



newsMATE

Philippines-Australia Landcare Project update

October-November 2005

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Project Leader's column

By Noel Vock

Kumusta/G'day

Welcome to our last edition of newsMATE before our November project review workshop in Bohol. This is our sixth edition since we started newsMATE in April, and I am sure you will all agree that it has been a great means of keeping news and views circulating amongst the project team. But while I might think that, it is important, as part of our project evaluation process, to check this more widely and in more depth. Consequently, at the review workshop, I have scheduled in the program a small review of newsMATE. In the meantime, please take a moment to think about the value of newsMATE to you, and if you would like it to continue. If so, what improvements would you like to see made?

May I take this opportunity to thank you all for your regular contributions of interesting, informative and often humorous articles. It has been a great team effort. Of course, we must also thank Jenni, Terri, Mary and Lynne of Econnect Communications for their wonderfully generous sponsorship of newsMATE. Thanks girls!!

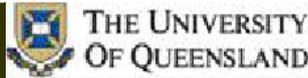
Note: As a result of our review, there will be no newsMATE for November, with the last edition for the year coming out in the first week of December.

November workshop

By now, you will have received the final program for our 1st Project Review workshop in Tagbilaran from November 15 to 18. I believe that in a project like this, the first review workshop is quite a critical step, as we move from the somewhat tentative and uncertain period of the first nine months to a more assured and confident next period.

You will notice that the program, lasting just over 3 days, has been essentially divided into four main components:

- Resolution of some of the important project management issues (Tuesday November 16);
- Review of progress at each site and across sites, plus presentations on the strategic directions and work plans for the next nine months (second day Wednesday November 17);



- Field visits to the new Bohol Landcare sites in Alicia and Pilar municipalities (third day Thursday November 18);
- Analysis and review of our research program (final day Friday November 19).

Of course, this is only the core program, with plenty of other training and team building side events. For one of these, remember that each workshop participant is to send Bebot a baby photo (or scan) of yourself before the end of October.

Particular thanks to Weng and Bebot, who have put in a superb effort in arranging all of the logistics, and to Rojo, Marilyn and Jun who are doing all of the hard work on the organisation of the field visit and other local arrangements.

Once again, we welcome involvement in the workshop from Au-Au of the Landcare Foundation, and our regular “non-official” partners, the AECI team. We also thank Dr Ken Menz, (ACIAR Program Manager, Canberra), Bernadette Cariaga (AusAID, Manila) and Reyna Reyes (ACIAR, Manila), who are making a special effort to attend the workshop. Members of the ACIAR Bohol watershed project will also be involved in segments of the program related to the Bohol site.

Extension skills to be a focus for team training

As part of our project staff training program, Weng and I plan to focus on a key training theme for each of our review workshops. During the November workshop, we will be seeking your input of ideas for future training. The theme we have selected for the November workshop is 'Extension Methods and Experiences'. Obviously this is a fundamental issue for our project, and so has been near the top of our list.

Our concept of training is not to have an “expert” trainer tell us what they know, but to see us all as “trainers” with skills and experience in a “trainers training each other” setting. This way, we can all share our knowledge and experience in a friendly and supportive environment. To facilitate this process, we have asked Gigi and Eldon to first run a “trainers training each other” session for the Landcare Coordinators Network in Manila on November 12, and then for the Landcare Coordinators Network in turn to run an identical session for the Landcare Assistants in Bohol on the evening of November 16.

Gigi and Eldon are fresh from attending a three-week training course on advanced extension methods run by the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) in Cavite, so I anticipate that they will be really fired up and ready to go!! Thanks to Gigi and Eldon for their willingness to manage this extension training for the project team.

