



Community Needs Assessment as Basis for Philippine College Foundation-Business Administration Department Community Extension Project

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the needs of the residents in Sitio Langcanao, Barangay Lurogan, Valencia City. Specifically, it sought to determine the demographic profile of the residents, identify their needs in relation to livelihood and financial literacy, and develop extension projects based on the identified needs. The study employed a descriptive research design which utilized a validated and reliable survey and interview questionnaire. Results revealed that residents highly needed both livelihood development training and financial management skills to create economic stability. An extension project (Project LIFE) was developed as an output to cater to the community's needs. The institution and local government unit should collaborate to enable the practical use of service learning to address real-life community needs.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions conduct community development initiatives that serve as basic elements for the advancement of local economic development and individual life improvement (UNESCO, 2020). The academic departments responsible for extension programs help educational institutions develop methods to address community needs through ongoing activities that harness institutional expertise toward sustainability. The Philippine College Foundation, through the Business Administration Department, maintains its commitment and effort to identify community needs to produce impactful extension projects. Extending programs requires a complete assessment of community needs because this process identifies which resources, along with knowledge and skills, the community lacks (Wang & Burris, 2018).

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) identifies higher education institutions (HEIs) as essential agents who use community engagement programs to develop their local socioeconomic progress by resolving current community requirements (CHED, 2016). It determines community extension programs as essential operational activities at HEIs by requiring departments to apply their unique expertise to support underserved communities (CHED, 2019). The Business Administration Department intends to develop a community extension project that caters to resident requirements for sustainable economic development and student-faculty social responsibility enhancement. The development of household income alongside economic resilience in low-income communities becomes possible when households acquire skills through micro-entrepreneurship and backyard gardening (Carter et al., 2019). Improving household finances through financial education practices in budgeting, savings management, and debt education creates better economic stability while decreasing exposure to economic disruptions (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2017).

This research targets specific evaluation areas to identify community needs, which will guide financial empowerment programs that develop economic sustainability in the selected community. This needs assessment will directly inform the Business Administration Department's extension efforts, ensuring that future initiatives are both relevant to the community and aligned with academic objectives. This approach facilitates community empowerment and allows students and faculty to apply business concepts to real-world challenges, fostering an exchange of knowledge and skills that benefits both the university and the community.

Objectives for the Study

1. To assess the community's needs regarding livelihood opportunities and financial management.
2. To determine demographic and socioeconomic data that may impact perceived community needs.
3. To develop an extension program aligning with the identified needs and the department's goals and objectives.

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS

This study utilized a descriptive research design to obtain information concerning the residents’ needs at Sitio Langcanao, Barangay Lurogan, Valencia City. The community is occupied by diverse ethnic groups such as Bisaya, Cebuano, Ilonggo, and Talaandig. It was selected as the research locale based on the initial site visit and residents’ living conditions. The researcher developed a survey questionnaire designed to gather relevant information on the community's perceived needs. This questionnaire underwent a rigorous content validation process, with three experts in research and extension reviewing and validating the content for relevance, clarity, and applicability. Field testing was conducted to determine the instrument's reliability, achieving a Cronbach's alpha of 0.83, indicating high internal consistency and reliability.

The survey questionnaire consisted of two parts; the first part was a demographic profile, in which this section collected general information about respondents to understand the characteristics of the sample population. The second part was the five-point Likert scale to rate the community's perceived needs. Frequency and percentages were used to analyze the demographic profile of the respondents, and the weighted mean was calculated to assess the community's perceived needs. Each item on the scale ranged from "Highly Needed" to "Not Needed," with the following scale and interpretations:

Table.1 Survey Data Collection

Numerical Rating	Range	Descriptive Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Highly Needed
4	3.41-4.20	Needed
3	2.61-3.40	Moderately Needed
2	1.81-2.60	Less Needed
1	1.00-1.80	Not Needed at all

Data collection began with the distribution of the survey questionnaire to a representative sample of the community. After completing the survey, a random selection of key informants was invited to participate in focus group discussions (FGD) to gather deeper insights and validate the quantitative survey results. Participants were fully informed of the study’s purpose, their right to withdraw at any time without consequence, and the measures taken to protect their confidentiality. Each participant provided informed consent, confirming their voluntary participation. As all participants were at least 18 years old, their consent was duly certified. The study adhered to ethical guidelines to protect participants' rights and privacy. Participants' identities were anonymized to maintain confidentiality, and data was stored securely. After completing the research, the findings were presented to the community in alignment with the principle of knowledge sharing, ensuring that the community members could benefit from understanding the study’s outcomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of respondent demographic profiles. The obtained profile was based on the respondents' age, educational attainment, ethnicity, occupation, and shelter. Out of the 50 respondents, 10 (20%) belong to the age range of 18-24 years old, 16 (32%) are in the age range of 25-34 years old, 13 (26%) are aged 35-44 years old, and 8 (16%) are aged 45-54 years old. Additionally, 2 (4%) respondents are in the 55-64 age range, and 1 (2%) is 65 years old and above.

