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Building Community Resilience and Economic Empowerment: Community Extension in Practice by a Local College

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a structured community needs assessment of a localized purok in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, Philippines, to identify socio-demographic realities, infrastructure gaps, and unmet development needs. Actual data have been collected from 58 households (n = 58) using a quantitative descriptive cross-sectional survey design. Results demonstrate the contradiction that, despite the existence of health services and disaster response services which have gained acceptance in the community, the community is severely lacking in economic empowerment programs. The findings prove the existence of a 58.62% unemployment rate, 94.83% of households living below the poverty line, and the significant unavailability of infrastructural services, such as unstable water supply and poor road networks. Surprisingly, despite this vulnerability, there are several hidden capabilities, such as an active female population (91.38%) and informal micro-businesses (34.48%). To cover these gaps, the research introduces an integrated extension framework based on agricultural improvement, entrepreneurial development, and civil service training. Among the suggested measures are creation of urban agricultural cooperatives, training seminars on business organization, bookkeeping, and digital marketing, as well as structured training sessions aimed at preparation for passing the Civil Service Exam (CSE).

INTRODUCTION

The concept of community development refers to the comprehensive approach to establishing communities in which the communities are working in collaboration with the external entities to construct the required level of social as well as economic and ecological infrastructure that assures the sustainability of their functioning (Phillips & Pittman, 2024). In the international context, the objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals emphasize that it is impossible to eradicate both poverty and starvation without developing communities as well as creating educational opportunities for people and providing them with access to clean water as well as sanitation (United Nations, 2023). Talking about the situation in the Philippines, it should be noted that socially disadvantaged communities are usually the most vulnerable to the negative consequences of economic changes and have low level of education as well as high unemployment rates and low quality of infrastructure which makes them susceptible to being the victims of the circular process of being ignored by both the urban and rural communities (Albert *et al.*, 2020; Reyes *et al.*, 2023). In the Philippines, according to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) requirements, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) must perform three functions, which can be achieved due to the collaboration with Local Government Units (LGUs), thus solving local socioeconomic problems (Apao *et al.*, 2021). LUCs maintain a unique position in developing extension

initiatives that benefit marginalised communities through the utilization of their intellectual capital.

However, there is a persistent issue in community work which is that most university extension services fail to achieve their goals since they are carried out from the top down, without any empirical knowledge of the needs of the community (Delos Reyes & Mactal, 2022). In order for interventions to be successful and sustainable, it is important to take prior steps, such as conducting a community needs assessment, which allows to get to know the actual ground realities of the residents (Mercado & Hernandez, 2023). Regarding the Northeastern Mindanao region, today, many barangays get basic social safety nets, however, localized communities still face issues related to poverty and economic instability (Alimen *et al.*, 2021).

Data that were obtained in the research show serious contradictions within the institutional process taking place in the community. At the same time, while healthcare services and disaster defense programs are available for the residents, the community has a huge deficit of programs aimed at economic empowerment. This is especially important, taking into account that the community is characterized by an unemployment rate of 58.62%, quite a big number of low-income families (94.83%), and the absence of necessary infrastructure.

This study is born out of the urgent need to address this developmental gap. This research provides the empirical evidence required to transition the community from baseline survival to economic resilience (Ramos &

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Salazar, 2022). Ultimately, this assessment serves as the strategic blueprint for university extension programs to design and execute targeted, high-impact interventions that foster food security, entrepreneurial capability, and sustainable community growth

This study seeks to conduct a comprehensive community needs assessment that will serve as a baseline for targeted institutional extension interventions. Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions

- What is the socio-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, income level, employment status, educational attainment, and housing type?
- What is the current status of the community's access to basic utilities and its primary sources of income?
- What prevailing issues are faced by the community, and what services are currently available to them?
- How do respondents rate the effectiveness and satisfaction level of the services provided in the community?
- What unmet needs exist in education, business development, infrastructure, and technology support, and how do respondents perceive their importance?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Socio-Demographic Determinants and the Poverty Cycle

Localized poverty in developing economies has a structural association with level of education and employment status. As stated by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), the households headed by individuals with the least education show a significantly higher rate of chronic poverty (Albert *et al*, 2020). The absence of education puts serious restrictions on entering the formal labor market and creates high local unemployment rates in different countries.

