

# BUILDING FOOD-SECURE COMMUNITIES THROUGH ENHANCED TENURE SECURITY: Insights of indigenous peoples in Bukidnon, Philippines



*Members of MILALITRA, Inc. with SALaR partners from Laos and Uganda.*

## INTRODUCTION

Concerns over the food insecurity situation in developing countries are reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030. An essential element in enhancing food security and reducing poverty in most rural communities, is improving access to land, increasing security of tenure and enhancing capacities to sustainably use land and resources.

With the overall goal of improving land and natural resources tenure security of rural smallholder farmers, the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), as facilitated by UN-Habitat, is implementing in Uganda, the Philippines and Laos the program "Secure Access to Land and Resources (SALaR)" Project through the support of Germany's Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

In contribution to SALaR Project, the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) in partnership with



More than one-fifth of the country's total population - 22 million Filipinos - still live below the national poverty line (Philippine Statistical Authority, 2015). Majority of the poor reside in rural areas and many of them rely on agriculture as the main source of income. Among the subsectors of agriculture, those living in the uplands and engaged in forestry activities have the highest incidence of poverty at 68 percent. Majority of these upland dwellers are indigenous peoples (IPs) estimated to be between 10 to 20 percent of the national population (PIDS, 2012). Ironically, these communities who rely on agriculture for a living are also considered "food poor".

the Xavier Science Foundation, Inc. (XSF) aim to enhance the tenurial security of about 2,500 households of indigenous peoples in two municipalities in Bukidnon, Northern Mindanao through the initiative "Improving Tenure Security of Smallholder Farmers in Select Areas in the Philippines."

In particular, ANGOC and XSF shall collaborate with three IP organizations to increase the uptake and enhance their capacities to implement land tools towards increasing tenurial security. Located in the province of Bukidnon, Mindanao, Philippines, these IP organizations are the:

- **Miarayon Lapok Lirongan Talaandig Tribal Association, Inc. (MILALITTRA, Inc.)**, covering four barangays in the municipality of Talakag. MILALITTRA, Inc. is composed of approximately 2,500 households. The group was awarded a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) of 11, 367 hectares in 2003. On the other hand, the group's Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP) is being updated.
- **Nagkahiusang Manobong Manununod sa Yutang Kabilin (NAMAMAYUK)** covers barangays Bacusanon and Nabaliwa in the municipality of Pangantucan. NAMAMAYUK has applied for a CADT of 3,506 hectares and has already formulated its ADSDPP. The community is composed of 208 households.
- **Portulin Talaandig Tribal Association, Inc. (PTTA, Inc.)** covers barangays Portulin, New Eden, Concepcion and Dagolos in the municipality of Pangantucan. It has applied for a CADT of 6,679.83

hectares and has already completed its ADSDPP. It has 165 family members.

Details of the organizational profiles of these three IPOs are available at <https://angoc.org/resources/profiles/>.

### WHAT IS THIS PAPER ABOUT?

This document aims to contribute to the learning process of SALaR Project from the point of view of the partner IP communities.

As such, the contents of this document are drawn from the reflections of the partner IP organizations arising from a series of focus group discussions (FGDs) facilitated by XSF staff. Around 77 IP community representatives (leaders, women, youth, members) from MILALITTRA, Inc., NAMAMAYUK and PTTA, Inc. provided their insights on land and food security, relevance, most significant change, fostering partnerships, sustainability, major challenges, key opportunities and lessons learned from the GLTN-ANGOC-XSF initiative.

The insights are complemented from information contained in various sources: a) project progress reports; b) exchanges between and among staff of ANGOC and XSF; c) discussions during the SALaR Mid-Term Review Mission; and, d) reflections from the SALaR Learning Exchange Visit.

### DEFINING LAND AND FOOD SECURITY FROM THE LENS OF IPs

Land tenure security according to the IPs, is a right to land as members and stewards of the ancestral domain. Respondents of the FGDs define land tenure security as:



- A guarantee or assurance that land will not be susceptible to land grabbing threats and affected by plantation expansions owned by corporations and private sectors. Chiefly, it is a right not to be displaced from their homes.
- Security is earned through a tangible medium or document (e.g. certificate signed by government officials and tribal chieftains to recognize the IPs entitlement to land) which does not necessarily equate to a land title.
- The ability to reclaim and sustain land tenure even to small parcels of land through a tangible evidence.
- Financially able to work the land and invest in farming and agricultural livelihood.
- Land security does not and should not endorse leasing or selling out lands as an endowment for their heirs and for the incoming generations to live.
- Land tenure should abide with the indigenous peoples' cultures.
- Lives depend on land; and as their source of refuge, tenure security should include rights to protecting the forestlands of Mt. Kalatungan as it comprises their ancestral domain.
- Entails the importance of land delineation among family members to prevent disputes and good relations between neighbors on land boundary matters.

However, unclear delineations and arbitrary land claims give rise to disputes among family and community members. Among the issues and challenges encountered on land tenure are as follows:

- Minor disputes among neighbors and family members due to overlapping land claims, arbitrary land boundary indicators and absence of any supporting land document to certify occupancy.
- Reluctance to till due to vague and arbitrary boundary indicators among neighbors where one can easily

expand/move and even impulsively destroy his/her neighbors' crops.

