

SARD in the Uplands



A CASE DOCUMENTATION OF THE SARD INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTED BY ANGOC IN THE UPLANDS OF DANSOLIHON, CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY, PHILIPPINES

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Executive Summary

The Project was initiated to enhance the capacities of the upland farmers for them to participate in the development processes. It was envisioned that by doing so they would improve their productivity while conserving the fragile agricultural resource base.

It addressed first the problem of access to land. Then, it assisted in redesigning the farming system to improve productivity and prevent soil erosion. Responding to the lack of basic services in the area and in consultation with the communities, the Project incorporated basic health services as one of the major interventions. Towards the end of the Project, it attempted to link the upland farmers to the local market.

After three years, the Project was able to facilitate the awarding of stewardship contracts covering 1,650 hectares to five organizations of upland farmers under the Community Based Forestry Management Program of the government. With the improvement in the tenurial arrangement, the farmers have also adopted more sustainable farming practices leading to increased productivity and stability of the farms. Health and sanitation also improved. Underlying all these project activities was the establishment of environmentally aware and empowered community organizations.

Several lessons can be drawn from the Project experience particularly on the stages of development in the uplands, on facilitating access to land, on implementing agricultural interventions in marginal lands and in enhancing multi-stakeholder participation. It also suggests to other groups working on the uplands take a closer look in linking upland farmers to the market as it may have substantial impact on improving their quality of life

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List of Acronyms

ANGOC	- Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
ATC	- Appropriate Technology Center
BBC	- Bishops- Businessmen's Conference
CADC	- Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim
CART	- Center for Alternative Rural Technology
CBFMP	- Community-Based Forest Management Program
CBFMA	- Community Based Forest Management Agreement
CGB	- Clean and Green Board
CHO	- City Health Office
CRMF	- Community Resource Management Framework
CSC	- Certificate of Stewardship Contract
DENR	- Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DA	- Department of Agriculture
DND	- Department of National Defense
DOH	- Department of Health
DOLE	- Department of Labor and Employment
FTC	- Farmers Trading Center
GAGP	- Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Project
IFAD	- International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILC	- International Land Coalition
ISF	- Integrated Social Forestry
LGU	- Local Government Units
PARTNERS/PRD	- Partners for Rural Development
POs	- Peoples' Organizations
SMBK	- Samahang Manggagawa ng Binhing Kalusugan
TFM	- Task Force Macajalar
XU-CN	- Xavier University- College of Nursing

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I. INTRODUCTION

The uplands and other less favored areas in Asia are home to some 40% of the rural poor. They are rainfed farmers, forest dwellers, highlanders and indigenous peoples (IFAD, 2001).

In the Philippines, the uplands are the preferred destination for rural migration. In 2000, some 20 million Filipinos (26% of the national population) live in the uplands. According to Dr. Guiang, more than 8 million hectares of the 11.9 million hectares classified as uplands in the country “are under some kind of cultivation” in 1998 (Tacio, 2000).

This is disquieting as the denuded uplands are so fragile and highly susceptible to erosion. With the forest gone, the denuded areas can be easily transformed into acidic, infertile grasslands susceptible to fire. Moreover, the upland farmers are barely surviving. Productivity is very low. Many of the children are malnourished and are infected with internal parasites due to lack of sanitary facilities and health services.

And yet, if properly managed, the uplands can offer opportunities for economic development while improving the quality of life of upland farmers and forest dwellers. It can be a major source of water, power and biological diversity. The uplands can also produce medicinal plants and high-value products such as organic foods, morels and fine wool (IFAD, 2001; Ramos 1991).

Amidst this background, the Asian NGO Coalition (ANGOC) initiated a project among upland farmers in the rural areas of Cagayan de Oro, a city in Northern Mindanao, Philippines. Majority of the farmers are *Higaonons*, an indigenous people in Mindanao.

Cagayan de Oro’s development, considered the economic hub of Northern Mindanao, has two faces. Its metropolis is the site of a lucrative trade and industry, sprawling subdivisions, modern infrastructure and busy commercial centers. But more than half of its one million population eke out a living that barely meet their basic needs. This includes the *Higaonons* and other farmers who were gradually pushed into the uplands to till ecologically-fragile lands of what used to be forest lands.

Though relatively near, around 25 kilometers from the urban center, their communities are deprived of basic services. Many have no access to drinking water, health services and sanitation. Access to these areas is very difficult. The agricultural resource base, a major source of their livelihood, is degraded. Poor farming practices further degrade the soil. Moreover, some continue to strip the forest cover in a desperate move for survival.

The forestlands of Cagayan de Oro have been logged three times over. As a consequence, Cagayan River has become heavily silted, and in 1993 the city’s coastline communities experienced heavy flash floods – the first in the city’s memory. But even

now, the indigenous communities occupying ancestral domain lands continue to be threatened by the encroachment of illegal loggers.

Figure 1. Map of Northern Mindanao highlighting Dansolihon in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines



II. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PARTNERS

The Project was inspired by the strong environmental movement in Cagayan de Oro. NGOs and people's organizations have taken bold steps that link public protests with affirmative action – in order to protect their environment and people's livelihood. They actively engaged in organized non-violent street actions, court cases, people's anti-logging checkpoints and other direct actions – integrated with the active organization of poor communities, livelihood activities, agricultural extension services, and negotiations for agrarian rights and stewardship contracts. Further, this mass-based movement has increasingly involved the city's growing middle class (university, media and professionals) not just as support groups but as actual environmental stakeholders.

ANGOC actively supported this growing movement by taking a lead role in linking NGOs and farmer groups with national government offices, media and international organizations. It provided technical support in documenting their experiences and translating them into policy proposals in their dialogues with policy makers. It also provided venues for sharing of information and experiences.

In 1996, ANGOC shared this experience with the Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty (now known as the International Land Coalition or ILC) and proposed that it be supported as a pioneering example of civil society program and as a testing ground for the Coalition to work at the local level. It received unanimous support from the Popular Coalition with financial assistance coming from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). In the interim period prior to the approval and release of project funds, Partners in Rural Development (PARTNERS), a Canadian NGO based in Ottawa, provided initial support to start off the process. Towards the end of the Project, the Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Project of the Japanese Embassy supported the Project in its attempt to link the farmers to the market.