Disparities in the labor market depending on gender exacerbate the situation. The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA, 2023) claims that women, especially housewives, have some structural obstacles to formally entering the labor market owing to unequal share of responsibilities at home. In turn, the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2021) reports that all these barriers force women to open informal micro-businesses that are useful but cannot expand.

Structural Deficits in Local Utilities and Infrastructure

The physical infrastructure availability is very important in the socio-economic mobility. The Digital Development Goals of the United Nations point out that having resilient infrastructure, provision of safe water, and sanitation is crucial in getting rid of poverty (United Nations, 2023). If water utilities are limited, people experience a complicated household crisis whereby their little income or work time is consumed by the necessity to look for the water on a daily basis. According to the World Bank (2021), this situation increases poverty and restricts

the opportunities for studies, work, and health.

Recent national surveys confirm this imbalance. While electrification rates in the Philippines have steadily improved, water service delivery continues to lag, particularly in rural and marginalized areas (PSA, 2022; DOE, 2021). Addressing these gaps through localized interventions, such as installing community water pumps, is widely recognized as a vital step before any economic or vocational program can achieve sustainability (ADB, 2020).

The Role of College Extension in Economic Mobilization

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines have the obligation to offer strong community extension services along with their educational and research agendas according to the requirements of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED, 2024). However, according to Delos Reyes & Mactal (2022), many extension programs are unsuccessful because they are based on a top-down approach without systematic and scientific analysis. Mercado and Hernandez (2023) prove the importance of structured needs assessment to make sure the strategies correspond with the needs of the community.

Extension programs align academic resources with community assets to allow for the transformation of vulnerabilities into opportunities. An example of the success of an extension program is the use of workshops in accounting, costing and digital marketing to empower informal micro-entrepreneurs to develop their business competence (Guanzon & Albao, 2024). Another instance of the extension programs working toward food security is the introduction of community urban agriculture through agricultural extension tracks (FAO, 2020).

Civil Service Review and Governance Pathways

Apart from agriculture and entrepreneurship, civil service training represents a key skill that fosters stable jobs within politically affiliated communities. The Civil Service Commission (CSC, 2021) stresses that civil service exam passing is essential for the initiation of government service jobs that are characterized by salary, benefits, and career advancement. It was mentioned that public sector employment helps reduce poverty throughout developing countries since it provides more security in comparison to informal jobs (World Bank, 2021).

Additionally, the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2021) states that formal employment opportunities reduce the level of household economic insecurity. Hence, civil service training should be included in the extension services where livelihood training should play the dominant role in creating diverse opportunities for job seekers. It also leverages the purok's strong political affiliations responsibly, ensuring that residents gain merit-based qualifications rather than relying solely on patronage networks. This dual approach strengthening local enterprises while opening access to government employment aligns with broader development literature

on sustainable community resilience.

Theoretical Framework

Nancy Milio's Framework for Prevention posits that an individual's or a community's behavioral patterns and socioeconomic choices are primarily dictated by the availability of structural resources rather than mere personal knowledge. Milio asserts that a severe deficit in essential resources—such as water security, stable infrastructure, and economic opportunity—drastically limits a community's capacity to improve its standard of living, thereby increasing vulnerability to chronic poverty

and systemic stagnation. In this study, Milio's framework directly explains the critical cycle affecting the 58 respondents: their extreme concentration within the low-income bracket (94.83%) and high unemployment rate (58.62%) is structurally reinforced by the community's primary self-identified issue of inadequate road networks and lack of direct water utilities. According to this theory, community progression cannot occur through passive education alone; it requires a direct modification of the resource environment, justifying the study's call for structural interventions like the local government installation of a community water pump.