- During time immemorial, ancestors would verbally give out lands without clear boundary indicators and measurements. Since the ancestral domain eventually consisted of mixed ethnicities, e.g. Iumads and Bisayas, not everyone is knowledgeable of such boundaries.
- Minor disputes among family members on land boundary matters; the need to subdivide land for their heirs.
- Dilatory process in claiming the CADT.
- Lack of knowledge and resources e.g. tools, equipment, livestock towards land cultivation, and capital for agricultural livelihood.
- Some residents sell land to non-IPs.
- Deception due to lack of education (e.g. submission to those who sell-out land in the ancestral domain).
- Parcels of land were sold to non-indigenous individuals; some IPs do not own land.
- Most lands in the barangay are bought. However, they do not hold any legal document to support their tenure; not even a "deed of absolute sale."
- Borrowed lands from families before were sold and were no longer retrieved for lacking any supporting document, tangible proof or evidence.

In order to manage and resolve such disputes, IPs resort to their Council of Elders. Whenever there are conflicts or small disagreements on the part of the households particularly on boundary issues, these are being brought to the attention of the Elders.

On the other hand, food security to their understanding pertains to the ability to provide nutritionally-adequate food not only to their respective families but should also be made available for the general populace, including non-farming individuals. Thus, engaging to farming and agricultural livelihood is a matter of utmost concern.



Respondents defined food security as follows:

- Be able to utilize the land with various crops e.g., corn, luya, etc. or root crops as an alternative to rice.
- Be able to raise crops in one's backyard to avoid the harmful effects of chemically-fertilized crops in the market.
- With land security, households are enthused to work the land and thereby achieve food security.
- Food intake quantity depends on the size/space of their farm lots.
- Their survival is dependent on their territory.

Thus, there is a strong link between land and food security. In fact, **land security is food security**. IPs depend on land resources for livelihood where they can access and/or consume safe and nutritionally-adequate food for at least three times a day; acknowledging the value of land cultivation and agricultural labor. On the other hand, food security is dependent on land tenure security. While some of them grow food in their backyards, food crops sold in markets contain excessive chemical fertilizers that can be harmful to their health; and without access to land, the following challenges as identified will not be addressed.

## ON RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT

Land tenure security is a right, as believed by the IPs. A tangible evidence or any form of document that will secure their tenure rights to land will enthruse them to invest in farming and agricultural livelihood in which food security is highly dependent on. Land tenure security is realized through the issuance of certificate as a medium of proof or evidence, thus increasing their sense of ownership and security to land.

Land delineation is necessary to resolve disputes in the family and community. Significantly, the project has fostered a sense of entitlement and security to land to address

tenurial challenges and issues. As such, entitlement to land increased their hopes for their CADT application.

From arbitrary boundary indicators, households are now informed of their respective land boundaries that has promoted understanding between neighbors. Subsequently, measuring and delineating land alone would resolve disputes in the community in general.

In addition, the concepts of land conflict management and resolution have been introduced to the IPs during the *Forum and Training of Trainors on Landscape Governance* in June and July 2019 in Cagayan de Oro City, Misamis Oriental and Valencia City, Bukidnon in Northern Mindanao, Philippines. Such tools are among the critical methodologies and mechanisms in defending the land rights and tenure security of IPs. During the said activity, IPs have discussed existing land-related conflicts in their territories, identifying the parties involved, history, and effects.

The project thus is deemed relevant to the community as highlighted in the following statements:

- It is the lifelong hope of IPs to own a tangible evidence or medium that would signify their ownership to land.
- To recognize, protect and promote their rights as IPs is stipulated in the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA). Accordingly, the project promoted their rights particularly to land. Through a simple form of certificate, they would already be able to hold something they can verily call "theirs".
- The project will give them a sense of security on land against land grabbing threats.
- It guarantees them that rights to land, inherited from their ancestors will extend to their heirs and still be able to determine their respective land boundaries to prevent conflict.



- The certificate of customary land occupancy will somehow serve as a proof that they are members of the Indigenous Peoples' Organization.
- With the pending Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) application, indigenous peoples have yet to acquire any tangible material recognizing their rights even to small farms and parcels of land.
- While indigenous peoples in the ancestral domain do not hold land titles that are still inherited from their ancestors, the certificate can be one helpful medium to earn entitlement on the lands they till.
- IPs see themselves as "just farmers" who cannot provide documents for themselves.
- Despite being in a remote area, NGOs still managed to reach out to the community for the project.
- Emerging issues on land boundaries have been clarified and addressed.
- Aiming for land tenure security amidst persistent non-indigenous claimants

that had caused confusions among IP communities, cannot be guaranteed and addressed without the project.

- The certificate would be a good alternative to help secure their land tenure since CADT areas do not require tax declaration as a proof of ownership.
- The CADT does not provide pertinent documents to individuals separately.
- Resolved several issues and disputes concerning land tenure among individuals has reduced the workload of the barangay officials.
- It allowed them to allocate and subdivide land among family members that will serve as a basis to secure tenure of their heirs in the ancestral domain.
- The project enthused the IPs to work harder as stewards of the land they depend for livelihood and sustenance for the family.
- Addressing land boundary concerns would prevent disputes.
- The project increased their hope for environmental conservation. It is considered one contributing factor that will help further forestlands in

As part of the intentions of the project on improving the tenure security of the members of the three IP organizations, information and data on land and tenure of the target beneficiaries were collected and analyzed using the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) as the primary land tool. The survey tool (household questionnaire) used in data collection is available at <https://angoc.org/gltn/resources/2306-2/>.