ANGOC AND ITS LOCAL PARTNERS

ANGOC set up a field office to coordinate and monitor project implementation. It also adopted a few indigenous communities. However, it relied on its NGO partners and people's organizations (POs) for project implementation.

The major NGO partner is the Center for Alternative Rural Technology (CART). Established in 1986, CART has since been in the forefront of educating, mobilizing and organizing small farmers, marginal fishers, women, youth, urban poor and indigenous communities. It is a strong advocate of environmental protection and biodiversity, equitable distribution of land and women's empowerment and their integration in development.

Over the past 10 years, CART has organized over 200 people's organizations federated under the Task Force Macajalar (TFM). TFM is composed of organizations of farmers,

fisherfolks, indigenous communities, women, youth and urban poor groups who have joined hands to protect the environment, advance sustainable agriculture and implement agrarian reform both in the lowlands and in the uplands of Northern Mindanao. Most of these groups have been transformed into cooperatives and are implementing various income generating projects.

ANGOC also linked up with local government units and national government agencies, particularly the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Agriculture (DA) and Department of Health (DOH). The issuance of the Certificates of Stewardship Contact, a tenurial instrument that allowed the indigenous communities to manage the forestlands for 25 years was a product of collaboration between the local officials and the DENR.

These linkages also led to the formation of the Clean and Green Board of the City of Cagayan de Oro through an executive order by the City Mayor. The Clean and Green Board is a multi-sectoral group composed of government agencies, non-government organizations, media, police and the military, church and other civil society organizations. It was mandated to investigate illegal removal, cutting and/or transporting of trees and other forest products in violation of forestry laws in all the remaining forests in the city (Ares, 1999).

Other groups that were involved in the Project include Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan College of Nursing, Committee of German Doctors and Rotaract Club (see Annex A for brief organizational profiles of partners).

THE PROJECT SITE

The Project area covering five upland villages is located in southern part of Cagayan de Oro City, about 25 kilometers away. The lands are generally hilly and mountainous. The physiographic description is residual terrace to gently sloping to undulating.

Community infrastructures and basic services are very limited. There is no water supply system and electricity is limited to the main highway. The roads leading to the interior are plain surfaced or merely trail and impassable during wet season. There are no available communication facilities. Only elementary schools are available and those attending high school will have to go to another village. A government center provides primary

healthcare but with minimal personnel. A pair of doctor and nurse usually goes to the community once or twice a week.

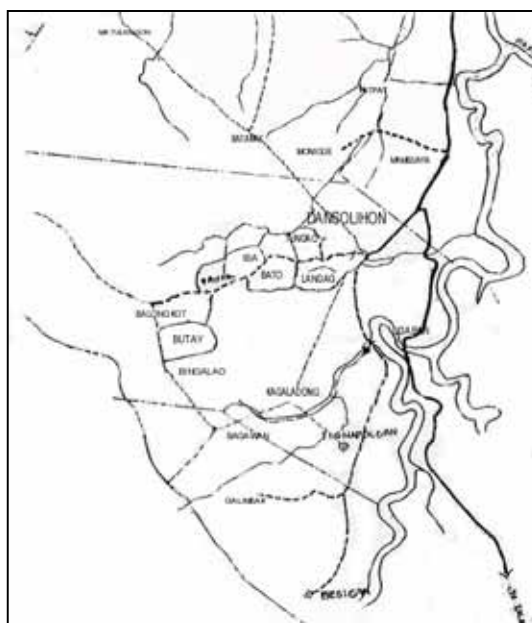


Figure 2. Map of the project site.

The villages can be generally described as economically-depressed communities. Commercial activity is minimal, limited to a handful of variety stores. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood with corn as the main crop accounting for about 90% of the total agricultural production. Other crops include coconut, pineapple and other fruit trees. Corn productivity is very low ranging from 0.5 to 1.0 ton per hectare, barely enough for consumption.

In Dansolihon, about 90% of the residents are *Higaonons*, an indigenous people. *Higaonons* are predominant in Northern Mindanao particularly in the Province of Bukidnon, the adjacent province to Cagayan de Oro. They refer to themselves as *Dumaan* (old) or *Tumandek* (originally from this place) but prefers to be called *Tagabukid* (from the mountains) to distinguish themselves from another indigenous community called *Dumagats* (from the sea). The lowlanders call them *nitibo*. They speak their own language called *binukid* and prefer to reside in the mountains (Ruiz, 1996).

They are dependent on the land for their survival. According to their cultural beliefs, their relation to the land is only as stewards as they believed only God (*Magbabaya*) and the guardian spirits can own lands. Swidden agriculture or shifting agriculture is the main form of cultivation. They also hold rituals before opening land for farming, before planting and before harvesting (Ruiz, 1996).

III. PROJECT INTERVENTIONS

ANGOC's project interventions may be classified into four major areas: a) access to resources and health services; b) increasing productivity and resource conservation; c) establishing market linkages; and d) reforming the policy environment. All these activities were directed towards enhancing the capacities of indigenous communities for them to actively participate in socio-economic and socio-political activities.

1. ACCESS TO LAND AND BASIC SERVICES

ACCESS TO LAND

Most of the upland farmers including the Higaonons cultivate the logged-over timberland. Technically, these lands are owned by the government. With high elevation and sloping terrain, soil is easily eroded causing siltation of the rivers.

Forest occupation is not an isolated problem in Cagayan de Oro. It was estimated in the 1990s that there are already around 14 million forest inhabitants. As a way of addressing this problem, the Government launched the strategy of Community Based Forest Management Program (CBFMP) where the communities are tapped to rehabilitate, protect and conserve the forests by granting them the management and sustainable use of the remaining forest resources. To formalize this arrangement, the forest occupants are given a certificate of stewardship contract (CSC) for individual farmers or families, a Community Based Forest Management Agreement (CBFMA) for the entire community and/or a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim (CADC) for organized indigenous communities.

To secure this contract or agreement, the Project undertook the following activities: a) organizational formation and strengthening of indigenous communities including official registration of these organizations with government bodies, b) support in the preparation of ancestral domain management plans, c) land survey to delineate boundaries and legal assistance, in areas where there are objectionable boundaries and d) facilitate the issuance of these legal contracts.