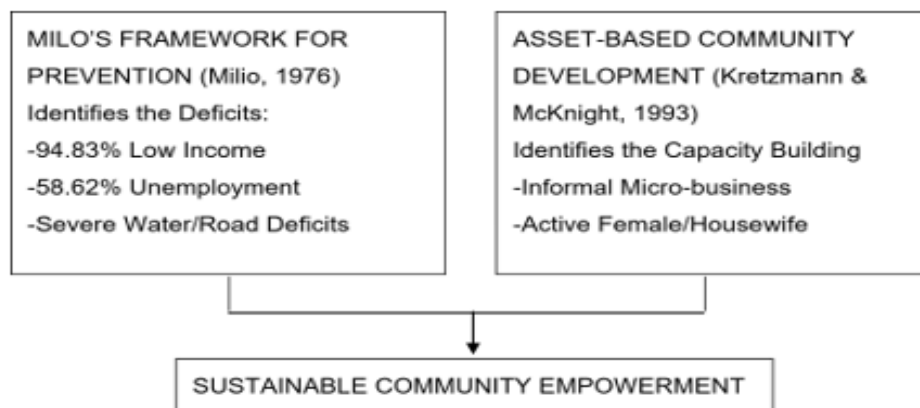


Figure 1: Framework of the Study

Milio's deficit-based analysis is supplemented by the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, which changes the developmental focus from what a community does not have to what it has. According to Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), successful community development takes place only when local talent, resources, and internal capacities are thoroughly identified and mobilized. The ABCD model highlights that even the most economically disadvantaged communities possess internal assets, such as a strong presence of informal micro-businesses (34.48%) and a highly active female demographic (91.38%) capable of collective mobilization. When applied to this study, the ABCD model serves as the theoretical mechanism for the recommended university extension interventions. By aligning the community's internal human assets with the specialized academic capital of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)—such as providing BSBA-led financial literacy and digital marketing seminars—the community's informal survival strategies can be converted into structured, self-reliant micro-enterprises. Hence, these combined theories dictate that by diagnosing structural deficits (Milio) and mobilizing latent grass-roots capacities through institutional partnerships (ABCD), the community can successfully transition from baseline economic vulnerability to sustainable resilience.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Research Design

The researchers carried out the study using a quantitative descriptive research design which was turned into a

Community Needs Assessment. This design is ideal owing to the fact that it allows for the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data systematically and accurately, providing evidence about the state of the services being offered to the community. With the help of a cross-sectional survey, the researchers were able to assess the vulnerability of the community in terms of its infrastructure, livelihoods, and technology without having to manipulate any variable.

Research Respondents

The participants in this study included 58 individuals (n=58) who were purposively selected from the local community in Bacolod City. The selected participants are highly vulnerable socioeconomic-wise with 94.83% of them being in the lowest income group and 58.62% of them being unemployed. Sociodemographically, the majority of the participants are women (91.38%) and are also young with 51.72% of them being aged 39 or younger. Most of the participants were only able to go through basic education yielding 86.21% of individuals in the study finishing elementary or secondary school only.

Data Gathering Procedure

The process was executed in three distinct phases: pre-survey administrative clearance, field survey administration, and post-survey data management. To begin with, formal permission was obtained from both the Barangay captain and local authorities. During the implementation of the research itself, the researchers used the in-person method of administering the questionnaires

by translating verbatim questions and instructions to Hiligaynon thus making it clear to the participants what was expected of them. Further, the next stage of the study involved the checking of the questionnaire forms (58 in total) to ensure that these were filled out correctly before being computerized using Microsoft Excel.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a structured, researcher-made Community Needs Assessment questionnaire designed to identify systemic gaps between current conditions and desired socio-economic baselines. This questionnaire had sections for gathering data on the demographic characteristics of the participants, access to utilities, current employment, and ranking of problems experienced by the community. As respondents had a low level of education, the questionnaire was drafted in a straightforward manner that was easy for respondents to understand and was pre-tested before being administered.

