such as peoples organizations, cooperatives or associations)

- Present findings on:
  - characteristics of the SLOs and MOs
  - SLOs' typology
  - goals/objectives
  - functions/tasks
  - women's involvement
  - organizational concerns
  - sources of support
  - relationship between the SLOs and their MOs.

# Specific Queries

- What roles do SLOs perform in negotiating land rights and managing natural resources in upland watershed areas of the country?
- In what ways can they be assisted to undertake their roles?

# Characteristics of SLOs and MOs

- SLOs existence ranges from 1-16 years (6 years average)
- Most are informal organizations
- Mixed ethnic composition – both with indigenous and non-indigenous members
- Membership size ranges from 7-130 MOs (median of 13 MOs)

- Possess an average leadership size of 11 (range of 5-19 leaders)
- SLOs are “functional” or “active” organization
- Survey of MOs covered 27 primary groups – 20 from Nueva Vizcaya and 7 in Bukidnon

- Majority (22 out of 27) call themselves association or organization
  - Women's groups (2 out of 22 MOs)
  - Tribal communities/leader
  - Volunteer forest guards
  - Multi-purpose cooperatives
  - Farmer or peoples organization

- MOs existence range from 2-29 years (an ave. of 9.5 years)
- MOs in Nueva Vizcaya are older by about 4 years than MOs in Bukidnon
- Individual members average around 77 (9 smallest and 300 largest individual members)
- MOs in Nueva Vizcaya are larger-sized (by about 60 more members) than in Bukidnon
- Almost all of the MOs consider themselves active members of their federation

# Typology of SLOs

- **Secondary Organizations** – members are all primary organizations known as peoples organization (PO), cooperative, association, or group (i.e. tribal council)
- **Tertiary Organizations** – members are all secondary organizations
- **Mixed Organizations** – members are composed of both primary and secondary organizations

# SLO Formation

- Predominantly initiated externally (10 of 12 cases)
  - National government agency (DENR-4 cases and NCIP-1 case)
  - LGU (2 cases)
  - Church organization (St. Vincent Parish-1 case)
  - International research institution (International Centre for Research in Agroforestry or ICRAF-1 case)
  - NGO (Kitanglad Integrated NGOs or KIN-1 case)
- 2 SLOs initiated by the POs leaders

## External Initiators' Motivations

- DENR – (1) strengthen the primary organizations' partnership with the agency on sectoral programs (i.e. on reforestation and livelihood) in improving socioeconomic conditions of upland farmers; (2) enable primary organizations to have a vehicle for their “environmental advocacy”
- Church organization - interest in freeing farmers from usury and trade monopolies
- Others – tap donors for funding for organizing associations and setting up livelihood projects.

## SLOs Motivations

- to protect forest resources and achieve socioeconomic development
- to establish linkages and networks with assisting institutions
- to strengthen their own primary organizations (as mentioned by half of the SLOs)
- to preserve culture, customs or traditions
- to obtain government accreditation and recognition from external entities

## MOs Motivations

- to participate in/benefit from federation projects or thrusts such as training for capability building, livelihood and networking with assisting institutions
- to obtain services such as assistance in preparing project proposals, complying with donor requirements for project availment, and getting government accreditation
- other reasons include: interest for unity, projecting a collective stand, becoming strong and empowered, solving environmental problems, learning agroforestry technologies, preserving traditional culture, and plain curiosity

# Shared Goals and/or Objectives

## **SLOs**

- to improve the living conditions of upland farmers
- to fulfill environmental and empowerment objectives
- to avail of tenurial instruments

## **MOs**

- environmental/forest protection objective (85% responses)
- socioeconomic objective
- enhanced farmers' welfare
- environmental welfare


# SLO Functions or Activities

- to conduct trainings and seminars on the proper adoption/application of farming techniques or environmental technologies (8 out of 12).
- to provide micro financing and finding alternative livelihoods options for their members (3 of 8)
- other activities: advocacy for tenurial rights, accreditation of Mos, and agroforestry activities such as tree and agricultural crop planting.

# Women's Involvement in SLOs

- 8 out of 12 SLOs have at least one woman in the SLO leadership (a range of 1-4 women leaders)
- female-to-male leaders' ratio is 1:3
- positions of women leaders in the federation are usually those of secretary (6 of 8) and treasurer or assistant treasurer (4 of 8)
- in two other instances, women were members of the board of directors or a federation president

- women leaders were consistently rated 3 (better than average) in 2 aspects: SLO formation and policy formulation/implementation
- women are minimally involved in running a federation because only a few manage to get elected into positions
- women tend to be more active at the primary peoples organization (PO) level because they have the opportunity, interest and capacity to attend meetings

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- women are more visible as spouses and daughters of male federation officials, helping at functions that require women's work like cooking or serving meals and keeping records

# Organizational Issues and Concerns

- need to respond to livelihood issues raised by MOs
- organizational capacities of MOs
- financial issues in the management of SLOs
- difficulties in responding to land tenure claims and issues
- inter-organizational issues

How do primary organizations or their individual members extend their needs and concerns to their parent federations?