In terms of educational attainment, 20 respondents (40%) have an elementary-level education, 11 (22%) are elementary graduates, 13 (26%) have reached high school level, and 6 (12%) are high school graduates. Regarding occupation, 10 respondents (20%) are employed, 19 (38%) work as hired labor, and 21 (42%) are unemployed. As for ethnicity, out of the 50 respondents, 7 (14%) identified as Cebuano, 16 (32%) as Bisaya, 15 (30%) as Ilonggo, and 12 (24%) as Talaandig. For shelter or residence, 35 respondents (70%) own their houses, while 15 (30%) either rent or live with other families.

In terms of toilet availability, 37 respondents (74%) reported having a toilet in their residence, whereas 13 (26%) indicated they do not have one.

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Respondent's Demographic Profile

Profile Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-24 years old	10	20%
25-34 years old	16	32%
35-44 years old	13	26%
45-54 years old	8	16%
55-64 years old	2	4%
65 above	1	2%
Educational Attainment		
Elementary Level	20	40%
Elementary Graduates	11	22%
High School Level	13	26%
High School/College Graduates	6	12%
Occupation		
Employed	10	20%
Hired Labor	19	48%
Unemployed	21	42%
Ethnicity		
Cebuano	7	14%
Bisaya	12	24%
Ilonggo	15	30%
Talaandig	16	32%
Shelter/Residence		
Owned	35	70%
Living with Relative	15	30%
Toilet		

Yes	37	74%
No	13	26%

The table shows that most respondents are within the productive age ranges: 25-34 years old (32%) and 35-44 years old (26%). These groups are generally considered the most active in the workforce, potentially indicating a population focused on economic and family-building activities. Similarly, the smaller proportion of older respondents (16% aged 45-54, 4% aged 55-64, and 2% aged 65 and above) reflects a possible generational shift toward a younger population structure. The finding is like what UNDP (2020) presented about how a community's developmental pathway relies heavily on population age distributions, mainly through younger generations, creating economic momentum.

The statistics indicate that 40% of respondents are at the elementary level, and high school graduates represent only 12% of the total respondents. Few people have access to secondary education, blocking their chances for social advancement in the future. The World Bank (2022) investigates how secondary education makes rural areas less poor by creating better employment possibilities. Occupationally, the research demonstrates that unemployment affects 42% of individuals, but hired labor makes up 38% of the proportion, and formal employment stands at 20%. The high numbers of jobless persons suggest that local economic conditions present restricted employment resources or skills deficiencies in the neighborhood. Peace Economic Zone outcomes would benefit from investing in skills training programs and local economic development schemes, according to the Asian Development Bank (2023).

Bisaya participants comprise 32% of the total respondents, Ilonggo participants represent 30%, and the Talaandig group comprises 24% of the research population. The minority group identifies as Cebuano with only 14%. This reflects the diverse cultural composition of the area, indicating the potential for rich cultural traditions. Lopez and Reyes (2021) state that recognizing ethnic diversity is crucial in community development programs to ensure inclusivity and cultural preservation. As for the shelter/ residence, the majority (70%) own their homes, while 30% either rent or live with other families. Homeownership is often associated with stability, but the presence of renters or those living with relatives may indicate economic constraints for a portion of the population. According to Habitat for Humanity (2021), secure housing is key to overall wellbeing and socioeconomic advancement.

Lastly, in terms of toilet availability, the presence of toilets in 74% of households is a positive indicator of basic sanitation facilities, though 26% lacking such facilities underscores a gap in infrastructure. WHO and UNICEF (2022) stress that inadequate sanitation can lead to health risks and reduced quality of life, particularly in rural or marginalized communities.