A critical support activity in land transfer is the organization of strong and viable farmer organizations as the government deals only with organized groups. To enhance their capability and to improve management of their resources, training courses were given on leadership and value formation, financial management, gender sensitivity training, sustainable agriculture, cooperative development, para-legal and environmental advocacy.

After less than two years, 1,650 hectares were distributed to the farmers under the CBFM Program.

Table 1. Data on no. of hectareage per farmer-beneficiary organizations.

Name of Organization	No. of hectareage
Tungao-Dayunan Higaonon-Dumagat Farmers Association (TUDAHIDUFA)	350 has.
Kapunungan sa Bato Upland Tribal Tiller (KAB-UTT)	250 has.
Butay Higaonon Farmers Association (BUHIFA)	300 has.
Langag Higaono Farmers Association (LAHIDUFA)	250 has.
Bayanga Higaonon Farmers Association (BAHIFA)	500 has.
Total	1,650 has.

Source: ANGOC Reports, 1999.

ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

The “inadequacy” of health services in the project area is an indication of the little support that indigenous communities receive from the government. And yet, it was difficult to implement socio-economic project without addressing the basic needs of the community. In consultation with the community, ANGOC incorporated the provision of health services as a component of the project.

As nothing much can be relied on from the Government in terms of financial and medical personnel, ANGOC together with the College of Nursing of Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan opted for the promotion of primary health care program. This approach called for the active participation of the community in assessing and in finding solutions to their health problems. It required the training of resident volunteer health workers on the use of low cost, appropriate technologies combined by the use of traditional medicines (herbs, finger pressure, etc.) and essential drugs.

After 2 years, ANGOC was able to train 25 female community health workers. Of the 25 volunteers, 10 continued to provide first aid services in their respective communities while the City Health Office of Cagayan de Oro absorbed 2 of them as regular health workers with corresponding honoraria.

Training courses and provision of health services (e.g. medical missions, free dental services, distribution of medicines) were made accessible to some 800 households. Sanitary latrines and community toilets were constructed benefiting 193 households. Four community herbal gardens were established and maintained by their respective organizations. A *Botika Binhi Orientation Seminar* was also conducted. *Botika Binhi* is a community drug insurance program aimed at making essential drugs accessible, affordable and available to local communities.

All these have been achieved through the collaboration of Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan College of Nursing, Department of Health, Rotaract Club of RI District 3870, volunteer health nurses and nursing students.

2. PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION

The challenge in enhancing productivity in the uplands is finding the balance between optimizing yields while enriching soil fertility. This is essential in reversing environmental degradation while providing food to the community. Aside from productivity, stability is also a major factor considered.

A critical decision at the start of the project is to delineate lands for cultivation and those that would have to be reforested. In fairly denuded and very steep areas, the communities decided to set them aside for reforestation. Some farmers had to transfer to other lands as they were cultivating very steep lands. But this decision is proving to be correct as the forest is now coming back to life. These areas are now planted with different varieties of hardwood and fruit trees such as acacia mangium, g-melina, narra, cashew, mango, jackfruit and santol. ANGOC was able to negotiate with DENR for some 139,500 seedlings for planting while the communities provided 5,000 seedlings themselves. A survival of about 60% was recorded.

The project took on a participatory technology development with heavy inputs on training. Training courses conducted were mostly on sustainable agriculture, integrated and diversified farming system, agro-forestry livestock management and reforestation. These courses were supported by the establishment of demonstration farms, cross-site visits and farmer-to-farmer exchanges. NGOs and government agencies were tapped to provide technical assistance. A farmer-trainer was hired to introduce sustainable agriculture practices and to supervise the farmers as they adopt these technologies.

Table 2. Agricultural training courses conducted

Course	Subject Areas
<i>Sustainable Agriculture Concepts, Principles and Practices</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National and Global Agricultural Situationer • Sustainable Agriculture (SA) in Relation to Ecology • Appropriate Technology and Spiritual Dimension of SA • Seven Dimensions of SA
<i>Integrated/Diversified Farming System</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating Livestock in Upland Farming • Crop Diversification • Bio-intensive Gardening • Intercropping • Contour Farming
<i>Sustainable Agro-Forestry Livestock Technology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursery Care and Management • Plant Propagation (orchard development, seed bed preparation) • Livestock Raising and Management (swine production, goat raising, caracow breeding and fattening, duck raising, quail raising) • Forage and Pasture Development
<i>Cross-Visit to</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction with fellow farmers

Course	Subject Areas
<i>Sustainable Agriculture Model Farms</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange of farming techniques • Appropriate Technology • Upscaling SA Initiatives

Source: ANGOC, 1999.

To complement these training courses, livelihood assistance was provided. Cattle fattening, goat raising, pig dispersal and poultry-raising were initiated among community members both for food and income generation. These livelihood projects were identified by the communities themselves and monitored by their respective organizations.

3. MARKET DEVELOPMENT

It was envisioned that with the increase in productivity, there was a need to establish market linkages. This was identified by the farmer beneficiaries as a critical link to increase their income. The products that they brought to the market are usually left unsold because they have no stalls to display their products. Established entrepreneurs and big businessmen already control these stalls.

The Project conducted a consultation among the farmer beneficiaries including other farmer groups in the area to determine the kinds of crops and the production volume that may be supplied to the market. A feasibility study was also conducted to determine the demand for the products of the farmers. Based on the information gathered, a market strategy was formulated. As financial assistance was necessary to start off the marketing activities, donors' support was sought. However, it took some time before assistance came. Finally, the Japanese Embassy, through its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Project, responded positively.

The project encountered a number of problems in implementing the marketing component. First, the timing was not favorable. It came at a time when production was low due to El Nino. Second, the marketing officer hired by the Project lacked the capacity to efficiently manage the nuances of linking with the market. Third, current production system of the upland farmers do not fit well with the requirements of the market.

The Project adjusted its strategy to focus on the local market instead. It was able to negotiate with the local government to provide the needed space for farmers to display their products. While it was a step backward, it gave the farmers the opportunity for a hands-on experience in marketing.