Added benefits from attendance at the IIRR training

By the way, besides the extension knowledge gained from attending the IIRR course, Eldon and Gigi also came away with some additional benefits, one of these being a new collaboration with fellow-participant, Valerie Justo, a vegetable pest management specialist from the National Crop Protection Center (NCPC). Valerie has considerable experience in developing IPM (Integrated Pest Management) systems for vegetable crops and running Farmer Field Schools (FFSs). She is also involved in a project researching biofumigation (non-chemical soil

fumigation) to control the destructive bacterial wilt disease in vegetables (particularly tomato and potato).

As a result of the interaction with Eldon and Gigi at the training course, Valerie is visiting Ned with Eldon on November 4-5 to better scope the vegetable pest issues and conduct a FFS. She will also further liaise with Gigi on biofumigation trials with Lantapan farmers.

This new collaboration is very timely, as vegetable production continues to increase as a key livelihood improvement strategy for Landcare farmers in Ned and Lantapan.

Further congratulations to Delia

In the last newsMATE, our project congratulated Delia on the official conferring of her PhD by the University of Queensland. Well, we now need to further congratulate Delia on the announcement that she has been awarded the prestigious ACIAR John Dillon Memorial Fellowship. This commemorates Professor John Dillon, who was one of Australia's leading agricultural economists and Chair of the ACIAR Board of Management from 1985 to 1994. It is awarded annually to an outstanding agricultural scientist or agricultural economist from an ACIAR partner country, who is currently or recently involved in an ACIAR project. The aim of the Fellowship is to develop the leadership skills of that person in the areas of agricultural research management, agricultural policy and/or extension technologies. This is done by providing exposure to Australian agriculture across a range of best-practice organisations involved in research, extension and/or policy making during a five to six week study period.

Delia will undertake her study tour sometime in 2006. Congratulations, Delia, from the entire project team and its associates.

Project web portal

Finally, I return to my newsMATE nemesis – our project web portal!!! While I am glad to say that it is now up and running (you can go and have a look at the external part of the site on www.landcaremates.org), I am disappointed that I have not yet been able to get you into the internal part of the site through your individual login and password due to a couple of little glitches. However, these are now thankfully resolved, and I intend to bring with me to the Philippines your login and password details. I will then provide an introductory training session for everyone on the first day of our workshop. Thanks for your patience on this one.

Annual report submitted to ACIAR and AusAID

Our annual report for the project has now been completed and submitted to ACIAR and AusAID. In compiling the report for the period to the end of June, I was very pleased and impressed with your progress for the operational first six months of the project. Not only have each of the five sites established clear target areas on which to focus, but also have significantly strengthened the collaborative links with LGUs, provincial governments, and in the three sites where they exist, the Landcare Associations. The Landcare Coordinators Network is functioning very well, with two productive workshops during the period. And the site teams have shown great initiative in getting out there and implementing the various activities. I noted that there were 32 separate

"Just two weeks after the training, in early August, one of the participants Mr. Eduardo De La Torre established NVS on his farm."

training, capacity-building and networking events held across the sites for farmers and agencies during the six month period. On the research side, we have established the groundwork for a productive year ahead with the development of a process documentation system, establishment of a minimum set of baseline information, and the development of research topics and designs for each of the five sites and the broader project.

So well done everyone – I thank you all for your commitment and dedication to the ideals of the project and your contributions in getting the project to its current stage.

Team member (and associate) birthdays for October and November

- October 30 – Rubie Monera
- November 8 – Weng Dano
- November 8 – Eldon Ruiz
- November 11 – Bads Badino
- November 12 – Jenni Metcalfe
- November 24 – Au-Au Laotoco
- November 30 – Rob Cramb
- November 30 – Noel Vock

Many happy returns and best wishes on your special day. We will light the candles for all of you on a special large birthday cake during our Bohol workshop.

I look forward to seeing you all again in the Philippines in a couple of weeks time.

