

University of Hohenheim

**Institute of Plant Production and Agroecology in the Tropics and
Subtropics**

Department of Agroecology

PD Dr. K. Martin

Institute of Agricultural Sociology

Department of Agricultural Communication and Extension

Professor Dr. V. Hoffman

**Socio-economic and environmental aspects of rainforest
tree seedling farming of the Cienda S. Vicente Farmers'
Association (CSVFA), Baybay, Leyte, Philippines.**

Elisabeth Voyeux

M. Sc. Thesis

September 2003

This study has been funded by the Eiselen-Foundation, Ulm

6. Summary

The problem of deforestation is affecting the Philippines in a severe manner. The government has started, more than a decade ago, to delegate the incumbency of forest protection and rehabilitation to local communities through CBFM, in the hope that they will find more appropriate ways of solving the problem than governmental agencies. This is grounded in the belief that communities that are living next to forests, if given the right incentives and tenure instruments, are best suited for the management of the forest, because their livelihood is directly affected by it.

The communities of Cienda and S. Vicente, Baybay, Philippines, are among these communities who have been given the responsibility and the tenure agreement to manage and rehabilitate their adjacent forest.

The study focused on the Cienda S. Vicente Farmers' Association, which is a people's organisation concerned with the improvement of its members' income and with environmental protection and rehabilitation. The association produces and sells seedlings of high quality forest tree species to sustain itself economically and provide income for its members. In addition it has adopted the technology of Rainforestation farming in order to associate issues of environmental rehabilitation, forestry and as a way to generate income. The study aimed at assessing certain aspects of the CSVFA which relate to the improvement of the members' income as well as to the enhancement of the members' environmental awareness through the association's activities.

With the help of a structured questionnaire 35 members of the association have been interviewed over the association's activities as well as over the members' farming system. The interviews aimed at collecting data about the group and its achievements, but also to understand the feeling the members have about belonging to the association.

The data was analysed using excel and SPSS. Moreover qualitative data was critically assessed so as to not miss important information which cannot be quantified.

The results can be summarised as follows:

- The income of the active members of the association has increased

- The environmental awareness of the association's members has increased and they are all aware about the damage deforestation can cause. Moreover environmental awareness has spilt over to the other members of the community who don't belong to the association.
- The active members are very committed and take pride in the fact of protecting the forest.
- Not all members are active, mostly due to economic reasons, since they feel that instead of working for the association they have to think about working in their farms in order to provide for their families.
- The association has what it needs to improve and sustain. However a bit more care has to be taken in what concerns the marketing of the seedlings sale and administration.
- The success of this group makes the idea of replicating the experience elsewhere attractive. Actually, an outreach programme, to introduce the Rainforestation farming technology and forest tree seedlings nursery has already been started.

With these results the conclusions can only be positive. The achievements of the group are evident. The association has been founded because of the determination of the communities. The aims of livelihood improvement and environmental protection are genuine and have been reached, even though not all members are presently involved. The organisational capacity of the community has improved and the self-confidence of the members has increased.

This successful example goes to show that CBFM is feasible and can be a successful road towards a better, sustainable development. It can allow communities to improve their economic condition while giving them the motivation to protect and rehabilitate their natural resources. Moreover it has a positive effect on human development since it empowers people through delegating certain responsibilities, but also through granting them more rights over resources. Thus the political framework should continue to encourage these organisation with proper legislation on forestry and tenure instruments.