

Community Extension Project Inquiry for Sustainable Implementation: A Case Study of Cebu Technological University-Argao Campus

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative exploratory case study attempts to fill the empirical gap concerning the uncharted possibility of further improving the implemented extension project of Cebu Technological University-Argao Campus. Guided by the ethical framework of Creswell, through the focus group discussion and confirmed by observation and analytical memoing, the stories and dreams of the community extension project beneficiaries were captured and served as the case of analysis using the lens of the 4D model of appreciative inquiry introduced by Whitney and Cooperrider. Data were kept trustworthy through evaluative criteria set by Lincoln and Guba and these were deduced thematically using the analytical framework of Braun and Clarke. Findings revealed the best practices of the beneficiaries like knowledge acquisition, information transformation, material utilization, method application, and product marketization and their collective vision for the ideal Dulaw extension project include legal identity, financial and structural



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independence, and project completeness of which all these are significant inputs for the plan to improve the extension project for sustainability.

Keywords: *community extension; appreciative inquiry; sustainability*

INTRODUCTION

The community extension projects of universities are crafted with the main goal of transferring research outputs into useful products for community development as part of the sustainable development goals of the United Nations, of which according to Bakar et al. (2022) are crucial in building more inclusive economies, and stronger, more resilient societies. Hence, sustainability is a key issue for these extension projects to become successful. In fact, Quezada (2014) argues that community extension projects should be implemented properly to attain the set objectives. Thus, by inference, these community extension projects require assessment and evaluation to level up the services provided and allow the beneficiaries to develop their sense of ownership as the community project transforms from dependent community extension project participants into independent community members consequently becoming assets for local to national development.

Expected to become institutions for community transformation, higher academic institutions are mandated to conduct extension activities as one of their trifocal functions according to Aniedi and Effiom (2011). However, in some cases, extension projects are left understudied, and the continuous implementation of these projects are done without appropriate assessment conducted for possible intervention to be provided to further improve and sustain the extension project.

Therefore, according to Binayao et al. (2021), universities are one of the most significant incubators of ideas and solutions to global problems, and their central position amongst the networks of government, civil society, and industry partners; this means that they have vast potential to generate positive impact. Under this context, it is imperative to evaluate extension projects like the Dulaw livelihood extension project of Cebu Technological University-Argao Campus.

The Cebu Technological University Argao Campus has been consistent in fulfilling its mandate for community extension services to share and transfer knowledge into critical skills of the community members in their respective adopted barangays. This is a direction that is anchored on the concept that at present the communities encountered the threat of surviving and meeting their needs without risking the potential for people in the future (Garcia, 2016). Hence, this institution of higher learning extends to aid in all available capacities and become an authentic partner of the community. Thus, part of its goals is the development of potentials among members of the community who are identified as the extension project beneficiaries. This concept of developing potential is anchored on the idea that both unemployment and poverty are among the challenges in the world according to Antonopoulos (2010). This is the reason why community extension projects are geared towards liberation from these challenges through knowledge, skills, and technology transfer, of which, as affirmed by Ostrom et al. (2010), extension services encompass the process of transferring technology and innovation to enhance the lives of the community.

Therefore, guided by these perspectives, the Industrial Engineering program of the Cebu Technological University-Argao Campus conceptualized and implemented the community extension project called DULAW, an acronym for *Developing a Unified Livelihood and Active Well-being*. This community extension project generally aims to transform the adopted community by providing critical knowledge and valuable skills that are significant to fight against the problem of unemployment and poverty. This general goal of the community extension project is targeted to be achieved starting from the introduction of the turmeric powder processing as the key element to initiate change.