First NVS Adopter in La Hacienda, Alicia, Bohol

By Marilyn C. Sebial (Landcare Assistant, Bohol)

The Landcare Bohol team conducted a one day training on soil and water conservation and agroforestry in barangay La Hacienda, Alicia, Bohol late last July. Just two weeks after the training, in early August, one of the participants Mr. Eduardo De La Torre established NVS on his farm. Out of 26 participants, he is the first to adopt the NVS. Mr. De La Torre, 42 years old, married with one child is a resident of sitio Birhen



but his farm is located in sitio Curbada, along the highway. His farm area is 0.5 hectare and planted to cassava and corn.

According to him, he's been into farming for ten years and he'd noticed that the corn and cassava productions on his farm were decreasing, although he was applying inorganic fertilizers. He also noticed that the top soil was being continuously eroded. But he didn't think he was able to do any conservation measures on his farm. According to Mr. De La Torre, it was after the training that he realized how important soil conservation was - especially the NVS technology – and was pleased to discover that it was not laborious, but quite easy to establish.

"The results were quite inspiring and remarkable... now both groups have formulated achievable plans... "

Landcare Satellite Planning

By Evy Elago (Landcare Coordinator, Misamis Oriental)

Plans for Landcare in the two identified core sites of Misamis Oriental, Alubijid and Kinoguitan, are now in place. A series of planning activities were made in Kinoguitan in September and Alubijid in October and key players actively participated in the entire process.

The LGU of Kinoguitan came in full force headed by the Municipal Mayor himself along with the Vice-Mayor, four members of the municipal council (Chairs on Agriculture, Environment, Budget and the ABC President), the entire Budget personnel and Technical personnel of the municipal agriculture office. There were also representatives from the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and Balay Mindanaw Foundation, Inc., a partner NGO. Complementing the delegates were the barangay captains and community leaders of the target barangays.

Alubijid participants were composed of LGU key technical personnel, representatives from the Provincial Agriculture and Natural Resource Office (PANRO), Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Barangay Captains and PO Leaders and Municipal Council headed by the *Sangguniang Bayan* Chair on Agriculture.

The process involved exposure visits to Claveria and Malitbog at first, where both groups were able to interact with the LGUs, Landcare Federation officers and some members of the Farmer Trainer Teams (FTT) from these two established learning sites. Actual visits to farms were also undertaken, providing the participants with inputs and perspectives at various levels, which they used as reference in the identification of strategies and activities in the actual planning for the sites.

The results were quite inspiring and remarkable. Sharing of different perspectives substantiated the discussions and now both groups have formulated achievable plans founded on the real needs of the target communities in pursuit of Landcare in these municipalities.

Special acknowledgment to the hosts: The Municipal LGUs of Malitbog and Claveria for facilitating the interactions and sponsoring meals and snacks for the visiting groups; the BOT members of Claveria Landcare Association, Malitbog Landcare Association, Tambobo-an and Poblacion Landcare Chapter Groups of Claveria and finally the farmers visited, for their generous sharing of time and insights. The events were made more meaningful with the support from all these key partners.

Different folks, different strokes

By Rojo Balane (Landcare Coordinator, Bohol)

It's the time of the year when radio and television stations begin to play holiday tunes, counting down the days to Christmas. So an early Merry Christmas to all of you - may the prices of commodities go down this season! On the other hand, it's also the time of the year for the local governments to look forward, beyond Christmas, when they have to formulate the following year's Annual Investment Plan. It is also busy

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his municipality..."*

for the Landcare project, lobbying for its integration into the programs so as to acquire the needed budget allocations for its activities from the respective local government units.

Getting into the system of the local government requires an understanding of the unique internal nature and dynamics between the established set up of every LGU. Every organizational structure tells us that the Mayor is the head, supported by personnel (which can be the arms and feet) that do most of the action in the field. However, beyond that seemingly simple set up may be an operational dynamic that is a little different from what can be seen on display.

In our efforts to obtain budgetary allocations from the local governments for our activities in 2006, we have to take into consideration the different structure in order to gain better chances of support and approval. In San Isidro, the established partnership between ICRAF and the LGU, through the agriculture office, has helped facilitate the municipal council to provide financial support for Landcare activities.



