

“Community-Based Forest Management Towards the Achievement of Social Equity: The Case of YISEDA and AMPCO in Maasin, Southern Leyte”

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ABSTRACT

For more than two decades of CBFM implementation social equity issues like poverty, livelihood (un)sustainability, and limited participation to decision-making lingered. This study assessed how social equity is attained through CBFM using the case of two (2) people’s organizations in Maasin City, Southern Leyte, the Young Innovators for Social and Environmental Development Association (YISEDA) and Anahao Movement for Productive Community (AMPCO). A combination of methods (quantitative and qualitative) were used. The dimensions of social equity: equitable distribution of rights, participation in decision-making and community forestry activities, access to livelihood opportunities, sharing of income and benefits, sharing of costs and responsibilities, and access to leadership roles, were measured and quantified using likert scale analysis. The mean score for the six (6) dimensions for AMPCO is 3.65, relatively higher than YISEDA at 3.40. This is attributed to factors such as effectivity of the extension and technical assistance of DENR, trend on the interests and attitudes of the members towards CBFM implementation, intra-organization relationship dynamics, management of project activities, capacity and resource-availability of POs relative to sustainable livelihood, and the manifestation of effective sharing-scheme. While both POs showed social equity dimensions in their implementation of CBFM, program sustainability is challenged by unstable policies, highly bureaucratic processes and presence of internal conflicts. Continued PO capacitation and empowerment must be done to sustain CBFM program.