

45. COMMUNITY-BASED DECISION-MAKING MECHANISMS & INFORMATION SYSTEMS ON LAND RIGHTS & ACCESS & CONTROL OVER ESSENTIAL FOOD-PRODUCING RESOURCES

ACTION AREA	UNIVERSAL FOOD ACCESS TO BUILD RESILIENCE
SOLUTION CLUSTER	ENHANCE LOCAL PRODUCTION FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION
THEMATIC AREA	SECURING ACCESS TO LAND AND RESOURCES
SUBMITTED BY	ANGOC

WHAT PROBLEM IS THE SOLUTION TRYING TO ADDRESS?

The initiative is trying to contribute solutions to hunger & poverty caused by inequitable distribution and control over resources, vulnerability of smallholder farmers to climate change & natural disasters, lack of participation in decision-making and governance, & low returns to the livelihood of smallholder farmers.

Specifically, the initiative will focus on contributing solutions to addressing the vulnerability of the communities to the effects of climate change and economic shocks brought by the pandemic - as the landless and people who do not have access to land and resource rights are amongst the most affected sectors by these anthropological phenomena. The COVID-19 pandemic with its travel restrictions, limited physical contact and prohibition of mass gatherings, has disrupted the food system resulting in inadequate food supply to consumers and surplus products by the producers.

With the lack of land ownership and resource rights experienced by the majority of the smallholders, they are often faced with landgrabbing and unfair contracts by businesses - resulting in land conflicts.

Further, with the prevailing food systems favored by the majority of the population, smallholder farmers are usually left with little to no support (in terms of inputs, infrastructure, marketing, and recognition) from the local governments.

Gender inequality in the farming sector has also been a prevalent concern. With women often less recognized as producers, their access to resources and credit is less.

Lastly, during this pandemic, civil society has witnessed national governments enacting laws and programs in response to the pandemic without or with limited consultations with CSOs and communities. The solutions and health/safety protocols enacted are regarded as blanket national solutions, ignoring differences in local contexts and situations.

WHAT, IN BRIEF, IS THE SOLUTION?

Seen as a crucial step towards better planning that is suited to the needs of the smallholders, the initiative will conduct a comprehensive situational profiling of selected farming communities focused on land tenure security, resource management, community participation, gender equity, health and food security, socioeconomic status. In particular:

- Land tenure and access to food
- Purchasing power
- Health and quality of food
- Community participation
- Sustainability of agricultural practices
- Views and practices related to gender and women's rights
- Involvement of the youth
- Effects of climate change, plus ways related to mitigation and adaptation
- Peace and presence/absence of land conflicts
- Short, medium, and long-term effects of COVID

(The list of thematic areas will be finalized during the updating of the framework)

The information from the comprehensive profiles will be used as inputs/bases for the preparation of village-level development plans of partner-communities. Resource mobilization, including the lobbying for the integration of community plans into local government development plans, to support the identified programs, projects, and activities in the said community plans will be undertaken.

In addition, the data will be utilized for studying the establishment of food hubs in the communities that will make local food systems more resilient to shocks - by reducing food kilometers. Shortening the food distance means connecting the producers and the consumers through an integrated food value chain. With established linkages, the food supply chain becomes more efficient as production is anchored on consumers' demand, delivery of products targeted, and wastage minimized. By emphasizing shorter supply chains and local territorial markets, food hubs will also stimulate localized development and employment, while reducing carbon emissions that are usually associated with transporting food, goods and people over wide distances.

At the local, national and regional levels, the data from the profiles will also be used for policy works on the protection of land and resource rights, gender equity, building resiliency and ensuring food security.

WHAT WAS/ WERE THE SOURCE(S) FROM WHICH THIS SOLUTION EMERGED?

The identified solutions are sourced from the ANGO Statement on Protecting land Rights and Ensuring Food Security in the Time of COVID-19 - a result of the collaboration of 12 NGOs across eight Asian countries (who are Members of the ANGO Network) calling for immediate actions from the global community, national governments, and civil society in resolving the systemic inequities that render people susceptible to the effects of the global pandemic. The Statement calls for, among others, the restructuring of the food systems, asserting that secure land rights for all will be integral to achieving food security in a post-COVID-19 world.