In addition, turmeric powder processing is found to be the appropriate starting point to achieve the desired goals since it has been observed through ocular inspection that the raw materials are abundant in the community of Barangay Gutlang, Argao, Cebu, Philippines. Turmeric, locally called *dulaw*, is considered as an unrecognized and unutilized asset in the community. Surprisingly, despite the abundance of these potential asset, the action research conducted by the Industrial Engineering program discovered that 44% of the registered households in the barangay have an annual income of less than Php100,000 and 17% of them could barely

support their family having an income of less than Php40,000 due to irregular source of income and unemployment.

Hence, the Dulaw Community Extension Project was conceived as a potential solution to the community problem on unemployment and poverty alleviation. Moreover, since its implementation for three years, the beneficiaries reported fragmented socioeconomic impact, such as meeting the basic family needs and provision of additional income to support their needs. Therefore, in this context, the community extension project is worthy of assessment and evaluation.

The study was conducted to answer specifically the following questions as the central point of this appreciative inquiry: (1) What are the best practices adopted in the implementation of the DULAW Extension project? and (2) What can be done for the ideal Community Extension project to be implemented?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Philippine government through the Commission on Higher Education requires all State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) to react to the need for societal transformation as found in Republic Act 7722. According to Bidad and Campiseño (2010), the goal is to assist the most underprivileged, downtrodden, and destitute people. By that, community service is defined by Laguador and Chavez (2013) as services that are identified by a higher education institution through formal or informal consultation with local non-profit, governmental, and community-based organizations as designed to improve the quality of life for community residents, particularly low-income individuals, or to solve specific problems related to their needs. Community engagement has been part of the daily activity of schools in the pursuit of its goals.

Extension Service is one of the four functions of SUCs tasked to deliver relevant research output and other services to the community (Herrera, 2010). The extension services of Cebu Technological University aim to provide the small, marginalized communities of the province of Cebu the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills for sustained productivity, profitability, and well-being. They also aim to upgrade the technical

capabilities of extensionists and other development workers of their satellite schools to deliver vital services and ecologically-sound technologies to the surrounding communities. Higher education institutions are developing community extension programs with the best possible societal impact that find this work of interest (Salazar, 2020).

In 2018, the Industrial Engineering Department of Cebu Technological University Argao Cebu Philippines started the extension project to deliver the technical capabilities and research output of the faculty and students to the community, particularly at Barangay Gutlang Argao, Cebu, Philippines. The department started with the training needs assessment, to help the team attain the comprehensive solution to a particular community problem (Iqbal & Khan, 2011).

By 2019, the phase 1 of the DULAW extension project started with the orientation of the beneficiaries on the technology and skills that the department prepared to prepare them for a sustainable livelihood program, this is where the faculty members share the resources and expertise and be active on the school community engagement program (Chua et al., 2014).

With the positive result of the phase 1 of DULAW extension project, phase 2 was conducted in 2020 with the objective of 75% of the target beneficiaries would acquire the competencies of product commercialization. Hence, product development was the crucial stage where the team must ensure the product requirements (Asyraf et al., 2022) as to product commercialization. In addition, the students' involvement was also included with the activity of packaging design contest during the Industrial Engineering Days through online. The packaging design was considered by the extension team to present the product with the specific trademark and color for easy identification of the future customers. Thus, packaging was used to communicate and facilitate customer decision-making (Yam et al., 2006).

With the pandemic lockdown, the department continued the extension project. During 2021, the Province of Cebu implemented a program of Sugbo Negosyo, in which five of the beneficiaries were given an opportunity to start a business with the support of start-up kit. The beneficiaries were able to pursue with the main goal of the extension project, which is a livelihood program. With the experience of beneficiaries, it

showed that the extension project of the department uplifted their economic status, whereby they were able to support the basic needs of their family despite of the challenges they encountered during their own production. But because of the typhoon Odette last December 16, 2021, the beneficiaries lost their tools and equipment and were not able to produce the product after the catastrophe.

METHODOLOGY

To answer these questions, the investigators conceptualized the methodology based on the most suitable research design along with other critical elements to achieve accuracy.