4. REFORMING THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

This intervention is part of ANGOC's strategy to link policy work at the macro level and community activities at the micro level. Changes in policy would have a broader reach as it will benefit other communities in a similar situation. Essentially, the

intervention is to translate field experiences into concrete policy options to influence government policies and programs.

POLICY DIALOGUES

The Project provided opportunities for indigenous communities, farmers and other sectors to dialogue with government agencies at the local, provincial and national levels. Community mobilizations served as avenues for education and awareness building on various interrelated issues particularly on access and control to resources.

A milestone event took place during the commemoration of World Food Day in 1998 when the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) accepted the invitation to dialogue with more than 500 representatives of indigenous communities, farmers, fisherfolks, women and urban poor organizations. At the end of the dialogue, the Secretary expressed full support to the different organizations and even distributed cattle to support the livelihood of the farmers.

Table 3. Issues and talking points

Sector	Demands
<i>Lumads/Indigenous Peoples</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate intervention and action to stop illegal logging and destruction of the watershed area • Clearer land-use policy for the uplands
<i>Upland Farmers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the DA to increase its promotion of and support to viable sustainable farming systems and through relevant policy favorable to farmers practicing organic farming and other sustainable farming practices • Greater technical support and assistance from government is needed to enable communities to engage in massive tree planting • More proactive efforts and direct extension work are needed • Direct provision of post-harvest facilities, particularly mechanical dryers for corn • Market assistance, particularly a trading facility/space in Cagayan de Oro for farmers to sell their produce
<i>Fisherfolk</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For DA to increase its promotion and support of coastal resources management – by increasing its support to community-based law enforcement to enable fisherfolk to protect their resources • For the DA Secretary to intervene in deputizing not just community PO leaders but also NGOs who have already been involved in Bantay-Dagat activities • For the DA Secretary to intervene in behalf of the fisherfolk communities, in coordinating with other agencies, in making industries more accountable and transparent in their activities

Sector	Demands
<i>Other General Concerns</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active DA support for agrarian reform, particularly on policy issues against land conversion, and the pursuit for an <i>integrated protected areas</i> system for agricultural production and sustainable food security at the household level • Direct assistance for the setting-up of small-scale irrigation systems • Direct DA assistance and support for providing safe, potable drinking water among many poor agricultural communities in Northern Mindanao • DA must take decisive, positive steps against bio-piracy and the collection and exporting of germplasm

Source: ANGOC, 1999.

INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING

Though not formally part of the plan, the Project was instrumental in the establishment of the City's Clean and Green Board in response to the monitoring work conducted by the farmers on illegal logging in the area adjacent to the project site. The Board is a multi-sectoral body chaired by the city mayor to oversee and monitor the faithful enforcement of forest laws and regulations and to investigate illegal cutting and transportation of trees and other forest products in violation of said forest laws. It may also recommend and assist in the prosecution of violators.

DIRECT ACTIONS

To stop illegal logging, multi-sectoral groups barricaded the main highways of Cagayan de Oro to prevent the passage of trucks carrying illegally cut logs. ANGOC facilitated the support of national groups such as the Bishop-Businessmen Conference (BBC) and the members of the Philippine Senate to the protesting groups.

Similarly, ANGOC assisted the farmers, fisherfolks and indigenous community who traveled to Manila to demand from the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) not to lift the transport ban of timber products from the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao to Northern Mindanao. The Cagayan de Oro – Lanao watershed has been reduced to about 3,000 hectares as of 1992 from 30,800 hectares in 1981.

DOCUMENTATION

The Project generated case studies focused on health and illegal logging issues. It also produced a video documentary on the Higaonons in Dansolihon, Cagayan de Oro. It depicted their effort to secure access to the land they till, make it productive in a sustainable manner and influence government to institute policies to protect their forests.

As part of ANGOC's accountability, a presentation of the ANGOC's poverty alleviation initiatives in Cagayande Oro was conducted. Participated by some 40 representatives from the community, local NGO partners, local government units and national government agencies, ANGOC presented the results of its interventions.

IV. IMPACT OF THE INTERVENTIONS

ACCESS TO 1,650 HECTARES UNDER CBFM

In less than two years, the Project was able to facilitate the release of three Community Based Forest Management Agreements (CBFMA) covering 1,150 hectares and an Integrated Social Forestry (ISF) Certificates of Stewardship Contracts (CSC) covering 500 hectares distributed to 363 farmers under the Community Based Forest Management Program (CBFMP) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

CBFMP addresses the continuing destruction of the Philippines' natural forests and responds to the problem of poverty among upland communities. It aims to simultaneously protect the environment, alleviate poverty and promote social justice by enlisting forest occupants to steward the uplands. It gives organized and empowered communities the right and responsibility to directly manage and benefit from forest resources through the issuance of different types of tenurial instruments. Among these instruments are the CBFMA and the CSC.

CBFMA is an agreement between the DENR and the participating people's organization that provides tenurial security and incentives to develop and manage specific portions of forest lands. The agreement has duration of 25 years renewable for another 25 years if terms and conditions of the contract are sufficiently met. CSC is similar to CBFMA but is awarded to individuals or families actually tilling portions of the area to be awarded or traditionally using the resource for all substantial portions of their livelihood. Each CSC covers a maximum of 5 hectares and has duration also of 25 years renewable for another 25 years. It is a type of co-management agreement between the Philippine Government and the farmers (http://www.forestsandcommunities.org/Country_Profiles/Philippines.html).

To award the vast tract of lands in less than two years is a phenomenal success as the feudal system is deeply rooted in the Philippine society. Any initiative to equitably distribute lands is fiercely resisted. The process involved organizing the farmers where each organization has to be officially accredited passing all the criteria of the Securities and Exchange Commission of the Philippine Government. Then their applications have to go through the government bureaucracy that took some time as they were scrutinized very carefully because there was another contesting party to the land.

The other claimant is related to the former mayor of the city allegedly responsible for the logging activities in the area. As they have established their presence in the village and have the resources to influence the DENR personnel, many of the farmers initially believed that the CBFMA will be awarded to them. Fortunately, the unrelenting pressure from the communities and the NGOs with the support from the local government unit convinced the DENR to decide in favor of the upland farmers. The local government unit professed that without the Project, the lands would surely be awarded to the other claimant.