Validity

The content validity for the instrument was verified by specialists in this field. They reviewed the questionnaire's content and compared it to the study's goals. Moreover, translating the instrument into Hiligaynon provided "face validity" to the study since it enabled respondents to understand and answer the questions correctly according to their culture and language, which avoided bias or confusion in answering the questionnaires.

Reliability

With the descriptive nature of the study, reliability was maintained through the standardization of the administration process. To enhance the accuracy and stability of the data, the same delivery means of the questionnaire was used and same explanations were given to each participant during the data collection. Finally, all 58 instruments went through the post-survey check which confirmed that the gained data was reliable and

could be used in the study.

Ethical Consideration

The principles of beneficence, justice, and respect for individuals are emphasized in the study following the provisions of the Philippine Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). Participants were involved on voluntary basis, while verbal informed consent was acquired in the local language. Participants were made aware of their right to discontinue the participation in the study or refrain from answering the questions that raise concerns. Each participant was assigned a number to provide anonymity for each participant. All the data is securely stored in the electronic forms which are encrypted and protected with passwords. AI (Artificial Intelligence) was used for analyzing the data and for writing the paper. AI was utilized only for 60% of the paper, but the output was revised and interpreted by the researchers in order to ensure correctness of the output.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Section i. socio-demographic profile

According to Table 1, the demographics of the respondents comprise data about their age, gender, income, employment, education, and home circumstances. In age information, almost half of them belong to age categories under 39 years (51.72% of respondents), while about a quarter of respondents belong to 60 years or above (27.59%) and a fifth of people belong to 40–59 years age group (20.69%). Thus, the significant proportion of respondents is in younger age category which is in accordance with national surveys that show the relative youthfulness demography of the Philippines (Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), 2022). Regarding gender, there are significantly more female respondents (91.38%) than there are male respondents (6.90%), indicating gender skewness in the current study. The gender imbalance is consistent with other community-based surveys conducted in the Philippines (Garcia &

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age 60 years old above	16	27.59%
40–59 Years Old	12	20.69%
39 Years Old Below	30	51.72%
Sex Male	4	6.90%
Female	53	91.38%
Income Level Low Income	55	94.83%
Lower Middle Income	3	5.17%
Employment Status Unemployed	34	58.62%
Self-Employed	14	24.14%
Private Sector	4	6.90%
Government Agency	4	6.90%
Student	2	3.45%

Educational Attainment No Formal Education	1	1.72%
Elementary	22	37.93%
High School	28	48.28%
College	7	12.07%
Housing Type Owned	33	56.90%
Living with Parents	12	20.69%
Others	10	17.24%

*n=58

Reyes, 2021).

The income level of subjects in this study is almost exclusively in the low-income range (94.83%) and very few (5.17%) cases are found in the lower middle-income bracket. The group shows zero representation from those belonging to the middle-income range, as well as upper middle income and high-income groups indicating that the people involved in this survey are mostly economically disadvantaged. These findings are consistent with the general observation that low-income families are widespread in less developed areas (Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2020). Also in terms of employment status, it was found that most respondents were unemployed (58.62%), while a smaller number are self-employed (24.14%), employed in the formal sector (private sector 6.90% and public sector 6.90%), or students (3.45%). The low level of employment of respondents from the survey relates to the trends visible for the working population in marginalized communities (International Labour

Organization (ILO), 2021).

Looking at educational achievement, the majority of the individuals surveyed have achieved secondary education level of high school (48.28%) with the second most common educational level being elementary level of education (37.93%). Only 12.07% of the respondents report a college level of education and a small percentage 1.72% have never been educated. Thus, it can be said that most of the individuals have low to middle level of education which is the case not to differ from the previous evidence obtained from rural survey (UNESCO, 2020). When it comes to housing type, it should be mentioned that majority of the respondents have houses (56.90%) with only 20.69% still living with parents and 17.24% stating other living conditions. Importantly, none of the applicants said they were living in any rentals, which proves the idea that homeownership is usually characteristic among the poorest families in rural areas (Habitat for Humanity Philippines, 2021).