Design

This is a qualitative exploratory case study since it delves with an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system according to Merriam (2009). Hence, the two major elements considered for a case study include the case and the boundaries. Thus, in this research, the case, which serves as focus of analysis, is the Dulaw Extension Project while the boundaries are the research site, extension project beneficiaries, extension activities, documents like memo, policies, plans, and time allocated to conduct the activities, which are collectively part of the experiences of Dulaw Extension project beneficiaries.

Moreover, this study employs the lens of Appreciative Inquiry design. According to Cooperider and Whitney (2005), appreciative inquiry is the cooperative, coevolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. Thus, the study aims at exploring the positivity of the DULAW Extension project through the participants' stories as they navigate to survive during the COVID-19 pandemic and even after the supertyphoon Odette. This is critical to improve further the Dulaw Extension Project and consequently provide far better experiences of the beneficiaries as it gears toward sustainability.

The investigators frame the research questions through the 4D model of Cooperrider and Whitney (1999), particularly focusing on the discover and dream phases. The *discover phase* allows the participants to

unpack and appreciate their personal and collective high point stories and experiences while the *dream phase* allows them to co-create a desired future from the collective, imaginative and innovative capacity of the group as part of the Dulaw Extension project.

Environment

The investigators conducted the study in Barangay Gutlang, Argao, Cebu, Philippines. It is one of the mountainous barangays of the municipality, which is approximately 20.6 km from the town proper. Gutlang is situated at approximately 9.9676, 123.5623, on the island of Cebu. Elevation at these coordinates estimates at 224.6 meters or 736.9 feet above mean sea level. Its adjacent barangays include Mompeller, Colawin, Mandilikit and Sua.

In terms of climate, the area is generally tropical. This means that there is a good balance between relative humidity and rainfall all throughout the year. The month with the highest relative humidity is December, which is at 85.97% while the month with the lowest relative humidity is April, which is at 80.24%. Moreover, the month with the highest number of rainy days is October with a record of 26.83 days. The month with the lowest number of rainy days is February with a record of 18.37 days.

Concerning the land type, Barangay Gutlang has a loamy type of soil. It is a combination of sand, silt, and clay such that the beneficial properties of each are included. For instance, it has the ability to retain moisture and nutrients. Hence, it is more suitable for farming. This soil is also referred to as agricultural soil as it includes an equilibrium of all three types of soil materials, being sandy, clay and silt and it also happens to have humus. Apart from these, it also has higher calcium and pH levels because of its inorganic origins. This makes barangay Gutlang highly dependent on agriculture, such as mixed crop and livestock farming.

Due to loamy soil with tropical climate all throughout the year in Barangay Gutlang, it became an ideal environment for dulaw plant scientifically known as *Curcuma longa*, which is also known as an Indian plant with aromatic rhizomes to thrive everywhere such as those found in the backyards of the extension beneficiaries. The pulverized rhizome of the

dulaw plant is used for stimulation, flavouring and to add a bright yellow colour to food.

In terms of population, Barangay Gutlang has 195 households composed of 811 total population according to the 2020 census of the municipality of Argao. This makes barangay Gutlang a lightly populated area of which data from the municipality shows that it is only 1.04% of the entire population of Argao, Cebu. In addition, 10.51% of the population in Barangay Gutlang are between the ages of 20-24 who are primarily not permanently residing in the area because of work or studying in learning institutions outside the barangay. Thus, the majority of those who remain to reside permanently are either the younger or the older age group outside from this identified population. This means that the remaining population are dependent on the land and other available resources in Barangay Gutlang.

Participants

The participants in the study were the five women beneficiaries of the Dulaw Extension Project. They were identified based on purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling was used for the identification and selection of information rich cases or participants connected with the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). Hence, in this research, the investigators identified the participants based on the inclusion criteria established, which include: (a) Dulaw extension project participants, (b) actively and consistently involved in the activities of the Dulaw extension project, and (c) recipient of the Sugbo-Negosyo assistance of Cebu Provincial government.