The data gathering stage employed the participatory enumeration approach where 23 IP volunteers (17 females, 6 males; 5 of 23 are youth) were trained and engaged as enumerators.

Through the participatory enumeration processes and use of STDM tool, boundaries of house, garden, and farm lots were identified. These information were documented and recorded, and indicated in the Certificates of Customary Land Occupancy issued to the IP-beneficiaries.

To date, the initiative has covered:

- 1,958 households enumerated (MILALITTRA, Inc. – 1,406; NAMAMAYUK – 318; PTTA, Inc. – 234);
- 1,747 house parcels mapped (MILALITTRA, Inc. – 1,241; NAMAMAYUK – 272; PTTA, Inc. – 234);
- 1,888 farm parcels mapped (MILALITTRA, Inc. – 1,456; NAMAMAYUK – 245; PTTA, Inc. – 187); and,
- 52 garden parcels mapped (MILALITTRA, Inc. – 35; NAMAMAYUK – 17).

A garden is defined as a parcel of land within an area near the house while the farm refers to large parcels of land distant from the house.

Soon after the household enumeration has been done, the encoding in the STDM software process is undertaken. Henceforth, validation by the community members on data generated is observed to ensure accuracy prior to the issuance of the certificate.

As of this writing, a total of 115 certificates of customary land occupancy have been distributed to the IPs in the three organizations.



their ancestral domain in the long run. Entitlement to land would help IPs to become more effective stewards of the environment.

- Entitlement to land fueled their motivation to grow more trees for the environment and not by any means sell out land.
- With a tangible proof or evidence, community members will become more assertive to work the land.
- The community would likely become less susceptible to logging threats.
- Land security in a way would promote livelihood opportunities that could potentially help the community rise out of poverty.
- Disputes could arise since there are no separate documents to determine land boundaries and secure tenure among individuals.
- Resolving disputes on land boundary matters is necessary; respect in the family begets respect in the area or community.

### ON MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

Been able to delineate land has contributed in resolving disputes and has enhanced relationships between neighbors in the communities. Furthermore, the importance of their domain has been realized, increasing their motivation to bring their CADT application forward, through which, has also discouraged them from selling out their land.

Among other positive changes observed as contributed by the project are as follows:

- Significantly, the project resulted to improved relationships among the tribes of the IP organizations. It fostered respect, unity and understanding among youth, women, men, Council of Elders, and other members of the community.
- Comprehension of project goals and objectives unified and enhanced

relationships among members of the IP organizations.

- Reduced their fear from land grabbing threats and from being displaced from land to engage on agricultural livelihood.
- Brought high hopes to better living conditions in the community.
- Realized the importance of the project to provide them with land tenure security and have influenced more people to participate in the survey.
- Children were able to observe in the enumeration process. While imparting to them the importance of the project that would discourage them to sell their land in the future; awareness is also an integral part to becoming effective members and stewards of the ancestral domain.

The project is further aimed to be sustained for the incoming generations to prevent disputes from reoccurring.

Reiterating the positive impact of the project in the land sector, the respondents have also expressed the following sentiments:

- Tenure security is as important as environmental conservation; planting trees is vital to prevent soil erosion as needed for agricultural production, and to generally reduce vulnerability towards the impacts of disasters.
- Since the project can provide solutions to problems concerning land tenure, any problem that may arise, as per the community members, is perceived feasible. Significantly, with the aid of these NGOs, local government units have become more engaged with the community.
- Community's enduring determination in claiming for their ancestral domain title.
- Land tenure security is aimed to be sustained for the incoming generations.
- Respective households were able to obtain separate certificates to secure



their land tenure since CADT areas are only provided with a single document. Such entitlement fueled their motivation to even more protect and care for the ancestral domain and discourage them from leasing and selling out land.

- Determined land boundaries will secure their farm lots and thus will contribute to food security. Moreover, tenure security allowed them to work the land for food without the need to rely on markets; as such may produce crops grown with excessive chemical fertilizers that can be harmful to them.

Another area with significant change that the respondents observed revolve on being equipped with knowledge and skills to effectively defend their rights in the ancestral domain through the following land tools:

- Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration. The concept of Landscape Governance has provided the unifying framework

GLTN tools	CSO tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM)</li> <li>■ Participatory Enumeration</li> <li>■ Gender Evaluation Criteria (GEC)<sup>1</sup></li> <li>■ Tenure-Responsive Land Use Planning (TRLUP)<sup>2</sup></li> <li>■ Fit-For-Purpose Land Administration</li> <li>■ Continuum of Land Rights<sup>3</sup></li> <li>■ Youth and Land Responsiveness Criteria (YLRC)<sup>4</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Landscape Governance (XSF/ANGOC)<sup>5</sup></li> <li>■ Land conflict: concepts</li> <li>■ Land Conflict management and resolution</li> <li>■ Indigenous peoples' rights (PAFID)</li> <li>■ Harmonization of government and community plans</li> </ul>

for the training course on land tools, linking ancestral domain governance and environment conservation. While its principles are not entirely new to the IPs, the course has “refreshed” them on how they once managed their territories where no political boundaries restricts the spatial extent of their stewardship on the environment.



