

Improving the methods and impacts of agricultural extension in conflict areas of Mindanao, Philippines



Key details

Location

Philippines

Duration

Start Oct 2013

End Jun 2021

Budget

AUD 2,602,445

Commissioned organisation

RMIT University

Partners

Landcare Foundation of the Philippines Inc;
University of the Philippines at Los Banos;
University of the Philippines, Mindanao

Project Leader

Dr Mary Johnson, RMIT University, Australia

Program

Social Systems

Project code

ASEM/2012/063



Overview

This project aimed to develop an improved 'model' for agricultural extension in conflict areas of Mindanao.

Farming households within conflict-vulnerable areas of Mindanao face many challenges to improving their livelihoods.

These include dislocation to farm activities, difficulty in accessing markets, uncertainty about long-term investment in farm infrastructure, lack of social cohesion and isolation from government information and services.

Previous ACIAR-funded work in other areas of Mindanao has highlighted how certain types of community-based extension methods can rapidly improve livelihoods of farming households. This project aims to refine and evaluate these extension methods in the more complex setting of conflict-vulnerable areas of western Mindanao.

The project worked with relatively poor farmers to help improve and diversify their income away from single livelihood mainstays such as mono-cropping of corn and the environmentally destructive practice of charcoal production. Two new farmer enterprises – tree nursery production and high-value vegetable production – have been introduced and saw an almost complete cessation of charcoal production by participating communities.

Project outcomes

- Successful livelihood development programs established with farming households and Local Government Unit (LGU) technicians in six pilot communities.
- Tree nursery production and high-value vegetable production developed. Tree nursery activities added 10-20% to farmers' annual income.
- In each of the pilot sites, the livelihood development program is delivered through an improved model for agricultural extension targeted at assisting agencies.
- Women are taking leadership roles, building trust, maintaining farms and food production, initiating small enterprise and supporting community-based recovery processes.
- The project collaborated with the Philippine Council for Agriculture Aquatic, and Natural Resources Research and Development at three new sites adjacent to the ACIAR project sites, to assist scaling-up of the project outcomes at the national government level.



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