The ideas/solutions identified also came from the sharing of the ANGO Members during the celebration of the World Food Day in 2020 where various interventions implemented were shared as well as the proposed solutions for short- and medium-term issues.

The identified solutions are also based on a village-level initiative in 1998 called the 200 Village Project, implemented in nine (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia) Asian countries wherein the food security of smallholder farmers were assessed in the household level. Results of the initiative became instrumental for CSOs' evidence-based advocacies relating to food and land tenure security.

The solutions were also derived as a result of analyses from other ANGO C studies including: (a) 2018 State of Land Rights and Land Governance in 8 Asian Countries, (b) 2018 Land Conflict Monitoring in 6 Asian Countries, (c) 2017 Continuum of Land Rights and Food Security in Cambodia, Nepal, and Philippines, (d) 2018 Philippines study on tenure and climate change, among others.

Having a baseline information (particularly on land conflict records and cases in 6 Asian countries) from ANGO C and Partners' ongoing works have shown its positive uses and relevance in the advocacy work. Through these data, governments have been engaged, & not only the land conflict situation became more visible but the CSOs have been recognized for such initiative - accrediting CSO data thus increasing its credibility.

In 2018, a first attempt to link the relationship of land tenure and climate change was conducted for a Philippine study. At present, with the expansion of this particular initiative to five more Asian countries, the recognition of climate change as a factor of food insecurity is becoming even more evident. Further, the role of climate change in food security has also been amplified as we see and recognize that the current pandemic (caused by a zoonotic disease) is a result, among other factors, of climate change.

WHY IS ADDRESSING THAT PROBLEM IMPORTANT FOR ACHIEVING THE GOAL OF YOUR WORKING GROUP?

The initiative is instrumental to meeting the goal of the ANGO C network from 2021-2025, which is to be a resource center that (a) advocates for land and resource rights of the rural poor; (b) promotes smallholder agriculture towards sustainable food systems and livelihoods; and (c), collaborates with other like-minded groups and individuals towards the protection of civic and democratic spaces, through a broad platform of Asian CSOs (and individuals) to challenge the development agenda, reform institutions, and foster the exchange of critical lessons, tools and approaches towards *food sovereignty, equitable land and resource rights, effective and responsible governance, and sustainable livelihoods*.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us just how crucial sustainable local food systems are to ensure food security as we saw hunger in urban communities and rotten products on the farmers' fields as a result of the disruption of supply chains.

Moreover, this initiative will also serve to inform support-CSOs on the policies, programs, and actions that should be pursued in partnership with communities, to forward the recommendations contained in the ANGO C Statement on COVID-19, and the ANGO C network's various studies (ex., on land conflicts, land grabs, tenure-climate change, transparency in land governance, landscape resource governance. See more of ANGO C's publications at <https://angoc.org/portal/>)

This initiative will contribute towards achieving the vision of the ANGO C network of "*Vibrant, peaceful, diverse Asian rural communities, living in harmony with nature as stewards of the earth, whose members are able to realize their full human potentials, collectively chart their path to development, provide for their present and future needs, and share equitably the fruits of their labors in community celebrations of Life.*" The linkages that will be formed out of the initiative will establish a platform for Asian communities and villages to share experiences, lessons learned from initiatives, and build solidarity between and among communities and individuals in the 8 countries.

WHY DOES THIS SOLUTION ALIGN TO THE DEFINITION AND CRITERIA FOR A 'GAME CHANGING SOLUTION' DEVELOPED BY THE SUMMIT?

This initiative meets the key criteria outlined in this document.