*Awarding of certificates of customary land occupancy in Pangantucan, Bukidnon.*

This project put premium to enhancing the engagement of women and youth. It has provided venues for dialogues to acknowledge their respective roles as inheritors, protectors, and stewards in the ancestral domain. The IPs have attested that they have been recognized, heard and prioritized. Furthermore, every individual, regardless of age and gender acknowledges the value of the ancestral domain as their home and source of refuge.

Women's rights to land has been mainstreamed using the Gender Evaluation Criteria (GEC), as the project strived to **promote gender-inclusivity** as follows:

- **Participation:** Project implementers consciously encouraged indigenous women's participation in project activities such as training courses, workshops, and data-gathering for the participatory enumeration. Eighteen out of the 23 enumerators

<sup>1</sup> Presented as part of the Landscape Governance Training of Trainers, also used to assess implementation and report to the Mid-Term Review.

<sup>2</sup> Presented as part of the Landscape Governance Forum.

<sup>3</sup> Presented as part of the Landscape Governance Training of Trainers.

<sup>4</sup> Presented as part of the Landscape Governance Training of Trainers

<sup>5</sup> Landscape Governance as a set of principles and procedures that was being documented by partners during implementation of SALaR Project.

<sup>6</sup> Legal instrument issued to the IPs on the recognition of their rights and governance over their ancestral domains.



## Tenure Responsive Land Use Planning and Concept of Harmonization of Community and Government Plans

A desk review was conducted on the Philippine land use planning system vis-à-vis the methodology of GLTN's Tenure Responsive Land Use Planning. Per the guidelines of local development planning in the Philippines, local land use plans provide due protection to ancestral domains of the IPs. However, it may not be a direct driver of tenure security of the IPs especially to those who have not secured their Certificates of Ancestral Domain Title (CADTs).<sup>6</sup> The processes of securing tenure over a particular land by a specific sector – which is based on Torrens titling system that entails securing tenure instruments (CADT/CALT in the case of IPs) and registration in the government (i.e. Land Registration Authority) – are not part of the land use planning process of the country. Nonetheless, local development land use plan may be used as an instrument to strengthen the claim and rights of the IPs over their land through the policies and strategies that will be indicated in the comprehensive land use plan (CLUP) document.

During the Forum on Landscape Governance held in June 2019 in Cagayan de Oro City, Northern Mindanao, the potential application of Tenure Responsive Land Use Planning in the Philippine Land Use System was presented to the IP participants through the harmonization and integration processes of community plans (i.e. Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plans) and government development plans (i.e. Comprehensive Land Use Plan) where the IPs will have the space to participate in and raise their community's agenda and objectives.

were women, while housewives were observed to have actively participated in the surveys. Particular issues faced and needs of community women were also identified during the landscape governance training. To monitor the gender balance in event participation, implementers consistently produced gender-disaggregated attendance data.

- *Capacity-building:* Enumerators trained to gather data for the household survey, most of which were women, were introduced to the basics of survey studies, as well as to the use of global positioning system (GPS) devices and an open-source geographic information system (GIS) software. Selected male and female participants joined training courses where they were (re-) oriented about rights and entitlements for indigenous peoples, and were educated in landscape governance with sensitivity to equal rights of people regardless of age and gender.
- *Legal and institutional considerations:* The training courses instilled in both men and women the value of equal land rights, as well as equality of

responsibilities in governing their ancestral domains. Related to this, the project issued certificates of customary land occupancy under the names of both the husband and the wife within a household, countering the more common practice of issuing official titles in the name of the male household head. Although not equivalent to legal land titles, the certificates of occupancy serve to support households' claims to residential and agricultural lands they have long-utilized, through the recording of relevant spatial information affirmed by neighbors and tribal leaders.

- *Social and cultural impact:* Through the surveys and the landscape governance training course, women in the communities reported increased awareness about their legal entitlements and gender-equal land rights. Women have also mentioned that they have gained greater confidence to actively participate and speak up during meetings and events. Women in the communities also developed a greater appreciation for their roles in the community as workers on and stewards of land, managers of the household,



peacemakers within the community, and mothers of the future generation. Both men and women found a deeper appreciation for the complementarity of their roles within the community, while also recognizing the capacity of women to be effective leaders and contributors to land and community governance.

- *Economic impact:* Those hired for the participatory enumeration were provided with honoraria proportionate to their outputs. In the course of the fora and workshops, not just the community leaders but also the women and other members of the indigenous communities, were able to network with government agencies directly involved in land tenure and livelihood programs for indigenous peoples.
- *Scale and sustainability of impact:* Participants of the landscape governance training course signified their intention to echo their learnings to their communities. Further, they identified ways in which they could work towards addressing the concerns (on land governance, land conflicts, gender, youth) raised during the course. More importantly, it is expected that communities will consciously become more gender-inclusive, with ongoing discussions on gender, women's roles, rights, and their empowerment, which the activities under the project initiated.