Table 2: Access to Utilities

Access to Utilities	Frequency	Percentage
Electricity and Water	18	31.03%
Electricity	36	62.07%
No Electricity and Water	4	6.9%
Water only	0	0

*n=58

As for access to utility services, 36 respondents (62.07%) noted their availability of electricity only, while 18 respondents (31.03%) indicated their availability of both electricity and water. At the same time, 4 respondents (6.9%) mentioned that they could not access both electricity and water supply. The results indicate the lack of infrastructure facilities available to low-income and peri-urban areas as electricity is at a greater coverage than water access.

According to recent national statistics released by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), the electrification rate has been steadily maintained over the years, while the adequacy of water supply service delivery has not been improved with big disparity among the poor and rural communities. The Department of Energy asserts that as of 2021, the electrification of households has

reached 94%. However, some areas still suffer from having no electricity in their homes. However, the delivery of water supply services continues to pose problems as some households are given water through communal or informal methods instead of having direct connection to the water supply network according to Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The fact that there is a small proportion of people who are deprived of water and electricity services indicates that households that are not connected to the utilities are at high risk. There is evidence that lack of utilities leads to more poverty and limits education, employment, and health (World Bank, 2021). Thus, addressing the issue should involve the systematic method of planning the infrastructure with recognition of the need for equal access to energy and water services.

Table 3: Main Income

Main Income	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture	4	6.90%
Small Scale Business	20	34.48%
Work from other Cities	4	6.90%
House Wife	14	24.14%
Not Answered	16	27.59%

*n=58

According to our survey of 58 respondents in which 42 mentioned their primary source of income, 20 respondents indicated that they are engaged in the small business, which is the most frequent type of activity. This is in line with the realities of the Philippines, where micro-small-medium enterprises (MSMEs) account for the majority of jobs (Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), 2022).

The following figure shows that 33% of the respondents, or 14 in total, fall under the category of housewives, which makes the issue of unpaid domestic labor more visible and emphasizes its significance for household survival strategies. Academic literature indicates that women's unpaid care work is significant but is generally ignored as a type of economic activity in the Philippines (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2021).

Moreover, four respondents indicated working in the agricultural sector as well as being employed in other

places. Most people rely on the agricultural sector, with the industry being vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and market fluctuations (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2020). However, the trend of labor migration to cities illustrates an ongoing rural-urban migration process resulting from the search for better job opportunities (Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2020).

As a result, it appears that only 16 individuals (27.59%) decided to respond to this query, indicating a possible reluctance in discussing issues related to income. Studies indicate that informal and unstable jobs are not usually reported, due to the steering nature of this type of employment (World Bank, 2021).

Section 2. Current Community Conditions and Services

This portion of the study presents the existing conditions and services available at the community, based on 128

Table 4: Issues Currently Faced by the Community

Responses	Frequency	Rank
Inadequate infrastructure (e.g roads ,water, supply	37	1
Unemployment or underemployment	33	2
Health and sanitation issues	31	3
Lack of livelihood opportunities	15	4
Lack of access to quality education	4	5
Limited access to technology	3	6
Others	3	6
Environment degradation	2	7

*multiple responses

responses. Some of respondents have major problems caused by damaged roads, limited water supply, or absence of facilities. These findings reflect the national infrastructure assessments revealing weak points in rural and nearby urban regions that suffer from the poor quality of roads and inequality of water distribution (Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2020; World Bank, 2021).

In addition, an admirable 33 responses or roughly 26% of the total mentioned that they either have unstable jobs or jobs below their skills or pay scale. This means that the Philippines is still grappling with its labor market issues, particularly underemployment even if labor statistics depict a promising scenario (Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), 2022).

Several issues, such as informal jobs and skills mismatch, still hold back people's potential for progress in the economic sphere (International Labor Organization (ILO), 2021).