Table 3 presents the needs of the community in relation to livelihood. The findings indicate that all indicators in the Livelihood dimension are "Highly Needed," with an overall mean of 4.51 and a standard deviation of 0.718. The highest-rated indicator is "Improving livelihood opportunities that can contribute to the development of the community" (M = 4.58, SD = 0.692).

Table 3. Community Needs in Relation to Livelihood

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Interpretation
1. Improving livelihood opportunities that can contribute to community development. <i>(Pagpauswag sa mga oportunidad sa panginabuhi nga makatampo sa pag-uswag para sa atong komunidad.)</i>	4.58	0.692	Highly Needed
2. Having diverse livelihood options for enhancing the resilience of the community in the face of economic challenges or disasters. <i>(Pagbaton ug lain-lain mga opsyon sa panginabuhian para sa pagpausbaw sa kalig-on sa atong komunidad atubangan sa ekonomikanhong mga hagit o kalamidad.)</i>	4.55	0.637	Highly Needed
3. Knowledge of livelihood activities such as backyard gardening, animal raising, and sari-sari store. <i>(Kahibalo sa mga kalihokan sa panginabuhian sama sa backyard gardening, animal raising ug sari-sari store.)</i>	4.47	0.723	Highly Needed
4. Access to diverse employment opportunities is needed in the community. <i>(Ang pag-access sa lainlaing mga oportunidad sa panarbaho para sa komunidad.)</i>	4.47	0.868	Highly Needed
5. Adequate livelihood opportunities that can contribute to social stability and cohesion within the community. <i>(Pagsiguro nga ang igo nga mga oportunidad sa panginabuhi makatampo sa kalig-on sa katilingban ug panaghiusa sulod sa atong komunidad.)</i>	4.47	0.668	Highly Needed
Overall Mean	4.51	0.718	Highly Needed

“Mas maayo kung aduna mi’y gamay nga panginabuhian nga pwede namo buhaton sa among panimalay o komunidad, aron aduna mi’y ikatampo sa panginahanglan sa pamilya ug pagpalambo sa among komunidad.”

(It would be better if we had small livelihood opportunities that we could do at home or with the community to contribute to our family's needs and the development of the community.)

The need for diverse livelihood options ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.637$) and knowledge of livelihood activities such as backyard gardening and animal raising ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.723$) reflects a collective aspiration for self-reliance and resilience against economic challenges or disasters. This aligns with the findings of Angelsen et al. (2022), which emphasize that diversified livelihood strategies enhance household resilience and reduce vulnerability to economic shocks. Furthermore, access to employment opportunities ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.868$) and adequate livelihood options contributing to social cohesion ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.668$) underscore the community's recognition of the broader social benefits of economic empowerment. As Martinez et al. (2020) noted, livelihood improvements are central to achieving sustainable community development and reducing inequalities.

Table 3 presents the community's needs in relation to their financial knowledge and practices. The results of the financial knowledge and practices demonstrate an even stronger demand for capacity-building initiatives, with an overall mean of 4.65 and a standard deviation of 0.509, indicating that financial literacy and management skills are highly prioritized. The highest-rated indicator is "Knowledge and skills to effectively track expenses" ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 0.495$), emphasizing the need for practical tools to monitor and control spending.

Seminars on setting aside income for emergencies ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 0.463$) and managing debt effectively ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 0.517$) are also highly rated, reflecting the community's recognition of the importance of financial preparedness and debt literacy. Lusardi and Mitchell (2020) discovered that financial education increases people's capabilities to make knowledgeable choices about investment and borrowing. The community recognizes financial preparedness along with debt literacy as vital elements because of their significance. One participant shared:

"Dapat naa gyud ipondo para sa emergency kay dili man malikayan nga naay kalit nga gasto. Pero lisod kay usahay igo ra jud sa pang-adlaw-adlaw."

(We must follow a practice of saving emergency funds since unexpected expenses are inevitable. However, it is difficult because sometimes our income is just enough for daily needs.)

Savings management efficiency and budgeting for personal expenses show strong agreement ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 0.531$ & $M = 4.57$, $SD = 0.537$) among respondents to indicate a shortage of financial planning abilities. The study results agree with de Bruin et al. (2019), who established that financial security demands effective budgeting and saving habits. These findings reveal a critical necessity for specific initiatives focusing on improving survival and monetary knowledge among community members. Transferring financial knowledge along with skills for tracking costs through seminars will enable local communities to become resilient and master diversified income sources through training sessions (Uy et al., 2023). Moreover, the implementation of these interventions will achieve maximum effect when local government and non-governmental organizations work together.