With regard to **youth involvement**, the project has strived to promote IP-youth inclusivity and to respond to the needs of IP youth through:

- *Youth Recognition.* The project recognizes youth as a sector important in the discussions on land – as they will be the heirs of the gains as well as the challenges in relation to their land. Throughout its implementation, the project ensured engagement and participation of youth in its activities such as training courses, forums, and participatory enumeration on land information.
- *Land Information.* The project gathered land information and compiled a land data inventory using the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM). Using this tool, youth access to and roles on land are recorded, and made available and accessible by the community, including the young people.
- *Land Governance and Participation.* Roles and avenues for participation of IP youth in the governance of their ancestral domains were highlighted in the results of surveys, focus group discussions, and training courses. IP youth are encouraged to be active in community activities and assemblies. During the training courses, participation of IP youth in meetings of IP leaders was raised as an important proposition.
- *Land Policies.* During the training courses, participants including youth, were oriented on the existing law on indigenous peoples – Indigenous People's Rights Act – where the vital roles of IP youth in nation-building and in the protection and promotion of their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being are recognized.

Women recognize their role in the ancestral domain as inheritors, protectors and stewards of land, peacemakers of the community, and mothers of the future generation. It has also been emphasized that they also work the land to provide for the needs of their families. Highlights from the focus group discussions are as follows:

- Significantly, the project provided an avenue for discussions and engagements among women; comprising more than half the number of enumerators.
- They equally acknowledge their right to land especially to pure native women married to non-indigenous men in the ancestral domain.
- Women are not commonly recognized as title holders, but through the project, their names can now be anchored in a document to also support their rights to land.



- *Land Use and Access.* Land use is among the sub-topics which the project delved into. During a forum on landscape governance conducted under the project, the Philippine land use planning system was presented to IP participants. The presentation also laid down the avenues wherein IPs, including IP youth, can participate and raise their concerns, needs, and objectives for ancestral domain governance.

The project has stimulated participation among youth, who also served as enumerators through the capacity development training courses and project interventions. Youth are given full support in their families in engaging to initiatives that would inspire them the importance of tenurial security, and consequently be able to impart knowledge to the rest of the members of the organizations. Furthermore, these engagements instilled in them the values of appreciation and sense of obligation as members and incoming leaders of the ancestral domain.

In effect, confidence among women and youth has prominently increased during seminars. They likewise narrate that they have improved their ability to communicate and face outlanders or visitors. An added dimension is the increased knowledge and appreciation of youth towards the

conservation, preservation and protection of the environment.

## ON FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS

IP organizations were once overlooked in the community. Failure to prioritize land titles or assistance in progress of their CADT application had created a gap between the IPs and the government. Relatively, government support programs and projects given are unsustainable. From being “unrecognized” and “left behind”, the project was able to effectively improve and strengthen relationships among the IPs as an organization, Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) and other community members.

Changes observed are as follows:

- The project improved and strengthened collaborations among the IP organizations, BLGUs, and other government agencies.
- Interventions have been relevant and effective in collaborating with government agencies especially with NCIP where indigenous peoples have once been overlooked.
- Settled land boundary issues among community members; lightened the burden of the BLGUs in dispute resolution.

## Engaging institutions

ANGOC and XSF were able to get the support of the Regional Land Use Committee (RLUC) for the project. RLUC is a multi-stakeholder committee composed of representatives of major government agencies (i.e., National Economic and Development Authority, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, National Commission of Indigenous Peoples, etc.) and private sector representatives. A Resolution was passed by the Regional Development Council of Region X (Resolution No. 10 series of 2018) supporting the implementation of this project.

XSF has entered separate Memorandums of Understanding with the local government units (LGUs) of the municipalities and barangays of Talakag and Pangantucan.

On the other hand, ANGOC conducted several meetings with the National Commission of Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) in relation to the processing of CADTs of PTTA, Inc. and NAMAMAYUK. As per NCIP Executive Director, it was revealed that the Philippine Congress has not approved the budget proposal for CADT processing fiscal year 2019-2020. Currently, there are ongoing discussions on reviewing the work and financial program for the processing on the two CADT applications.



- United community members and barangay officials.

## ON SUSTAINABILITY OF THE INTERVENTIONS

It has been expressed that the community was equipped with knowledge and skills that will help them sustain the project through training courses and engagement with various stakeholders. These learnings will be retained and further strengthened as they continue to follow-up with their CADT application.

- They have become less dependent and capable working on themselves with the knowledge imparted, especially with the enumerators through the training courses, fora and dialogues.
- Entitlement to land, as a primary observation is deemed necessary for them to engage in agricultural livelihood in sustaining their needs.
- Learnings gained from the project are guaranteed to remain and be strengthened with continued collaboration between IP leaders and members.

With regard to the database generated from the participatory enumeration processes, the discretion of data management will be decided by the IPOs since it involves information of their families and landholdings. The computers shall also be turned over to the IP organizations. XSF will only facilitate and render assistance as to how these information be used and shared with the LGUs.

“Updating” the data would require several steps and it has to be considered on how the IP organizations and/or LGUs take part in it. This will have to be discussed in the sustainability planning. Furthermore, the enumerators and encoders may require additional STDM software training. Given the project's experience in the use of the software with configurations that need constant cleaning up, it is advisable that all these challenges be straightened in the planning as well, taking

into consideration the organizational system of the IP organizations (i.e., personnel, salary or honorarium, maintenance of equipment and software, among others).