Instrument

The main instrument of the study was the interview guide for the Focus Group Discussion. Generally, the interview guide consists of three types, which are the introductory, content and concluding questions. The interview guide is in English with Cebuano-Visayan translation. The investigators made the introductory questions to set the tone for the specific topic. The content questions focused on digging deeply into the ideas and concepts, which are critical for the study. The concluding questions provided the participants the chance to add on information that they may

have missed along the gathering process. Moreover, to ensure content validity of the interview guide, at least three qualitative experts, trained extensively by the Asian Qualitative Research Association validated the instrument. Furthermore, the validation was based on the criteria adapted from Caffrey (1995).

Moreover, one of the supplemental instruments includes the observation guide, which is used to provide direction on what to look into that are relevant and critical to the research study. Another supplemental instrument is the researcher's analytical memo that is used to take down in detail the progress of the study. The investigators used these three since they are significant in maintaining trustworthiness of the study.

Data Gathering Procedures

Collection of data commenced after the approval of the transmittal letter. Primarily, to get the experiences of the study participants, the investigators conducted the Focus Group Discussion. It began by arranging a particular date to meet all the participants. During the focus group discussion, the researchers asked the interview guide questions using the English and Cebuano-Visayan translation when needed. Moreover, the investigators allowed the participants to use the most comfortable language they feel available since this is critical according to the study of Ramos (2010). Observation followed in four separate times based on the availability of the participants. The purpose is to see in general the setting of the participants, and in particular, the routine from creating the product up to marketing it and onwards. In addition, the researchers made memos simultaneously to take note of everything that occurred in actuality including the review of policies and issuances both from CTU-Argao and the partner agency, comprising the Local Government Unit of the town of Argao and the Local Government of Barangay Gutlang, Argao, Cebu.

Data Analysis

The data analysis is done using the thematic analytical framework of Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data of which in this case, are the experiences of the participants told in the form of stories during the focus group discussion. The goal of thematic analysis is to identify themes, like

emerging patterns in the data that are important or interesting and use these themes to address the research. The analytical framework of Braun and Clarke is composed of six phases.

The first phase is about becoming familiar with the data. In this phase, the researchers read and reviewed several times the transcripts from the focus group discussion, as well as revisited several times the notes gathered in the observation and those reflected in the memos of the researchers. The second phase is about generating initial codes. In this phase, the researchers started to carefully highlight the different terms and phrases that connect to the concepts asked in the research question. The third phase is about searching for themes. In this phase, the researchers initially looked into the commonalities between highlighted codes to see if these codes actually belong to certain categories. The fourth phase is about reviewing themes. In this phase, the researchers verified the categorized codes based on the previous stage. The data shows the themes through deduction. This is also the part where the researchers critically examined further the codes to see if they truly are supporting and substantiating the categories being formed which consequently created the themes. The fifth phase is about defining the themes. In this phase, the researchers made the final refinement of the themes, and the aim is to identify the essence of what each theme embraces. The researchers also considered in this stage the collective perspective of the theme's relationships. The sixth phase is about writing-up the findings. This is the phase where the researchers outline the findings in the most suitable form for presentation of the entire research paper. Thus, when researchers deduced all themes, they went back to the observation notes and written memos to validate these findings in a form of counterchecking. This is also the way to prepare the presentation for an extensive and comprehensive discussion backed up by the data from the observation notes and memos as confirmatory evidence.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The researchers used the framework of Lincoln and Guba (1989) for the trustworthiness of the study. The criteria include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Thus, researchers applied specific strategies under each criterion to maintain the trustworthiness of the research.

For credibility, the researchers maintained prolonged engagement, triangulation occurred through multiple data sources (interview, observation, analytical memos), peer debriefing member checking in the context of reviewing the transcript, themes, and other data in the study, and using well-established research method along with iterative questioning to establish honesty of informants based on the strategies suggested by Shenton (2004).