The key person for Landcare in San Isidro is the Municipal Agriculture Officer, who has the full support of the Mayor and whom has been actively involved in the activities of ICRAF in the area. From his appreciation of the impacts that these interventions have generated comes his commitment to support all our undertakings in their municipality. A number of the usual items in his office's annual budget have accordingly been sacrificed in order to allocate the proposed Php50,000.00 to support ICRAF activities, focusing on the three barangays of Baryong Daan, Masonoy and Candungao.

The good MAO, however, can only seek the support of the municipal council in approving the proposed finance for ICRAF. Most of the members of the council are familiar with ICRAF and its accomplishments in San Isidro and these have been important factors that helped us to gain the unanimous support of the council. We are now assured that we have the financial support of the LGU for the development of San Isidro into the model of Landcare in Bohol and perhaps in the Visayas.

In the municipality of Alicia, the set up is quite different. All major activities and undertakings have to be approved by the Mayor. In contrast to the other areas, the Mayor of Alicia is very much involved in the development of his municipality, being hands-on and taking part in trainings and IEC activities in the barangays.

Our link in Alicia deals directly with the Mayor, with whom we have established a valuable rapport. Initial activities of Landcare have proved that farm technology dissemination and adoption by farmers need not be costly for the local government and that is the major reason behind his assurance of support for the 2006 activities of our project. All we had to do was provide him with the program design which he can integrate into either their Clean and Green or Reforestation Program.

We have varying experiences with different municipalities and we have to deal with them with some degree of flexibility. There are those where the agriculture personnel are very enthusiastic but the Mayor has other

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"In bio-dynamic doctrine, the use of chemical fertilizer is a 'No No' because it will affect our life and the environment through gradual poisoning."

priorities in mind. There are also those areas with Mayors who are very interested in the concept but do not have the official capacity to implement programs in the field.

Different folks, different strokes.

BUGAS Forum in Agusan Del Sur

By Bhads Badino (Landcare Assistant, Agusan del Sur)

The Landcare team in Agusan del Sur was invited to a farmers' forum held in mid September at San Francisco, Agusan del Sur.

The forum, *"Boosted Utilization of Grains in Agusan del Sur"* or *BUGAS*, was organized by the Provincial Local Government Unit of Agusan del Sur headed by Hon. Gov. Eddie Bong Plaza, and was attended by a range of non-government, government and people organizations.

'Bugas' is a local name in our very own Visayan dialect for rice that is ready for cooking. The province of Agusan del Sur is known as the rice granary in the CARAGA-Region of Mindanao. Rice is a major product from the province and is harvested almost year-round because of a sufficient supply of water and good irrigation systems implemented by the National Irrigation Administration in the Province.

The BUGAS forum sought to address issues relating to rice production including cultural management, hybridization, soil analysis for rice based farms, water management, establishing a laboratory, getting technical assistance from the local government and control of pests and diseases.

Back to nature-loving farming

By Bhads Badino (Landcare Assistant, Agusan del Sur)

Together with farmers and staff of partner LGUs in Agusan del Sur, I was able to participate in the Biodynamic Agriculture Training held in Makilala, North Cotabato, in August and September. The training was conducted by Don Bosco, an NGO whose main program is natural/organic farming. In bio-dynamic doctrine, the use of chemical fertilizer is a "No No" because it will affect our life and the environment through gradual poisoning.

We were able to invite 18 participants from Agusan Del Sur province: eight staff of LGU partners; eight farmers and two from the academic sector. The training was divided into two phases – the first phase from August 22 to 24 and the second phase from September 12 to 14.

The trainings were fruitful and beneficial to the participants and right now they have already applied the skills learned. As initially planned with the participants, we will be establishing a model farm with natural farming concepts and principles. With this technology, the farm expenses would be lessened and farmers believed that biodynamic agriculture is the best landcare practice that will address their current environmental and economic issues.