Furthermore, mechanisms have been set-up to ensure partnerships shall be pursued based on the following:

- The community's willingness and enthusiasm to engage to more projects and hope for continuing collaboration with the partner CSOs.
- While these indigenous communities are provided with development programs, they on their part also aim to protect the environment, and would discourage to sell their land.
- Communication among community members is a principal factor to enhance collaborations with partner CSOs.

## MAJOR IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

The project has had its share of challenges:

- *Institutional limitations of the NCIP.* The commission has been found wanting not only of appropriate budget but also of trained personnel. Given its scope of work and responsibility, NCIP requires trained personnel to administer technical aspects of land title issuance and experienced personnel to handle land conflicts and issues of resource access affecting ICCs/IPs. Further, change in assignments of officials and personnel in the field offices constantly happen, thus disrupting continuity and necessitates rebuilding of partnerships.
- Given the absence of a national land use policy, overlaps with different tenurial instruments issued by various government agencies are bound to happen. As in the case of Pangantucan, Bukidnon, the government has declared a protected area that overlaps the ancestral domain of NAMAMAYUK. *The challenge lies in resolving and*



*finding a lasting solution to address such overlap which aggravates the status of tenure insecurity of the IPs.* More than the institutional limitations of the NCIP to resolve such resource conflict, possible unfitting provisions of the implementing rules and regulations of the recently enacted Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (ENIPAS) Act may hinder the resource governance rights of IPs over the protected area.

- *Winning the support of the local government units.* Potential local partners specifically the local government units would need thorough partnership-building to provide in-depth explanations, as well as present the pros and cons of implementing projects with sensitive issues like land concerns.
- *Operating in the context of ancestral domain.* Interventions require close coordination with the IPs. It is with the understanding that each tribe may have varied cultural practices and understanding. As project implementers, there is a need to better understand the context of ancestral

domain and how it relates with societal issues and concerns.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES

The approach of working with the support of the Regional Development Council (RDC) and the RLUC promotes inter-agency collaboration, reduces chances of conflicting claims, and increases some level of certainty that the RLUC would support NCIP program implementation (e.g. registration of CADTs and approval of ADSDPPs). Such partnerships is seen to strengthening the claim and security of tenure of the IP communities over their ancestral domains.

Sustained engagements with the NCIP Central and Regional Offices will provide a platform for the IPs, and NCIP to follow-up the CADT processing and support for ADSDPPs.

The project partners shall pursue to build on the gains realized so far through:

- facilitation of the practical applications of the GLTN land tools;
- conduct focus group discussions with the IPs assessing their perceptions

## Implementing participatory enumeration and STDM within IP communities in Bukidnon

### Challenges

During the data collection process, enumerators from the respective indigenous peoples (IPs) communities have encountered a number of challenges as discussed below. Despite the difficulties, however, the participatory enumeration procedure has made the enumerators know and understand their fellow villagers better.

*Social Acceptability.* A major apprehension seen among some IP households in taking the surveys, particularly in the communities of MILALITTRA, Inc., is with the funding nature of the project – i.e. supported by foreign groups. This has resulted to delays in meeting the enumeration target. Distrust of some IPs towards foreign-funded projects roots from past experiences of their fellow IPs on unfair, non-transparent, and deceptive negotiations between IPs and non-IPs.

There were also a few members of the IP organizations who did not want to be surveyed since they already have titles to their lands.

It took plenty of orientation meetings with the local government units at the *barangay* (village) and *sitio* (hamlet) levels to ensure that they receive the full information about the project activities. Although some still assumes that after the project implementation they will receive some assistance like farm inputs from the project.

*Lack of LGU Support.* Generally, the project has been supported by the local leaders in terms of allowing it to operate in their respective barangays. However, there are only a few leaders who took ownership of the project and have initiated ways for it to operate more smoothly. Some have gone to the extent of leading the orientation sessions conducted on selected sitios and joining the initial enumeration activities to secure the community's trust and ensure their participation.



In stark contrast, some leaders leave all the project activities to the enumerators and staff of the Xavier Science Foundation Inc. (XSF). They do not help in the information dissemination, community preparation and conflict resolution. This has caused much delays in the actual enumeration process.

*Enumeration Process and Land Tools.* As part of the preparatory activities, XSF coordinated with the local community leaders on who they would recommend being part of the enumerator trainees. The leaders identified women and youth who have had previous experience on government-implemented enumeration activities. These women and youth underwent a series of training courses given by XSF, with technical support from ANGOC and GLTN. Although their past enumeration experiences have equipped them with the basic roles of an enumerator, the training courses proved that they still had much to learn about the protocols and etiquette that the job required. They realized that enumeration is not only about asking questions and writing down the answers. But they needed to put in some social effort as well --- i.e., build rapport with their respondents, create a safe space to foster confidence and openness in answering the questions, establish trust as an enumerator and project implementer, among others.

The enumerators were also taught to master the household forms. They initially found it difficult because of the volume of information that they needed to secure. They had to understand what every question meant. The survey was also printed in the Cebuano (Binisaya) language, and the enumerators and respondents primarily speak Talaandig and Manobo, their native dialects. The enumerators would have to translate these questions to their respondents while staying faithful to the essence and context of the particular question.