On the other hand, for transferability, the researchers had a thick description of the context and the phenomena as suggested by Lewis and Ritchie (2003). For dependability, the researchers had a detailed description of the methodological procedures as suggested by Shenton (2004). Lastly, for confirmability, the researchers made triangulation and audit trail of the data based on the strategies as pointed out by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Ethical Considerations

The study employed the ethical framework of Creswell (2014), which includes before conducting the study, beginning the study, collecting the data, analysing the data, reporting and storing the data, as well as publishing the data.

Before conducting the study, the researchers made sure that there is adherence to the culture and routine of the participants through familiarization of their day-to-day activities. The investigators obtained research approval from the concerned authorities through submission of the proposal to the panel for scrutiny. The investigators sought the local permission in the study site through the Campus Director of CTU-Argao and the Barangay Captain of Gutlang, Argao, Cebu, Philippines. In addition, the investigators selected the study site without self-interest since it is only because the Extension Project happened to be existing in the area, and lastly, there was a pre-negotiation for possible publication authorship.

In beginning the study, the investigators identified the research problem in consideration of the benefits that the participants may receive. The researchers identified the purpose of the study and disclosed this to the participants to provide information and get their consent. Moreover, the researchers respected their norms as part of their culture. Lastly, sensitivity to the vulnerable needs of the participants was highly considered. In

collecting the data, the investigators gave full respect to the study site. There was no deception of the participants. There was maintenance of respect for potential power imbalances and exploitation of participants. Lastly, there was no collection of harmful information. In analysing the data, there was avoidance of possible bias such as taking side with the participants. The researchers did not disclose prematurely any positive results. Finally, the investigators maintained a continuous respect of the privacy and anonymity of participants through fictitious names. In reporting and storing the data, the researchers observed carefulness. The investigators kept the data in a single file to ensure protection of sensitive information. Only the researchers have full access to all the data gathered. In publishing the study, the researchers shared processed data copies of report results to the study participants and stakeholders as well as to other researchers. There are no duplicative publications. Lastly, the researchers observed complete proof of compliance with ethical issues without conflict of interest.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Since the focus of the study is anchored on the first two phases of the 4D model, which are the Discovery and Dream phases, these two phases therefore correspond to the best practices and visions for ideal implementation of the community extension project.

Best Practices Adopted in the Community Extension Project

Table 1

Best Practices Adopted in the Community Extension Project

Themes	Categories
Knowledge Acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training participation• Technology application
Information Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Product formation• Product innovation
Material Utilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customary tool• Advanced device
Method Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Routing procedures• Innovative processes
Product Marketization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calculated pricing• Strategic selling

Findings reveal that participants initially started with the community extension project through *knowledge acquisition*. Hence, knowledge became the very foundation of the project before moving towards the next step. According to Ramirez (2021), knowledge is one of the most important resources for the achievement of objectives and sustainability. Meaning, possession of knowledge is a considerable advantage to whoever has it. In addition, as Clark et al. (2021) put it, accurate knowledge is essential for high quality shared decision making. Simply, with the possession of this accurate knowledge, it leads to positive change when it becomes the cornerstone of decision-making. Thus, in this case, the participants took advantage of acquiring knowledge from the initial meetings with partners from the community, which eventually led to skills training including the learning of the technology being introduced by the extensionists. From their committed participation, they acquire into possession a valuable asset that is critical to shift the course of their lives.

[...] *Pag-ingun ni Kapitan nga na-ay skills training ana nga petsaha, ni decide jud ko nga mu-adto sa barangay hall para maka kat-on ko.* (When I was told by the Barangay Captain that there will be a skills training on that date, I immediately decided that I will be in the Barangay Hall to learn.) – Participant B.