With the awarding of this tenurial instrument, the farmers have secured their place in the community, opened access to other services such as credit and started to make long term plans in increasing agricultural productivity and in conserving the resource base. Essentially, with secured access to land they graduated from merely surviving to becoming productive members of the community.

ENVIRONMENTALLY AWARE AND EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES

Five community organizations were established and strengthened during the project period. These organizations served as the main vehicle by which the upland farmers systematize their community activities, participate in government programs and relate with other external organizations. Through the organizational processes, they learn the importance of having policies and procedures, of conserving their environment and in linking with government agencies and other institutions. Ultimately, they learn to participate in development processes knowing their rights and responsibilities.

In exercising these rights and privileges, they were successful in getting access to their lands within the legal framework of a government program. The difficult struggle became a valuable learning experience for them. By organizing themselves, they become a force to reckon with. By officially registering the organization, they gain access to a number of development programs offered by the government.

The communities have also become active in protecting the remaining forest. In a nearby watershed area within the village, members of the community discovered massive illegal logging activities. They took pictures of hardwood flitches under the houses and cut logs found deep within the forest. It was doubly dangerous as the persons involved are government personnel working supposedly to protect the forests. Through a multi-sectoral effort involving the government, military, LGUs, NGOs, media and the church, the accused persons were brought to court and penalized. The officials of the said government agency were suspended and transferred to other assignments. Moreover, an effort to reforest the area was initiated.

At the city level, the communities participated in several multi-sectoral activities such as setting up of checkpoints to monitor transport of forest products, barricading logging trucks and holding rallies in government offices calling for greater environmental awareness. At a personal level, some leaders have been tapped as resource persons to share their experiences with other upland communities.

A MORE STABLE AND PRODUCTIVE FARMING SYSTEM

As a result of various technical training, the farmers have adopted contour farming, diversified their crops and planted hardwood and fruit trees on very steep lands. More than 80,000 trees are now growing in severely deforested areas and on the banks of creeks and stream.

These farming technologies provided soil cover all year round and reduced soil erosion while enhancing agricultural productivity. Some farmers claimed an increase in farm income by as much as 25% though it cannot be generalized as there was no field

evaluation conducted. Swidden cultivation or shifting agriculture, a common practice among the Higaonons, has been greatly reduced.

The project also provided working animals and appropriate farm tools to selected farming households. These greatly reduced the workload and working hours at the farm. This allowed them to cater to other livelihood activities. The women, in particular greatly benefited from this intervention. With the reduced time in the farm, they are now able to attend to their children's needs and do other household chores.

IMPROVED HEALTH AND SANITATION PRACTICES

With the conduct of a short course on health and sanitation, the health center became more vibrant with the support from a core of health volunteers, the establishment of herbal medicine gardens and an functional referral system for those who have major sicknesses. Hygiene and sanitation was greatly improved.

Given the lack of doctors and resources for health services, the Project focused on preventive health care and on treating minor illnesses within the village. With the necessary training, it availed of the services of mothers to act as trained health volunteers to assist in health maintenance. The local government unit was impressed with the enhanced skills of the volunteer health workers that it decided to provide honorarium to two volunteers to perform their tasks on a regular basis.

An added bonus of the training program was the improvement in the literacy skills of the mothers. Before the training, most of the trainee-mothers have difficulties in writing and in comprehending concepts. After undergoing the health course, mothers showed an improvement in writing skills and in absorbing lessons. Moreover, their arithmetic skills also improved as the training included measurement problems.

INSTITUTED COLLECTIVE ACTION TO PROTECT THE FORESTS

At the initiative of the Project, the City Government created the Clean and Green Board to monitor the enforcement of forest laws and regulations and to investigate and prosecute illegal logging activities. The Board is a multi-sectoral body composed of government institutions, city council, NGOs, church, media, military, police and the National Bureau of Investigation. During the life of the Project, the Board apprehended and filed cases in court against DENR personnel involved in illegal logging activities in the project area that resulted to their suspension.

The formation of the Clean and Green Board reflects the high level of environmental awareness among various sectors in the city. This could be attributed to the strong environmental movement led by NGOs and organizations of farmers, fishermen and the urban poor. The contribution of the Project is more on establishing a mechanism for collective action participated in by the different sectors in addressing illegal logging.

V. LESSONS LEARNED

DEVELOPMENT IN UPLAND COMMUNITIES

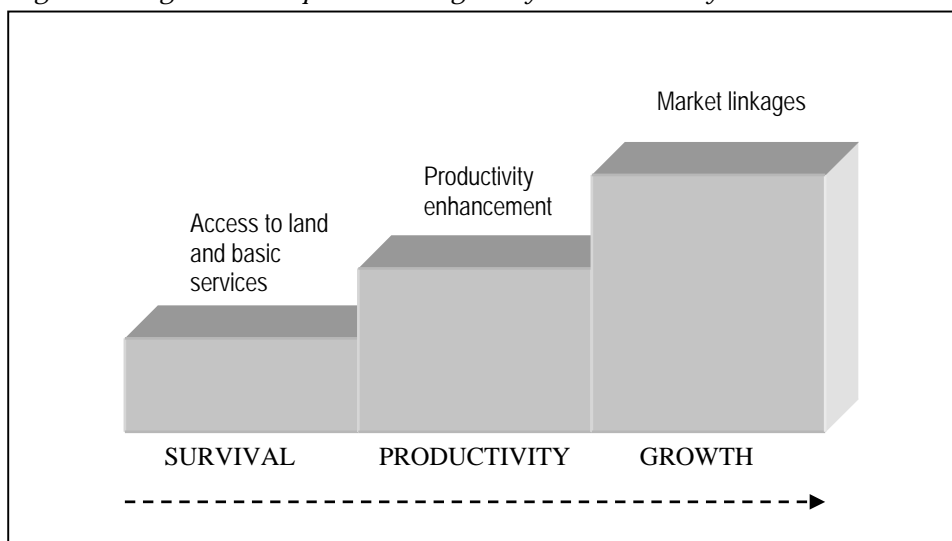
Development in upland communities progresses in stages; each stage building on the preceding stage.