Three weeks of exhausting but rewarding experience at IIRR!

By Gigi Boy (Landcare Coordinator, Bukidnon)

"...houses still had traces of being submerged in more than eight feet of mud and soil."

The recent training, Participation in Extension: Farmer-Led Approaches, saw the participation of two of the "oldest" members, literally and figuratively, of the LC coordinators' network, Eldon Ruiz and me! The three-week training was conducted at the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) Regional Center for Asia, Y. C. James Yen Center, Silang, Cavite, during late September to early October.

The International Course was designed to advance rural development objectives through improved agricultural research and extension practices with increased community participation. It is a venue wherein participants can examine alternative extension approaches, providing a wealth of lessons and rich opportunities for comparing and contrasting extension programs that employ participatory approaches.

Lectures, role plays, discussions, debates and an actual field visit more than compensated for the lengthy training, with facilitators keeping the participants alert and actively participating in most of the discussions. The three-day field visit took us to the typhoon-ravaged town of Infanta, Quezon, where logs and other debris from the forests of the area littered the farms and coastline, and houses still had traces of being submerged in more than eight feet of mud and soil. But the lessons we got from interacting with the townspeople diverted our attention from the aftermath and instead we learned how the people got back on their feet and continued with their lives, with the help of the local government unit, the Infanta Integrated Community Development Assistance, Inc., (NGO), the church and external organizations.

The course was also attended by representatives from the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) of Ghana, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) of Sudan, CARE Mozambique, China and Vietnam. The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) sponsored several Filipino participants who are involved in a number of ACIAR projects in the country.

One of the major highlights of the course emphasized the multi-stakeholder participatory approaches in dealing with issues and challenges at hand, keeping in mind that in the end, it would be ultimately benefiting the farmers or the poorest of the poor in the community. (Not to mention the International Night, which saw some of the most dazzling performances of our co-participants from different cultures. Eldon, for the first time, sang to his heart's content to mesmerize the beautiful ladies of IIRR.)



End Note:

Our deepest gratitude and appreciation to the generosity of ACIAR, especially our project leader Noel Vock, ACIAR Canberra and ACIAR country office personnel, Country Manager Ms Cecil Honrado and Ms. Reyna Reyes. Also to our supervisors at the World Agroforestry Centre and SEARCA for their support during the training.

LATE NEWS!

As the ezine was going to press this week, Gigi received some great

"...'Meeting the Communication Challenges of Philippines Landcare', has been selected by an international working group as one of 15 papers to be included in a special book..."

news from the organisers of the Public Communication of Science and Technology (PCST) Symposium he attended in Beijing in June. The news was that the paper he presented on behalf of the project 'Meeting the Communication Challenges of Philippines Landcare', has been selected by an international working group as one of 15 papers to be included in a special book on science communication. The working group, headed by Professor Bernard Schiele, went through a three month peer review and evaluation of all conference papers based on a careful analysis and synthesis of their content as well as the audience response. The 15 papers were selected as being the best and most valuable.



The book of papers will be the second book in a PCST Network series. It will be published by the China Association for Science and Technology and will be launched at the PCST-9 International Conference in Seoul, Korea in May next year.

Congratulations to all concerned - Gigi for his excellent presentation, the five authors of the paper, the Landcare Coordinators Network and project team for helping Gigi fine-tune his presentation before departure, and Jenni for helping us participate in the Symposium. The book will provide further world exposure for Philippines Landcare.

Next edition

We'd like to send the next newsMATE out in mid December. That means we'll need your stories and news updates about 10 days before the due date. So below are deadlines for the next couple of months:

November edition deferred

Friday December 6 (special Christmas edition)

Please send your contributions to lynne@econnect.com.au. Remember, we are looking for interesting stories and short pithy news updates about your activities.