

# **Community-Life School Model for Sustainable Agriculture Based Rural Development**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Rural poverty continues to persist in spite of numerous rural -based programs and projects implemented over the years. Despite development initiatives from the government, non government and private organizations to alleviate rural poverty, illiteracy and malnutrition remain high in rural areas. During the 1980's, the search for new development models have led rural development workers and theorists to advocate for participatory development models (Chambers, 1998) as an alternative to the top down model of development. Although the participatory paradigm proved successful in terms of accomplishing project objectives, the problem of sustaining the gains of the intervention after the pull out of the project remains a major challenge.

This paper presents insights on three rural-based projects namely the rice-based project implemented in 95 ARC municipalities which focused on enhancing farm productivity through rice, vegetables and livestock production, the education intervention with the Tagbanuas in Calauit, Palawan and the on-going rice based project in Padre Burgos, Quezon.

The first project reveals increases in the number of farmers with those having yields of 4 MT/hectare and above from only 41.5% to 65% of 200 farmer participants. However, for the project to have impact on rural community conditions, local organizations should be strengthened to ensure widening of gains to other members of the community at the same time that it has to develop skills in marketing farmer produce. Networking with other organizations through project implementation was part of the strategy to build on social capital. The current rice productivity enhancement project in Padre Burgos integrates the important strategies and insights in the first two projects and expands the network and concerns beyond the farm to include education concerns for elementary and out-of-school youth.

Given the variations of rural community needs, the implementation framework starts with a rapid needs and opportunity analysis after which an entry point project is determined. With the thrust for ensuring a sustainable livelihood, the framework emphasizes a participatory, experiential approach in co-developing technologies in livelihood activities appropriate to the needs and conditions of the rural community. However, livelihood may not necessarily be the entry point. In Calauit, Palawan for example, the entry point was education since that the community did not have an elementary school at that time. It eventually expanded to cover farming and fishing intervention and now, the proposed agro-eco cultural tourism project.

The Community-Life School (CLS) Model highlights volunteerism, life-long learning, enhancement of social capital and endogenous led development as pillars of sustained development. The CLS model believes that empowered individuals and households are key to sustained rural development. Moreover, it advocates tackling development in a holistic manner by involving all members of the households and key stakeholders in addressing aspects on livelihood, education, environment, nutrition and governance. The community life school hopes to contribute to the struggle of the rural communities for a vibrant and productive rural life.

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## I. Introduction

Development is ridden with paradoxes because while there are many theories, there has been a marked increase in poverty and inequality within and among nations. Thus, while there are a lot of studies to better understand the concept, there appears to be less confidence among development workers in the improvement of human conditions on global scale (Kothari and Minogue, 2002). Pieterse (2001), in tracing the development paradigms from the colonial period up to the post modern period, reflects the changing indicators from primarily economic to human and social indicators to a concern for agency and power.

Community development is likewise, far from a unitary concept. Keeney (2002) contends that organization frameworks can be classified into four: charity, welfare state, activist and market. The charity framework favors the provision of relief from poverty based on patronage done mostly through philanthropic activities. The welfare state framework is based on principles of social justice and redistribution and provides a collectivist structural approach to social issues engaged in by nation states that provide direct service delivery to disadvantaged communities. The activist framework works on issue based concerns that promote social determination and change at the structural, ideational and skills level through political mobilization and advocacy. The market approach promotes self help and private initiative, enterprise through promotion of competitive behavior. On the other hand, Subban (2007) states that community based initiatives can either be classified as community organizing, economic development, asset based community development, or comprehensive community building initiatives.

Community development (CD) as a major thrust of the government of the Philippines started in the presidency of Ramon Magsaysay to address the mounting insurgency problem. CD was seen as an instrument to restore faith in the government by improving the delivery of social services (ETC, 1973). While originally conceived as an instrument by the government to pacify the rural people, the elements of community development program were anchored on increase in productivity and income, self help, construction of roads, expansion of social services (ETC, 1973 p:15).

The objectives of community development differ from program to program yet one common element would be the concept of self-help. The model of community development presented in this paper is a result of various community development experiences in the past. The Community Life School model banks on four important concepts: volunteerism, life-long learning, enhancement of social capital and endogenous led development as pillars of sustained development.

## II. Development of the Community Life School Model

The CLS model is a result of the various community development projects spearheaded by the major author. This portion traces the development of the two models by highlighting the accomplishments, limitations and learning from three key projects which helped shaped CLS. The first project is the Volunteerism Project of Agricultural Development in Agrarian Reform Communities (VPAD) implemented nationwide, the Gurong Pahinungod Program (GPP) with focus on Calauit, Palawan and Enhancing Integrated Rice-based Production Through Grassroots Life School Education (GLSE) in Padre Burgos, Quezon.