*Learning the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) tool was another challenge they had to face.* The training of enumerators gave the participants a series of hands-on exercises on how to encode the data they will be gathering into a system that will link into a database, eventually generating a certificate. The youth trainees were tech-literate. They can follow the step-by-step process given by GLTN. But STDM had a lot of configuration errors that caused it to fail, leaving the trainees with confusion and a sense of distrust towards the system. On the other hand, the older trainees found it difficult to catch up. They were already grappling with the use of the computer. Navigating through STDM was even harder. However with perseverance, the trainees, though a work-in-progress, were able to navigate the system.

*Technology.* It was common at first for the enumerators of the three IP organizations to encounter difficulties in using the equipment for the data collection – tablets for accomplishing the surveys and Global Positioning System (GPS) units for gathering spatial data. Nonetheless, they have fully learnt how to navigate through the software and use of the equipment. The lack of tablets and GPS units caused delay during the enumeration process. The enumerators had to schedule who will use the gadgets at a given time.

*Sloping terrain and abrupt changes of weather conditions.* With communities located on the slopes of Mt. Kalatungan, most of the farms are on high elevations, and the enumerators were required to hike up steep slopes just to reach some of the farm lots. The enumerators have to be careful when collecting data in these areas else they might fall off cliffs or ravines. They even had to clear the area of tall grasses just so they could mark the boundaries of the farm lots for recording. Fortunately, landowners started clearing off their farm lots for ease in mapping out the area. Such an act shows cooperation among the community members and concern for their fellow IPs.

It is in the sloping areas where the enumerators from NAMAMAYUK and MILALITTRA, Inc. have had some encounters with snakes due to the tall grasses blocking the sight of the ground they walk on.

Slippery roads and trails due to heavy rains have also caused delays among the enumerators of PTTA, Inc. Moreover, it fogs early in the MILALITTRA area that also causes delay in farm mapping.

*Conflicting Land Claims.* There was a common occurrence of conflicting land claims among families and relatives that were unraveled during the enumeration phase. Some parcels of land could not be surveyed until all the siblings who claim ownership over it would agree to have the land surveyed. This was to avoid familial rifts. There are also cases wherein the enumerators would receive violent threats from individuals who oppose a certain party's ownership claim over a given parcel of land. There are some cases wherein respondents do not disclose that their land parcels have already been sold to a different owner. The enumerators would survey this, only to find out later from local leaders or concerned community members that the said parcel no longer belongs to the false claimant. This means the enumerators' spatial data, which was toilsome to generate, will be for naught.

*Comprehension of the survey questions.* As with the case of the NAMAMAYUK, some respondents had difficulties understanding the questions of the survey tool, as many of the community members are not able to attend school or have only reached elementary level.

Trained enumerators would have to rephrase the questions into simpler thoughts and most of the time they provide examples for better comprehension of the respondents.



### Effective approaches and lessons learned

Given the major challenges on terrains, enumerators have devised team approaches to gather data more efficiently. The strategy of the PTTA, Inc. was for the enumerators to visit the particular area/community, in groups, where they are commonly assigned. Such a way ensures full coverage of the said area for data collection.

Enumerators of MILLALITTRA, Inc. have employed the same approach as with PTTA, Inc., further considering the farthest communities as their first area to administer the surveys.

Sufficient groundwork and orientation by XSF and IP leaders to the community members about the project and its activities also provided the respondents the confidence to accommodate the enumerators and give their consents to be interviewed.

Significant roles of women and youth in data collection and encoding, particularly in the cases of MILLALITTRA, Inc. and NAMAMAYUK, are also commendable. Cooperation among respondents and enumerators (as discussed above) and involvements of various sub-sectors within the IP communities solidify the long-existing sense of community among the IPs of Mt. Kalatungan.

concerning the outcomes and potential benefits of the issuance of the Certificates of Customary Land Occupancy; and,

- development of advocacy strategies to influence policy-makers to support the initiative.

### LESSONS LEARNED

Land tenure security is a right, as believed by the IPs. A tangible evidence or any form of document that will secure their tenure rights to land will enthruse them to invest in farming and agricultural livelihood in which food security is highly dependent on. The entitlement to individual land increased their hopes for their CADT application and fueled their motivation to even more protect and care for their ancestral domain and discourage them from leasing and selling out land.

Cooperation and collaboration among community households, enumerators and stakeholders significantly contributed to the accomplishments of the project. Key factors identified are as follows:

Enumerators were well-trained and equipped with tools (e.g. tablets, GPS, cameras) and technical knowledge.

- Project concerns and clarifications from community members are promptly addressed by the officials/elders of the IP organizations, which significantly fast-tracked the project processes.
- Project area team leaders' immediate response to clarifications, and frequent monitoring in the community.
- Enumerator's perseverance.
- Community members' trust, support and participation.
- Collaboration among barangay officials and volunteers.

The project provided venues for dialogues to acknowledge the respective roles as inheritors, protectors, and stewards of the IPs in their ancestral domain. This contributed in improving relationships among the tribes and foster respect, unity, and understanding among youth, women, men, council of elders, and other members of the communities.

### CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

Indigenous groups highly depend on land and agriculture for their food and livelihood. Challenges faced in relation to land tenure security increase their vulnerability to land-grabbing threats and arbitrary land claims, thereby resulting to land disputes among community members and reluctance to invest in agriculture.