- **Direct mechanism** - MOs attend the federation's meetings, general consultations, or evaluations to raise the issue/concern (6 of 8 SLOs); express these in writing (4 of 8)
- **Indirect mechanism** - individuals in the MOs channel issues through their respective presidents/leaders, who then forward the issues to the federation for discussion (5 of 8)
- **Others** – directly informing the federation president, interventions of Brgy. Capt/LGUs/Provincial Government/DENR/PENRO/PASU Office

# Sources of External Support

- external institutions or groups
- most commonly mentioned supporters:
  - other local organizations
  - national government agencies (DENR, DA, DAR, DOLE, NCIP, AFP/PNP Armed Forces of the Philippines/ Philippine National Police)
  - CASCAD (Caraballo and Southern Cordillera Agricultural Development)
  - Ecogovernance Program



- Less common sources

- NGOs
- LGUs
- politicians like congressman and governor
- donor agencies
- academic research institutions

# Relationships Between SLOs and their MOs

- local government entities (ENROs) introduced MOs to their respective SLOs (17 out of 27 MOs responded)
- federation officials themselves endorsed their federations to primary organizations (5 of 27)
- on a lesser extent, DENR staff, DA officials, and politicians were also instrumental in leading primary organizations to join federations

- Federations are perceived to be different from their member-organizations
  - primary organizations are composed directly of their individual members, while SLOs are the aggregation of these primary organizations.
  - presidents of the primary organizations represent the organizations in the general assembly of the federation; hence, the federation has a more 'powerful' voice
  - the SLO area is far greater than MO area
  - MO usually keeps to community-wide concerns, while SLO may attend to municipal- or watershed-wide issues

- member organizations can directly assess donor funds
- federation serves an important role as a bridge between member organizations and the funding institutions
- MOs primary goal is to secure land tenure for its farmer members and secure members' livelihoods as well
- MOs are more knowledgeable about claims, claimants, and boundary conflicts

- SLOs' primary goal is to access livelihood opportunities for its member organizations
- federation assists, endorses or follows up member organization's tenure applications to DENR

- on environmental protection, member organizations implement and/or comply with forestry laws and policies in accordance with tenurial agreements
- federations inform and/or update member organizations on forestry laws and policies during general assemblies
- federations monitor their member-association's compliance (as a partner's help to DENR) and provide feedback at assemblies
- care, protection, and maintenance of the environment are roles of member organizations
- federations monitor what they do

- on formulation of environmental policies : both federations and member organizations participate once they become accredited with their respective local development councils
- accredited MOs become members of Barangay Development Councils
- accredited SLOs join either the Municipal Development Council, the Provincial Development Council, the Provincial ENR Committee, or the Regional Development Council
- federations and MOs get to propose environment-related measures and lobby for or against a measure
- no evident data on whether or not SLOs and MOs work together to suggest and support environmental policies for their common good

## ● Benefits of federating :

- knowledge and skills sourced by the federation
- forwarding of member organizations' needs and concerns to government and policy making organs
- opportunity to participate in the federation's projects
- allocation of funding and planting materials
- introduction to external assisting institutions
- encouragement and inspiration





- Costs of federating:

- obligation to pay membership dues and other fees (16 of 27)
- provision of matching time, labor and services to the SLO (14 of 27)
- out-of-pocket allowances for member organization officials to attend federation gatherings (3 of 27)

# Summary and Conclusions

- SLOs emerged as a response to opportunities to access resources
- Federations are fund-driven
- SLO's are clearly motivated by utilitarian ends

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- Federations expect assisting institutions to deliver the opportunities they seek especially with regard to:
    - identifying and linking them to the sources of funding and training opportunities
    - accessing these opportunities by training them to prepare project proposals

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- helping them to get registered formally
  - helping them obtain local government accreditation


## ***What is the role of SLOs in negotiating land rights and managing upland watershed areas in the country?***


- Primary farmers' organizations are involved in obtaining the rights. SLOs however are involved indirectly by following up primary organization's applications for tenural security and registration of rights

- SLO's role has been to connect MOs to sources of environmental funds for their knowledge building, skills development, or learning livelihood technologies that harmonize with the forest environment
- Many SLOs in the country were animated by DENR--they provide an important outlet for forwarding the country's environmental agenda.

***How can SLOs be assisted to meet their important role as conduit for the attainment of sustained livelihood and stable natural environment by primary member organizations?***

- Many SLOs and farmers do not have technical, proposal writing skills
  - Aside from providing training to enhance their skills, donors and other actors will need to simplify procedures for proposals and even provide for acceptance of proposals that are written in local dialects.

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- SLOs also need further preparation in their mission of being SLOs
  - Need for more financing for upland women groups and even a donor preference for supporting SLOs that have or consciously observe gender-fair criteria and practices for selecting leadership and allocating benefits to member organizations

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- More studies such as on:
    - impacts of SLOs on policy formulation and implementation
    - evaluations of SLO performance, especially between those initiated by government and those not initiated by government

Thank You!