Concomitantly, 31 respondents (24% approximately) provided responses relating to the availability of clean water and sanitation facilities as well as healthcare and hygiene services. This seems to repeat previous countrywide research which shows that access to clean water and sanitation remains a significant public health concern (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2020). Lack of hygiene facilities renders people more vulnerable to various diseases and creates additional challenges in times of health crises, like the COVID-19

pandemic (World Health Organization (WHO), 2021). Overall, the information gives a clear overview of the role of infrastructure, employment, and services in enhancing poverty and vulnerability. The solution

includes the development of strategies for the effective use of infrastructure.

Table 5 presents the services currently available in the community as identified by the respondents, using

Table 5: Services Currently Available in the Community

Responses	Frequency	Rank
Health	43	1
Educational Programs	43	2
Environmental Programs	36	3
Disaster Preparedness and Response	18	4
Community Development Projects	16	5
Livelihood Training	12	6

**multiple responses*

frequency and rank. The results show that health services and educational programs are the most available in the community, both receiving the highest frequency of 43 responses, ranked 1st and 2nd, respectively. The community enjoys strong access to basic health and education services. National statistics indicate that health and education services are among the most widely implemented programs in Philippine communities (Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), 2022; Department of Education (DepEd), 2021).

Environmental programs are in the third rank with 36 responses, suggesting that environmental programs are existent but not as successful. The same is reflected in research showing that environmental initiatives take a backseat to health and education, but have been penetrated to the local governance systems more actively (Barojabo, 2025; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2020).

On the other hand, disaster preparedness and response services received 18 responses and ranked 4th and community development projects had 16 responses and ranked 5th. This indicates that such services are not as wide or accessible as health and education. This reflects the broader tendency for disaster risk reduction and

community development initiatives to be made more accessible at the ground level (Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2020).

Lastly, training for income-generating activities is the least common form of service (12 responses) and ranks as the sixth most common. This indicates the gap in services that support the generation of income, training and economic empowerment. Studies show that even though the importance of training in livelihood skills for poverty reduction and sustainability is high, it is underfunded and thus neglected (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2021; World Bank, 2021).

Overall, the community possesses superior access to healthcare and education services. Nevertheless, there seems to be a substantial deficit in the number of livelihood training programs and economic support services offered. This gap in services presents a room for institutions and organizations including those offering BSBA programs to come up with services focusing on entrepreneurship and skills training as well as other income-seeking activities.

Table 6 illustrates the levels of satisfaction with six major types of services by community members. The

Table 6: Effectiveness of Current Services Provided

Responses	very satisfied	satisfied	neutral	dissatisfied	very dissatisfied
health	26	31	0	0	0
educational programs	14	16	18	0	6
environmental programs	11	10	18	3	0
disaster preparedness and response	18	18	8	0	0
community development projects	18	21	6	1	0
livelihood training	17	24	8	2	2

satisfaction levels of respondents can be divided into five categories, namely, Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, and Very Dissatisfied.

On the whole, health services received the highest ratings as all respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied.

This phenomenon corresponds to the national trend in which the primary health care services are considered the best accessible and used services, especially in barangay health centers (Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) 2022; Department of Health (DOH) 2021).

The feedback on educational programs is mixed: while many appreciate them, some respondents remain indifferent or dissatisfied with their effectiveness, suggesting that there are areas for improvement. Such feedback agrees with studies indicating that despite growth in the number of people who get access to education, many problems related to educational quality and distribution of resources across Philippine educational institutions remain unsolved (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2020).

Feedback on livelihood training was also mixed, as many respondents opted for neutrality while others were dissatisfied with it. This means that the effectiveness of these types of programs is extremely low, which is consistent with research results showing that skills development programs often fail to meet the needs of the community and the labor market (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2021).

Feedback on environment programs is predominantly positive, as none of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction. It can be inferred that these programs are effective and widely accepted. This is in line with research findings that indicate that local environment projects such as waste management and greening initiatives are well accepted in case the community is actively involved

in the project (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2020).