The Dansolihon experience suggests that there is logical sequence in pursuing development in upland communities. The first stage deals with facilitating access to land, the main source of their livelihood. This is the survival stage where food insecurity is high, manifested by hunger and poor health. The primary concern is attaining land tenure that ensures livelihood security and stability. Provision of basic services such as potable water and health are also necessary.

Once access to land is secured, the subsequent preoccupation is enhancing productivity and stability of the land. Some interventions at this stage include technology improvement, farming systems development and effective resource management. The primary objective is to satisfy food needs of the family at all times. Stability is equally emphasized at this stage as the farm and the farming household is vulnerable to external shocks and calamities.

The third stage comes when the farm produces enough to satisfy the food needs of the family with surpluses to sell in the market. From the sole purpose of producing for one's needs, it adds on the market dimension as a major concern. The demands of the market are now considered in its production system. This is the growth stage when the household hopefully graduates from poverty.

Figure 3. Stages of development undergone by the community



Underlying all these development processes is the need to enhance capacities of upland farmers; their organizations as the main vehicle for change.

As major stakeholders in the area, the upland farmers play a key role in determining the direction of development of their communities. And yet, after years of neglect and deprivation, their capacities are diminished and resources depleted. It is therefore necessary to enhance their capacities for them to effectively participate in the development processes. Such an investment ensures community ownership of the project and lays down the foundation for a continuing development even after the project.

Organizations were also established as a venue for them to learn, to articulate their plans and do collective actions. It is through these organizations that they learn to appreciate their rights as members of the community, including the corresponding responsibilities that go with these rights. These organizations become the vehicle to link up with other groups and other institutions. By binding together, they also become aware that government agencies start to listen and respond to their demands.

For in the end, development is not only a question of how much service the government can provide to these communities. It is also a question of how these communities are able to assert their rights and in turn become productive to contribute to the greater good of the society.

FACILITATING ACCESS TO LAND

A legal framework for the use and ownership of productive resource that is consistent with existing cultural practices is essential towards its sustainable utilization.

It must be recognized that given the scarcity of lands and the lack of opportunities in the urban centers, millions of farmers have begun to occupy and cultivate forest lands. And without a clear legal framework on land utilization, the tendency is for forest occupants to misuse or abuse the lands which may have detrimental consequences on the environment.

The Community Based Forest Management Program of the Philippine Government is an attempt to respond to this situation. It offers a stewardship contract with the farmers for them to till the land on the condition that they protect the resource base. The agreement is for 25 years renewable for another 25 years. It is envisioned that by providing the legal framework, the farmers would conserve the forest while satisfying their food and other basic needs thereby enhancing the stability of the upland ecosystem.

The stewardship arrangement works well with Higaonons as it is akin to their concept of land use and ownership. For the Higaonons, dominions over a territory give them the right to usufruct but not absolute ownership of the property. The value orientation [of the Higaonons] when dealing with property seems to be leaning towards “community good” rather than individual rights (Ruiz, 1996). But this tenurial arrangement is now being put to a test as more investors take interest in the land. There are now talks of

leasing the land for cultivation of plantation crops where the farmers will be hired as workers of the plantation.

AGRICULTURE IN MARGINAL LANDS

Agriculture in upland marginal lands performs a dual function in providing livelihood to farmers and in preserving the agricultural resource base.

The upland area surrounding Cagayan de Oro is critical in maintaining the ecological balance of the city. It provides the necessary watershed that ensures steady flow of water supply, prevents siltation of the river system, and minimize occurrence of floods. Unfortunately, it has been logged three times over and most of the lands are now under cultivation.

The situation calls for a form of agriculture that can produce the food needs of the farming household while enhancing the fertility of the soil. At the community level, it demands a comprehensive land use plan that balances both the need for food production and conservation. This is a critical balance where overemphasis of one function can be destructive to both functions. It is like walking on a tightrope, the greater the level of poverty and resource degradation, the more critical the need for balancing.

For marginal lands, equal emphasis should be given to stability and sustainability aside from productivity.

The Government has always argued that the problem of food insecurity in the country is a problem of low productivity. This argument is true but inadequate. Vulnerability to external shocks has played a critical role in the annual volume of food supply. In rice, for example, the Philippines have met the demand for only 5 years since 1980. All these five years have been associated with good weather.

The case of Higaonons in Dansolihon presents a case of a vulnerable farming system where a narrow focus on productivity may not be sustainable or can even become counter productive. In tilling marginal lands that are prone to erosion, farmers recognize the importance of productivity but equally give a premium on stability and sustainability.

Many of the poor farmers in the Philippines are in a similar situation with the Higaonons. If these farming systems are stabilized then perhaps the government may be nearer its goal of ensuring food security. It is therefore recommended that in designing an agricultural intervention for poverty reduction in marginal lands, a balance of productivity, stability and sustainability should be considered as indicators of success.

Resource conservation work of upland farmers through the utilization of sustainable farming practices benefits all and therefore deserves public incentive.

Farming practices of upland farmers have consequences on other sectors and stakeholders in the community. They could contribute to the continued supply of water even during dry season or they could bring flash floods during wet season. While it can be argued that sustainable farming practices can achieve the twin goal of increasing productivity and resource conservation, the reality is that there are situations when farmers have to choose one over the other. And based on the Dansolihon experience, personal needs come first as in instances when farmers have to cut the trees to survive.

Adopting sustainable farming practices for resource conservation requires investment in time and resources. Given the poverty level in upland communities, it may require external interventions especially at the initial stage of development. Along this line, it is recommended that the government shares in these investments by providing public incentives to farmers practicing sustainable farming technologies.

PARTICIPATION IN THE MARKET

The sustainability of the upland production system is not compatible with the demands of the market.

When the farmers were producing some surpluses, they expressed the need to establish market linkages to sell their products. But, as the experience of the farmers suggests, participation in the market requires different parameters. Volume, product quality and regularity of supply are some of the market requirements before a product is accepted in the market.

The current production system of upland farmers does not fit well with these market requirements as it favors diversity of products following the natural seasonal cycle. The products sold are very diverse ranging from three to as many as eight different products per farmer. The quantity of various products, however, is not enough to consistently supply the volume needed by consumers. The volume and frequency of the harvest is such that it has over supply during the rainy season but not enough during the dry season.