[...] *In my case, after sa unang training, mag sigi na kog pangutana ug kanus-a ang sunud para dili ko maka absent.* (In my case, after the first training, I always asked when will be the next training in order for me never to be absent. – Participant D.

In addition, the observation of documents confirmed this acquisition of knowledge as found in the attendance records kept in the file of the barangay secretary and the office of the extension services of the university. Additional information that supports their participation in the training to acquire knowledge was found also in the photos during the actual conduct of the skills training. The analytical memo also verified this when the participants reflected the value of knowledge to gain resources to move forward.

Moreover, the second theme points out *information transformation*. This focused on the idea that knowledge acquired and possessed is applied to gain benefits. While possession of knowledge is a valuable concern, it also means that acquiring knowledge is using it to transform the present status. Hence, Richard and Braunsberger (2022) advocated for systems thinking. This is on the concept that in order to reduce the complexity of life caused by social problems, the possession of knowledge should transcend towards proper usage. Thus, transformation of information happens. In the case of the participants, they were able to transform their acquired knowledge into the formation of products and even beyond by innovating products on their own.

[...] *Of course, paghuman sa unang training, sulay-sulay pud kog porma gamit akong nahibaw-an.* (Of course, after the first training, I tried making the product on my own based on what I learned.) – Participant C.

[...] *In our case, kay silingan man mi, nag sulay mi ug porma ug candy gamit ang amo nahibaw-an sa basic training.* (In our case, since we are neighbours, we innovated the product in the form of a candy using what we learned from the basic training.) – Participant A.

This emerging theme is confirmed during the actual observation when the participants demonstrated at home the process of creating the product. It was also noticed that they were innovating accordingly considering the practicality of the available resources. In addition, the analytical memo reflected that participants' hope for positive change in their socio-economic status led them to try transforming this acquired information into products that can add support to their daily needs.

Furthermore, the third emerging theme is called *material utilization*. This is the case when the participants adapted the customary tools and even the introduced advanced tools to meet the expectations. Meaning, as these participants moved forward in their journey in the community extension project, they were also expected to meet challenges as many other things became new in the journey. However, eventually, they were able to manage and adjust. This idea is related to the concept of Derrer-Merk et al. (2022) that the sense of belonging is a fundamental human need. Therefore, the

participants, fuelled by their commitment to change the game of their lives were able to continue by learning to use the customary tool and even those new advanced tools being introduced by the extensionists.

[...] *Katawa ko pag-una kay ako nahibaw-an katong manomano raman para ma-powderized siya kay naglibug man ko unsa-on pag-gamit ang blender.* (I laughed at first because what I knew was just doing it manually to powderized since I was confused on how to use the blender.) – Participant E.

This is confirmed during the observation that the participants navigated themselves in utilizing the equipment provided as part of the start-up capital. While they reported to have issues in utilizing them at the beginning, it was evident during the observation that they already knew well on how to manipulate the equipment.

The fourth emerging theme is called *method application*. This happens when the participants became acquainted and eventually became used to performing guided by the knowledge previously learned. Simply, through knowledge, they dealt with the changes sensibly and realistically guided by the concepts relevant to the procedures from a mere routine towards innovating them. This is in consonance with the concept of Anderson (2022) that changes are faced through a pragmatic routine approach.

[...] *Pag-una, sunud ra jud ko sa unsay pa-agi nga gitudlo, hangtud na-ay customer naka-ingun nga wala kay katong dili dugangan ug sugar or murag candy ba kaha.* (At first, I only followed the process taught to us until a customer asked if there is a product made without sugar or formed like candy.) – Participant B.

In the observation, it was found that the participants were well-versed down to the details of the method transferred to them during the training. Moreover, in the analytical memo, it was reflected that this action is a consequence of their eagerness to see the end product along with the hope that it will provide them additional income for their family.