The disaster preparedness and response program was generally well-received, with minimal dissatisfaction and neutrality. This is indicative of the ongoing efforts of the Philippines to improve disaster risk management and reduction systems at the community level (Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2020).

Finally, community development projects were mostly rated as satisfactory, although a few respondents voiced their discontent. This indicates that while such projects are present, their impact may vary depending on implementation and inclusivity.

Overall, the community appears to have stronger satisfaction with health and environmental services, moderate satisfaction with education and disaster preparedness, and weaker satisfaction with livelihood training. This highlights an opportunity for institutions, such as BSBA programs, to design extension services focused on entrepreneurship, skills training, and income-generating activities to better support community development.

The table above shows the importance of three key interventions to support business and economic development needs. Among the three choices, Marketing Strategy Development and Digital Marketing Training

Table 7: Business and Economic Development Needs

Responses	very important	Important	Moderately important	Slightly important at all Not important
Entrepreneurship training and wokshop	30	21	1	1
Marketing strategy Development and digital marketing training	32	21	2	
Office administration skills training for local businesses	28	22	3	1

is considered highly significant owing to the increasing importance of digital marketing in business. This conclusion is in line with domestic and international reports which indicate that the necessity of digital marketing skills has increased for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the wake of the pandemic (Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), 2022; International Trade Centre (ITC), 2021).

The second is Entrepreneurship Training and Workshop, which reflects a strong need for learning practical skills and attending workshops that would prepare individuals for starting a business. The efficacy of entrepreneurship education in enhancing business survival rates and innovation in developing economies is confirmed (Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2020; World Bank, 2021).

The last kind of training mentioned is Office Administration Skills Training, which is not perceived to be as pressing in comparison to the rest. Although it is accepted that administrative skills have an important role in the operation of any business, respondents seem to be more interested in market-oriented skills and

entrepreneurial skills than in back-office activities. This is confirmed by general literature on the topic, where it is pointed out that communities usually prefer getting skills that help earn money and increase access to markets (ILO, 2021).

To sum up, the priority given to digital marketing and entrepreneurship training suggests that the community is fully aware of changes in business environment, where the ability to run business and apply digital technologies plays a crucial role in economic improvement.

CONCLUSION

The target community is trapped in generational poverty due to structural gaps rather than missing social cohesion. Having reached a threshold of social readiness, residents require a shift from passive charity to structural capacity building. An interdisciplinary strategy focused on technical skills, local cooperatives, and modern infrastructure will convert these vulnerabilities into sustainable self-reliance. This study reinforces the beauty of one of the pillars of HEI function — community extension.

Recommendation

A College-Based Community Extensions – Four-Phase Strategic Framework

Phase 1: Foundation & Baseline Capacity Building

Employs the “Food for the Table” initiative, urban agriculture, and basic financial literacy to address immediate survival needs and resolve baseline bottlenecks.

Phase 2: Optimization, Expansion, & Curricular Integration

Integrates student volunteers (NSTP/CWTS) to scale agricultural yields and introduce technical modules like vertical hydroponics and value-added food processing.

Phase 3: High-Value Diversification & Institutionalization

Drives long-term autonomy by establishing a CDA-registered Multipurpose Cooperative and introducing advanced economic ventures like essential oil processing.

Phase 4: Infrastructure Modernization & Environmental Sustainability

Focuses on holistic stewardship by building climate-resilient greenhouses, drainage systems, and recreational spaces to ensure long-term urban renewal and community livability.

Limitation & further research

This quantitative descriptive research created a comprehensive picture of the socio-demographic situation, infrastructure situation, and services gaps for 58 households in one of the communities of Bacolod City, Negros Occidental. It's important to note that the current research focused on finding specific statistics, like income, employment, education, and others. Focusing on quantitative data allows us to get a clear picture of problems for the designed future university extension service plans in the town and at the same time helps to see the state of the community.

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