Given the fragility of the land and the lack of resources to establish an irrigation system, the farmers have very limited choices in modifying their production system. What could have been done, but which the Project did not have the time to accomplish, is to coordinate with other groups in the area to consolidate their surplus products. This will give them the needed volume. The timing and product quality can then be managed. But this requires a certain level of organization both at the production and marketing phases.

ENHANCING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

The multi-stakeholder approach provides a collaborative framework that facilitates project implementation.

Prior to the actual implementation of the project, a number of consultations were conducted involving key stakeholders: government agencies, LGUs, NGOs, academe and the beneficiaries themselves (see Annex 1). With these consultations, ANGOC was able to convey the purpose of the Project and clarify areas for possible collaboration with the other stakeholders.

Although the project beneficiaries warmly accepted ANGOC, there was resistance from a number of stakeholders. Government staff at the local level is not as receptive as they viewed NGOs in general as anti-government. Some community members involved in illegal logging showed aggressive resistance to the Project. Similarly, illegal claimants of the land who may be dispossessed because of the new program of the government to give stewardship to the community are also not pleased with the Project entry.

By treating them as part of the stakeholders, the Project was able to win them over to support the Project or at least lessen the resistance. The first step was to know and understand the reasons for their resistance. For some, it was only a matter of recognizing and involving them in the development processes in the community. The next step was to involve them in all project activities whenever possible. By recognizing that they are stakeholders and therefore part-owners of the Project, their resistance was minimized. Finally, transparency in Project operation helps build trust and confidence necessary to push some of the objectives of the Project.

VI. RETROSPECTION

The upland performs an important function in maintaining a healthy balance of the ecosystem. And yet, it is now threatened with an increasing population due to land scarcity in the lowlands and absence of opportunities in the urban centers. While questioning this skewed development, the pressing challenge in the uplands is achieving the twin goal of providing livelihoods to upland farmers while conserving the natural resource base.

The Project addressed this development challenge by enhancing the capacities of the upland farmers for them to participate in the development processes. Through training and organizational building, they become part of the community dynamics interrelating with other stakeholders of varied interests.

In the process, they were able to secure contract with the government to have legal access to lands they till. This improvement in tenurial arrangement enhanced their productivity, opened access to other opportunities and nurtured their sense of belongingness to the community. In turn, they take the responsibility to protect the natural resources in the uplands by adopting sustainable farming technologies and by becoming strong advocates for forest conservation.

The Project also attempted to link the farmers to the market when they were producing some surpluses in their farms. But market participation requires a different set of parameters that would have implications on their current production system and organization. The Project did not have the time work on this but its importance has been recognized. This could be an area where other groups may want to work on.

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ANNEX 1: MATRIX OF STAKEHOLDERS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROJECT

Area of collaboration	Applied Interventions														
	Access to Resources				Productivity Enhancement			Market Development			Policy Dialogue				
	Land Tenure Improvement		Access to Health Services		Conduct of Trainings on SA and Established Demo Farms	Reforestation	Livestock Production	Consultation and Planning ¹	Resource Accessing	Procurement of Equipments & Actual Marketing Service	Awareness Bldg. & Education	Conduct of & Participation to Different Fora			
	Community Organizing	Organizational Building (conduct of trainings, registration, etc)	Survey of Boundaries and Awarding of Certificates	Community Planning (CRMF)									Provision of Trainings	Establishment of herbal garden	Construction of latrines
Funding	IFAD, PRD	IFAD, PRD	IFAD, PRD	IFAD, PRD	IFAD, PRD	IFAD, PRD	IFAD, PRD	IFAD, PRD	IFAD, PRD	IFAD		Japanese Embassy	IFAD, PRD	IFAD, PRD	
Implementation	CART, ANGOC, POS ²	CART, ANGOC, POS, DOLE	CART, ANGOC, POS, DENR	CART, ANGOC, LGUs, Line agencies	ANGOC, XU-CN, DOH, Rotaract Clubs of RI District 3870, volunteer nurses and students, POS, CHO	ANGOC, SMBK	ANGOC	ANGOC, CART, SAC, POS	ANGOC, CART, POS, DENR	ANGOC, CART, POS	ANGOC, CART, POS	ANGOC	ANGOC Producers: POS, SAC, IPAR, CART, CART-POS Consumers ATC, SEARSOLIN, SHJM, MDB, Xavier heights Subdivision	ANGOC, POS	ANGOC, CART, Line Agencies (DA, DENR, DAR), LGUs, CGB, 160 farmers & fisherfolks reps from TFM, Local NGOs, Manila-based NGOs (BBC, FPE), SCENR, DND, Parish of Wao, Task Force Subungan
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of updates and reports by ANGOC-Field Office to ANGOC-Manila Feedback sessions conducted by ANGOC-Field Office with POs (farmer-beneficiaries) Field/ site visits by ANGOC, IFAD and PARTNERS Submission of reports to IFAD and PARTNERS 									<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of updates and reports by ANGOC-Field Office to ANGOC-Manila Field/ site visits by ANGOC and Japan Embassy Periodic submission of reports to Japanese Embassy 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring by the Clean and Green Board³ on the policies initiated implemented by line agencies 		
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local fora initiated by ANGOC with intended beneficiaries and other local NGOs Internal Evaluation by ANGOC-Manila Assessment done by IFAD Policy Division Assessment by delegates from PARTNERS 									<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings initiated by ANGOC with CART and POS to assess the project Project Evaluation conducted by Japan Embassy through SEED (External Evaluator) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ANGOC-Field Office and ANGOC-Manila Assessment by Clean and Green Board 		

¹ Planning includes data gathering and proposal generation.

² Peoples' organizations organized by ANGOC and CART (see Table 1).

³ ANGOC served as secretariat to the Clean and Green Board which was a result of a meeting with the City Mayor of Cagayan de Oro, ANGOC, and its farmer-partners and Task Force Subungan.