*A local counselor making his point in a dialogue with IPs.*

Principally, active collaboration with the local government units (LGUs) is necessary to recognize the rights of IPs as inheritors and stewards of the ancestral domain. Inclusivity of sectors through engagements, especially among women and youth, and the learnings gained from the trainings, will be strengthened to sustain the project results. Efforts will be undertaken to further enhance capacities of the LGUs and potentially with NCIP in the utilization of the land tools.

A number of policy and programmatic recommendations have been identified in the issue briefs in relation to harmonization of plans, addressing land and resource conflicts, and promoting women's and youth's right to land. The project partners will incorporate them in the ongoing advocacies and dialogue processes.

Finally with the existing resources, the project has achieved significant results. Given its relevance and potential impact in enhancing food and tenurial security, this initiative can be implemented in other Asian countries experiencing similar challenges among their IP communities. ■

## PARTNER INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' ORGANIZATIONS



### MILALITTRA, INC.

The Miarayon Lapok Lirongan Talaandig Tribal Association, Inc. (MILALITTRA, Inc.) covers four barangays in the municipality of Takag, in the province of Bukidnon, Philippines. The group was awarded a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title for 11,367 hectares in 2003. The group's Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP) is being updated. MILALITTRA, Inc. is composed of approximately 2,500 households. The community's major source of income is farming. It is estimated that around 1,500 hectares within their ancestral domain are devoted to farming.



### NAMAMAYUK

The Nagkahiusang Manobong Manunod sa Yutang Kabilin (NAMAMAYUK) covers barangays Bacusanon and Nabaliwa in the municipality of Pangantucan, in the province of Bukidnon, Philippines. NAMAMAYUK has applied for a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title for 3,506 hectares and has already formulated its Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP). The community is composed of 208 households. Their livelihoods revolve around farming and other agricultural activities.



### PTTA, INC.

The Portulin Talaandig Tribal Association, Inc. (PTTA, Inc.) covers barangays Portulin, New Eden, Concepcion, and Dagolos in the municipality of Pangantucan, in the province of Bukidnon, Philippines. It has 165 family members. PTTA's main goal is to deter illegal logging within the sacred forests of their ancestral domain. It has applied for a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title for 6,679.83 hectares and has already completed its Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development and Protection Plan (ADSDPP). The community's livelihoods involve farming, eco-tourism, and implementing externally funded community development programs.



## PROJECT IMPLEMENTERS AND PARTNERS



The **Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC)** is a regional coalition of national and regional CSOs in Asia actively engaged in promoting food sovereignty, land rights and agrarian reform, sustainable agriculture, participatory governance, and rural development.



The **Xavier Science Foundation, Inc. (XSF)** is a legal, non-stock, non-profit, non-government organization advocating programs and projects that will alleviate poverty and promote social empowerment.

XSF serves as a conduit of funds to support development projects, innovative programs, fora, and dialogues.



The **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)** is working

towards a better urban future. Its mission is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and the achievement of adequate shelter for all. It facilitates the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) and hosts its Secretariat. For more information, refer to [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org).



The **Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)** is an alliance of global, regional, and national partners contributing to poverty alleviation

through land reform, improved land management, and security of tenure particularly through the development and dissemination of pro-poor and gender sensitive tools. For more information, refer to [www.gltn.net](http://www.gltn.net).



The **German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)** is the

primary State development body in Germany. BMZ's governing principle is the

protection of human rights, which includes the right to live in peace and freedom, and to help address the poverty issues in the world. For more information, refer to [www.bmz.de](http://www.bmz.de).

Concerns over food insecurity in developing countries are reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030. Given that land plays an important role in the livelihoods of most people in developing countries, food security and poverty reduction cannot be achieved unless issues of access to land, security of tenure, and the capacity to use land productively and in a sustainable manner are addressed.

Thus, the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), as facilitated by UN-Habitat, is implementing "Secure Access to Land and Resources (SALaR)" Project through the support of Germany's Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), with the overall goal of improving land and natural resources tenure security of rural smallholder farmers in Uganda, the Philippines, and Laos.

In the Philippines, while a number of land laws are being implemented, several gaps need to be addressed to improve the situation of their intended beneficiaries. Hence, "**Improving Tenure Security of Smallholder Farmers in Select Areas in the Philippines**" aims to contribute to the goal of SALaR Project.

This project is implemented by the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) in partnership with Xavier Science Foundation, Inc. (XSF), with technical and financial support from Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) and Germany's Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

### *For more information about this project:*

#### **Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC)**

33 Mapagsangguni Street, Sikatuna Village  
Diliman, Quezon City 1101 Philippines  
Tel: +63-2 8351 0581 Fax: +63-2 8351 0011  
Email: [angoc@angoc.org](mailto:angoc@angoc.org)  
Website: [www.angoc.org](http://www.angoc.org)

#### **Xavier Science Foundation, Inc. (XSF)**

Manresa Complex, Fr. Masterson Avenue  
Upper Balulang, 9000 Cagayan de Oro City  
Philippines  
Phone: (+63-88) 8516887  
Email: [xsf@xu.edu.ph](mailto:xsf@xu.edu.ph)  
Website: [xsfoundationinc.org](http://xsfoundationinc.org)