Finally, the fifth emerging theme is called *product marketization*. This points to the idea that the outputs produced from the knowledge practically used to create and innovate and guided by the processes now have to be sold for income. However, monetizing these products requires strategies as pointed out by the participants, including calculated pricing and strategic selling. Hence, the last theme still demands both knowledge and competencies on this matter. In fact, as mentioned by Dajah (2022), using the holistic marketing approach includes creating cohesiveness and gathering credible results. This is why in the case of the participants, given the minimal knowledge they have on marketing, they still tried to see if the prices provided to the produced products can be enough to continue the supply of production and at the same time gain for their daily needs. Moreover, they did not rely on one selling strategy and instead moved around the community to get connected with their former and potential customers.

[...] *Wala kaayo mi idea pag presyo, so amo ra gibaligya unya gi kwenta-kwenta nga makapadayun pud mi sa among gamay nga negosyo.* (We do not have idea on how to do the pricing, so we just sold it based on our own computation with consideration that we can continue in our small business.)
Participant A.

In the observation, the participants need to move around their community to sell their products going from one house to another. In the analytical memo, it turned out that this is one of the challenging parts on their end since the weather is one thing to consider along with the culture of the people around. Meaning, if it rains, despite having a lot of produced product, they have no choice but to wait for the rain to stop. Moreover, there are instances that they have to just leave the product and come back for the payment in some other time as customers tend to haggle at the same time.

Major Components of the Ideal Extension Project

Moving on to the dream phase, the study reveals three emerging major components of an ideal Dulaw extension project. These include the legal identity, structural and financial independence, and project completeness. Each of these emerging components is supported by their corresponding categories as found in the data gathering.

Table 2
Major Components of Ideal Dulaw Extension Project

Themes	Categories
Legal Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting laws • Organized group
Financial & Structural Independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start-up capital • Permanent location • Strategic site
Project Completeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic training • Regular monitoring & evaluation • Ready market • Open communication

The *legal identity* component corresponds to the need to establish not only their self-image but as well as the fact that the established self-image is supported by necessary documents duly recognized by the government and the general public. Hence, as pointed out by the participants, hesitations to marketize the product may come to mind once they are questioned by their identity and authority. This is why the crafting and passing of supporting laws like local ordinance either from their own barangay officials or from the local government unit of the town is deemed necessary. In addition, the participants also considered the concept of being properly organized. This is in a way where they will be registered as an organization where they can appropriately process their official documents, such as receipts for their products. The concept of identity has always been an issue such as those reported by Yusuf and Putrie (2022). Similar to this case, identity remains a critical component in order for the extension project beneficiaries to operate and practise their knowledge in accordance with the provisions of the law of the land.

[...] *Wala man mi ana diri nga ordinansya.* (We do not have that ordinance here.) – Participant A.

[...] *Ma-ayo unta sa women's...maklaro ang membro.* (I hope the women's group will be organized.) - Participant E.

In the observation of actual documents, it was evident that there were no supporting documents to show that they were organized. Though the training was made through a communication from the university to the

local officials of the barangay, it was found that the mouth did the dissemination of information only. The analytical memo shows the critical need for acceptable identity in order for them to have the confidence to continue performing tasks that are related with the extension project.

In addition, another important component of the ideal Dulaw extension project is the need to gain *financial and structural independence*. This is the idea that participants believe for the critical role of start-up capital which should be enough to continue into business. This is pointed out by the participants after they realized that the support initially provided through materials and equipment was damaged by the typhoon. Thus, the continuous production was hampered by the catastrophic phenomenon. With financial aspects considered critical for any business transaction (Omodero, 2022), it is therefore necessary for the Dulaw extension project proponents to assure that the beneficiaries will have sufficient support on this matter, and that this support requires the need for permanent and strategic site for them to be seen and regularly visited by their customers.

[...] *na-a pud unta mi amo magamit pang sugud ba kay lisura lagi paghuman sa bagyong Odette. Lisud ibalik sa unsay nakatabang na unta namo.* (We hope that we also have something to use for us to start again after typhoon Odette. Since it is difficult to go back to the small business we used to do that helped us.) – Participant E.