ANNEX 2: LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED FOR THE STUDY

Name	Designation	Sector/Institution
Emerio Singane	President	Tungao Dayoray Higaonon Dumagat Farmers Association (TUDAHIDUFA), Sawmill Dansolihon, Cagayan de Oro City
Merlita Velez	Volunteer Health Worker/Member	Tungao Dayoray Higaonon Dumagat Farmers Association (TUDAHIDUFA), Sawmill Dansolihon, Cagayan de Oro City
Felipa P. Tapayan	Administrative Officer	CART, Inc. 164 Cabaraban Subdivision, Puntod, Cagayan de Oro City Telfax: (08822) 710635 E-mail: cart@webgate.com.ph
Sustines C. Magallanes	Project Officer	CART, Inc. 164 Cabaraban Subdivision, Puntod, Cagayan de Oro City Telfax: (08822) 710635 E-mail: cart@webgate.com.ph
Rodolfo Tabudlong	Barangay Chairman	Barangay Dansolihon Cagayan de Oro City Cell No. 09185579668
Atty. Marilou R. Ares	Legal Counsel/Atty. at Laws	Clean and Green Board Cagayan de Oro City Tel. No. (08822)729612
Neil Martin	Former Community Health Nursing Coordinator of Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan College of Nursing Dean College of Nursing Lyceum of Iligan Iligan City	College of Nursing Lyceum of Iligan Iligan City Cell No. 09166470255
Paciana S. Acampado	Chief Regional CBFM	Department of Environment and Natural Resources Cagayan de Oro City Tel. No. (08822)726280,726243
Maricar M. Simene	Former Project Officer of ANGOC Mindanao	Asian NGO Coalition Mindanao Cell No. 09177077688
Jerry J. Gallaron	Past District Rotaract Representative	Rotaract Club of Metro-Cagayan de Oro Rotary International District 3870 Cell No. 09163769204
Dittmar Schug	Program Manager	Committee of German Doctors, Xavier University Mortolo-Hayes Sts. Cagayan de Oro City

Name	Designation	Sector/Institution
		Tel. Nos. (08822) 726676, (088) 8572143
Nathaniel Don E. Marquez	Executive Director	C/o ANGOC 5-B Marilag St., UP Village Diliman, Quezon City Philippines Tel: (632) 4337653-54 Fax: (632) 9207434 Email: angoc@angoc.ngo.ph
Mary Grace D. Santos	Executive Assistant	C/o ANGOC Email: grsangoc@philonline.com

ANNEX 3: BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

CENTRE FOR ALTERNATIVE RURAL TECHNOLOGY, INC.

The Centre for Alternative Rural Technology, Inc. (CART) is a non-government organization working with people's organizations towards social transformation, sustainable development and empowerment of the people. It is a non-profit, non-stock corporation registered with the Security and Exchange Commission of the Philippine Government.

It was founded in 1986 at the University of the Philippines, Los Banos, Laguna by a group of concerned development workers, academicians, farmer leaders and community organizers. Since then, CART has been in the forefront of educating, mobilizing and organizing the small farmers, marginal fishers, women, youth, urban poor and indigenous communities.

To date, CART is serving some 200 people's organizations of farmers, fisherfolk, women, indigenous people, rural youth and urban poor. Most of these groups have been transformed into cooperatives and are implementing various income generating projects. Two of its PO leaders are presently sitting as full-fledged council members of the Presidential Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD).

ROTARACT CLUB

Rotaract is a global organization of young men and women ages 18-30 of similar backgrounds and interests who enjoy the fruits of effective teamwork, the success of worthwhile projects, and the bonds of lasting friendship.

Rotaract is a junior organization of the Rotary. It is founded primarily to support and assist the Rotary in its objective to serve the community where it belongs and foster international understanding. As such, it is Rotary's partner in service and goodwill--- socio-civic.

Rotaract Club is more than a community service club. It is part of a global effort to bring peace and international understanding to the world. This effort starts at the community level, but it knows no limits in its outreach. The Rotaract Club will be a community service activity of its sponsoring Rotary Club, which is a member of Rotary International (the worldwide association of more than 29,113 Rotary Clubs).

Rotaract is a non-political and non-sectarian organization. It brings new energy, fresh ideas of service, increased support to projects, a new type of teamwork, and future members for the Rotary Club. In short, when a Rotaract Club is organized, everyone benefits -- the community, the potential Rotaractors, and the sponsoring Rotary Club.

COMMITTEE OF GERMAN DOCTORS

The Committee of German Doctors for Developing Countries is a charitable, secular, humanitarian organization, founded in 1983 by a Jesuit. The non-governmental Committee (NGO) works in developing countries with volunteer German Physicians primarily to give medical assistance to poor people in need who cannot avail of any other medical services. Adhering to its humanitarian goals, the Committee is politically neutral and independent. Through its work for the poor and its effort to increase awareness among the German people, the Committee tries to contribute to the understanding between people and thus help promote justice and peace among nations.

All German doctors working with the Committee are volunteers who do not receive any payment for their service. Most of them give their 6 weeks vacation time for their short-term service. However, several stayed for three months up to two years in the Philippines (with a small honorarium). Their service is integrated in the local health organizations where the physicians work as “visiting doctors” in cooperation with local staff.

One of the project components in Mindanao is the Community Health Care Center. Located at the campus of Xavier University, the Center is a joint venture between the Committee and Dr. Jose P. Rizal College of Medicine. The primary purpose of the project is to provide free health service exclusively to the very poor of the region. Furthermore it is designed to assist the College of Medicine in its goal of training physicians with a strong bias toward community medicine.

The Committee is also supporting indigent patients admitted in government hospitals in town with free medicine and other forms of support.

XAVIER UNIVERSITY-ATENEO DE CAGAYAN, COLLEGE OF NURSING

The XU College of Nursing is one of the top performing nursing schools in the country, with an excellent rate of board passing including board toppers. The graduates are recognized for their excellent training and high ideals for service. All XU students are called: “to be men and women for others.”

As a service profession, the XU nursing program does not only focus on the technical, communication and critical thinking skills required, but also on the value and character formation of the student. Their service career is contextualized with one’s personal development. Its impact on the care-receiver and the community at large are the important concerns of the program.

The College tradition of excellence and service is evident through its graduates’ exemplary performance in board examinations and in the practice of nursing profession in the Philippines and other country as well.