Table 4 shows the developed extension project for livelihood and financial literacy. Project LIFE aims to provide community members with essential livelihood skills and financial literacy to enhance their economic stability and wellbeing. The program will focus on empowering individuals with the knowledge and resources needed to create sustainable livelihoods and make informed financial decisions. The Project LIFE is a comprehensive intervention aimed at solving socio-economic problems through skill development, financial empowerment, and enterprise development. Through the use of a collaborative strategy that engages barangay officials, community leaders, extension coordinators, faculty, staff, and student volunteers, the project seeks to generate sustainable economic opportunities for marginalized groups. The incorporation of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms ensures ongoing improvement and long-term effects. Being a replicable model, Project LIFE can be used as a model for other community-based development initiatives, promoting economic independence and resilience in local communities.

Table 4. Community Needs about Financial Knowledge and Practices

Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Interpretation
1. Knowledge and skills to effectively track expenses. <i>(Mahibalo sa mahitungod sa saktong pag subaybay sa mga gasto)</i>	4.72	0.495	Highly Needed
2. Seminar on how to set aside a portion of income for emergencies. <i>(Seminar mahitungod sa ipon gikan sa akong kita para sa mga emergency.)</i>	4.70	0.463	Highly Needed
3. Seminar on how to properly manage debt and know the risks of borrowing. <i>(Seminar mahitungod sa unsaon pagdumala ang utang ug unsay mga risgo sa pagpanghulam.)</i>	4.66	0.517	Highly Needed
4. Seminar on how to manage my savings effectively. <i>(Seminar mahitungod sa kung unsaon pagdumala ang mga ipon sa hustong paagi)</i>	4.60	0.531	Highly Needed
5. Knowledge of the regular budget for personal and household expenses. <i>(Mahibalo mahitungodsa regular nga budget para sa personal ug mga gasto sa balay)</i>	4.57	0.537	Highly Needed
Overall Mean	4.65	0.509	Highly Needed

Table 5. Extension Project Development Plan Project LIFE (Livelihood and Financial Education)

Key Result Areas	Specific Objectives	Project Activities	Persons Responsible	Timetable (Year)
Livelihood Skills Training	Equip participants with practical skills for small-scale businesses and income-generating activities.	1. Conduct skills workshops (e.g., handicrafts, food processing, agriculture). 2. Provide resource materials and starter kits for selected participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barangay Officials • Community Leaders and Residents • Extension Coordinator • Faculty and Staff • Students • Volunteers 	2025-2028
Financial Literacy	Increase community awareness and understanding of basic financial management and budgeting.	1. Hold financial literacy seminars (topics: budgeting, savings, debt management). 2. Distribute financial planning guides and budgeting templates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barangay Officials • Community Leaders and Residents • Extension Coordinator • Faculty and Staff • Students • Volunteers 	2025-2028
Small Business Development	Enable participants to develop and start their own small businesses or cooperative initiatives.	1. Organize business planning workshops. 2. Facilitate one-on-one mentorship sessions for business plan development. 3. Connect participants with local microfinance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barangay Officials • Community Leaders and Residents • Extension Coordinator • Faculty and Staff • Students • Volunteers 	2025-2028

Monitoring and Evaluation	Track and assess the program's effectiveness and the impact on participants' livelihoods and financial habits.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct pre- and post-program surveys to measure financial knowledge and livelihood skills changes. 2. Schedule follow-up visits to assess progress and provide additional guidance. 3. Prepare program evaluation reports and share findings with the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barangay Officials • Community Leaders and Residents • Extension Coordinator • Faculty and Staff • Students • Volunteers 	2025-2028
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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A high percentage of residents aged range of twenty-five to thirty-four attained elementary level hired labor and belonged to Indigenous groups that owned shelters and toilets. The community needs livelihood and financial literacy programs, particularly in expense tracking, savings management, and debt handling. There is also a strong demand for diversified livelihood options, skills training, and employment opportunities to enhance economic resilience. Additionally, the findings highlight the necessity for initiatives promoting education, household financial planning, and community-based capacity building. An extension project (Project LIFE) was developed as an output to cater to the community's needs. Considering these findings, it is highly recommended that the Philippine College Foundation collaborate with the local government and relevant agencies to implement programs addressing the identified needs. Establishing strong linkages with non-governmental organizations, financial institutions, and livelihood development agencies will be essential in ensuring the success and sustainability of these interventions.

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