[...] *na-a pud unta mi lugar nga Makita bitaw mi pirmi para ug na-ay mangita sa among produkto, maka-ingun nga tu-a ran a sila didto.* (We hope to have a permanent place so that when customers will look for our product, at least they can be told where to find us.) – Participant B.

[...] *Kana unta nga lugar nga dali ra makit-an parihas sa daplin ug kalsada.* (A place that can be found easily like near the road.) – Participant D.

This finding is also confirmed in the observation. Though they were able to start establishing the routine work as a result of the previous trainings conducted, it is evident that they stopped after the equipment given as part of the start-up capital was damaged by the typhoon Odette. Hence, this

incapacitated their performance in continuing to apply the knowledge and skills previously acquired.

The third and last component is called *project completeness*. This is referred to as the need to see the whole picture sustaining before terminating the project. Hence, the participants pointed to the need for systematic training. By that, they meant not only frequent but regularly done as well. Along with that is also the cruciality of having regular monitoring and evaluation so as to see and assess the progress and provide necessary intervention when needed. In addition, a ready market is more preferable. Thus, in this case, the market-supply chain is linked properly. Lastly, the importance of open communication is raised in order to provide a platform for growth and development.

[...] *Mas ma-ayo mapadayun mi ug training hangtud jud makama-o na mig taman.* (It's best that we will be continuously trained until we really have learned.) – Participant A.

[.] *unta, sila nga nagpasi-ugda kay mag follow-up pud sila ug na-unsa na mi para makita pud nila ang dagan.* (We hope that the community extension organizers will monitor and evaluate us regularly so that they will know our progress.) – Participant B.

[...] *Nindot unta jud mi klaro mamalitay pirmi para lahus lahus amo paninda.* (It would be nice that we have permanent market (customers), so we can continue selling our product.) – Participant A.

[...] *mas ma-ayu jud ug na-ay maka istorya pud bitaw sa mga panginahanglanun gikan namu padung kay kapitan ug sa mga opisyaes.* (It is much better if someone can communicate to the barangay captain or other officials concerning our needs.) – Participant C.

In the analytical memo, it shows that wholistic approach leads to a successful extension project. As confirmed by the observation, there was lack of conduct of trainings and monitoring and evaluation of the extension

project implementers and local government counterparts based on the absence of communication and other supporting documents. Instead, they have presumed that the participants previously trained have acquired knowledge and gained skills already after several trainings; thus, were ready to do it on their own. This is an action made without substantial proof.

CONCLUSION

The study ends with the fact that best practices emerged among the community extension project beneficiaries, which include knowledge acquisition, information transformation, material utilization, method application, and product marketization. All these came into being despite the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and typhoon Odette which constrained the beneficiaries. In addition, three major components are parts of the participants' dreams for the ideal Dulaw extension project, and these include the needs for legal identity, financial and structural independence, as well as project completeness. Simply, this points to the fact that appropriate and consistent supports from those who have access to resources and complementation towards building a sense of ownership are critical for a successful, effective and sustainable community extension project. Meaning, the key to a successful community extension project begins with selflessness of those who possess to share the resources and the need for the beneficiaries to transform themselves into responsible community members fuelled by the desire to effect positive change in their socio-economic status.

RECOMMENDATION

Therefore, it is recommended that the Dulaw community extension project to be revisited from the first to the last stage, taking into full consideration the stories and dreams of the project beneficiaries in the creation of the ideal plan for the continuation of the community extension project.

Hence, these are critical results of the community assessment, which can be a good foundation for a sustainable university extension project. This is the reason why the crafting of a community extension project should always be geared towards sustainable development in order for true progress and development can be observed even in far-flung areas.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF AUTHORS

The authors confirm the equal contribution in each part of this work. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of this work.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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