1. The impact will be broad and wide-reaching in scale, since it will involve multiple small villages in 8 countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka). The information to be gathered will then snowball into the creation of community plans.
2. The initiative is also actionable, since there is foreseen support from both CSOs, villages, and even the government. Local and national governments will benefit from the data generated and

analyzed that will be useful in informing their policies and programs, especially because these wide-scale rural community information-gathering initiatives are rarely conducted by governments. The ANGO network also has enough experience with implementing a similar initiative in 1998. Plus, since most ANGO members are national networks themselves, it will be able to access a wide outreach of local CSOs and community organizations in the 8 countries.

3. The initiative will be sustainable since the information-gathering will be used to craft community plans that will outline how the issues faced by communities will be addressed through programs that they themselves may implement. The information will be instrumental in planning and execution of local food hubs that will ensure food security at the village level. Moreover, the ground-level information will be used by communities and CSOs to inform further actions and campaigns.

The initiative also addresses the other criteria:

1. It has foreseen positive effects on ensuring equitable livelihood opportunities, advancing human health, and regenerating environmental integrity, with focus on youth, women, marginalized populations.
2. It is a large departure from the usual practice of the top-down approach in policy making and planning, and addresses the lack of importance provided to information from the ground.
3. The impacts are foreseen to persist to the medium- and long-term given that community plans, campaign strategies, and policies will be crafted from the information to be made available.
4. Gender equality and women's empowerment in food consumption and production systems will also be included in the framework.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT AND/OR LIKELY POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THIS IDEA

From the presentations of the results of various efforts on land and land data monitoring and household-level food security assessment (including the 200 Village Project), there has been recognition by the government that available data is not sufficient to assess local needs.

During an engagement initiative of ANGO and CSO partners with the National Statistics Offices (NSOs) in eight Asian countries in 2018-19, the NSOs have expressed their openness to collaborate with CSOs on improving available data on land, in particular on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 1.4.2 (on tenure security).

In an ongoing implementation of the *Secure Access to Land and Resources (SALaR)* of the UN Habitat's Global Land Tool Network with the Xavier Science Foundation, Inc. and ANGO in Northern Mindanao, Philippines, the data from the land tenure inventory of the Project are being recognized by their local government units regarding the house and farm lots of the partner indigenous people.

For this particular initiative, since similar actions have been previously done during the 200 Village Project in 1998, the ANGO Network will be able to revive and update the framework suited to the present situation.

Through its track record of conducting research and evidence-based policy work, the ANGO network has established its credibility and reliability among governments in Asia. Some leaders from the ANGO network are recognized as key resource persons and technical working group members of formal government mechanisms in their respective home countries.

ARE THERE CERTAIN CONTEXTS FOR WHICH THIS SOLUTION IS PARTICULARLY WELL SUITED, OR, CONVERSELY, CONTEXTS FOR WHICH IT IS NOT WELL-SUITED AT ALL.

The current framework that will be updated has been applied only to rural communities in Asia. The ANGO network has not yet tested its application outside of Asia or its application to the urban context.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE KEY ACTIONS REQUIRED TO ADDRESS THIS SOLUTION?

Public policies

- At the public policy level, memoranda of understanding (MOUs) or partnership agreements between implementing CSOs & local government units (LGUs) are needed to ensure cooperation & the smooth implementation of the initiative, given that the government will also benefit from the data to be collected. Data to be generated will be analyzed, consolidated, & used for policy work on food & tenure security, health & nutrition, climate change, agricultural technologies, etc.
- The implementation of this initiative will also be dependent on the health protocols in place due to the pandemic. The workplan would have to be adjusted based on the restrictions that will be in place in the 8 countries.
- Following-up on the actions that will come out from this intervention will also need LGU/government support.

Civil society actions

- The success of the intervention will depend on the willingness and commitment of local CSOs to be part of the process, and their understanding of the framework.

ANY OTHER REMARKS OR COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE REFLECTED IN AT5'S REPORT OUT ON 'GAME CHANGING' SOLUTIONS (OPTIONAL)

Any solution to long-standing problems should not be taken as a panacea. Quick outcomes are not expected if we are working on policy-level and systemic issues. This initiative, for example, will involve a long process with outcomes that may come in later years. Further, the overall enabling environment has to change in order for policy changes to take hold.