## A. Volunteerism Project for Agricultural Development in Agrarian Reform Communities (VPAD)

VPAD is a project implemented by University of the Philippines at Los Baños through Ugnayan Pahinungod (Pahinungod) and National Crop Protection Center (NCPC) and the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR). It uses a participatory approach to technology identification and development where farmers themselves are trained by the experts to become farmer scientists. The project objective was to improve the farm productivity and sustain agricultural production. Experts from UPLB and NCPC conduct on-site monitoring and provide technical advice and Pahinungod tapped experts from PhilRice and IRRI as technical resource persons during the training. Figure 1 shows the implementation framework of the project.

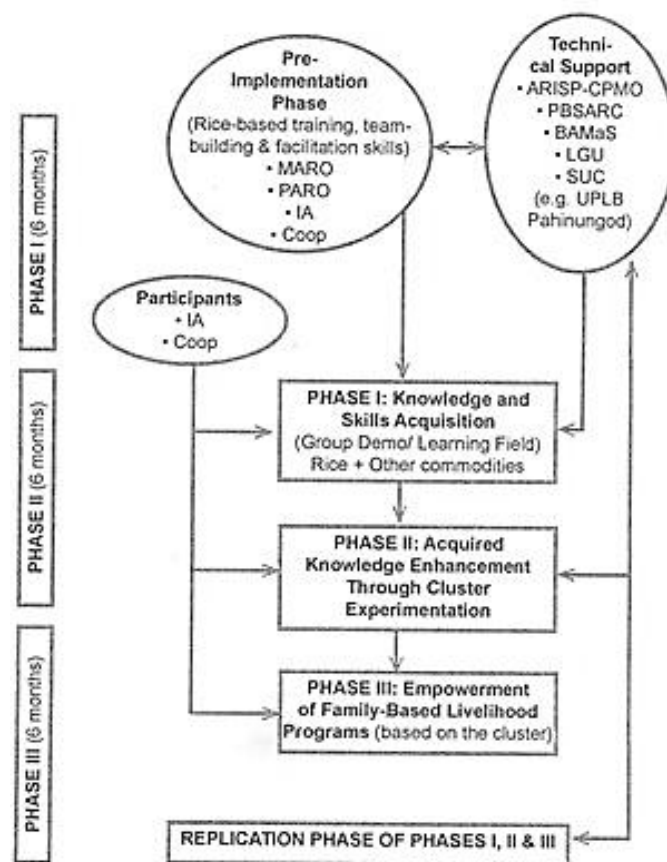


Figure 1. Implementation Framework

The project focuses on the enhancement of livelihood of the farmers by developing experimentation and facilitation skills. The aim of the project was to ensure that farmers learn how to question and seek for ways to address their concerns by using the scientific methodology. A livelihood enterprise is chosen that will serve as the learning platform of scientists from UPLB, PhilRice, IRRI and the farmers. The resulting farmer scientist leaders, in turn, will become the new farmer scientist-facilitators.

The following is a detailed explanation of the implementation framework:

### **Phase I. Knowledge and Skills Acquisition**

This phase focused on the sharing of agricultural knowledge and farming experiences among the farmer-participants and farmer-scientists as well as agricultural workers. This activities were carried out in the field laboratories of learning fields through participatory training activities.

### **Phase II. Acquired Knowledge Enhancement Through Cluster Experimentation Replication**

Phase II or the Acquired Knowledge Enhancement Through Cluster Experimentation covered activities designed to encourage farmers to experiment on technologies learned in Phase I. The experiments were implemented individually and by cluster. The farmers planned their trials for a cropping season, and monitored and recorded their observations, findings and results.

In this phase, the farmers were expected to adopt members of their family and other farmers in the Project. This approach aimed to encourage family members to realize the appropriate roles they must play in helping augment family income. A food security area in the family backyard was also expected to be in place at the end of Phase II.

### **Phase III. Empowerment of Family-based Livelihood Programs**

This phase was designed to encourage every participant to involve his or her own family members and other farmers or assist a community of farmers of their choice. Assessing market within the community and the municipality started at this phase.

In this phase, the farmers were encouraged to start a small-scale family enterprise; each of them serving as resource person and consultant of the other group of farmers. This was expected to be the beginning of the Project replication in the ARC, which was expected to start after Phase III.

### **Transition Phase/Replication**

Throughout the three phases, a new set of farmer leaders and those with facilitation skills were identified. After Phase III of the project, these farmers become the new farmer-scientist facilitators (FSFs) and they start a new demonstration/learning field, and identify new set of participants not previously benefited by the project.

### **Accomplishments**

**Technology trainings conducted.** 148 cooperatives availed of the training assistance and a total of 605 batches of training were conducted categorized as follows:

Table 1. Training accomplishments

Category	No. of Participants		No. of Cooperatives
	Total	Farmers	
Rice-based technology and Facilitation Skills (UP-Pahinungod)	1,124	474	148
PHF courses (BPRE & DAR-initiated)	201	115	40
Other Agri-support training activities	12,252	12,252	148

These training efforts were complemented by mentoring and coaching of LGUs, SUCs, UP Pahinungod, other support agencies and DAR PPMOs.

**Participants trained.** The Rice-based Technology and Facilitation Skills Training were attended by 1,124 participants composed of 474 farmers, Municipal Agricultural Officers, Technologists and DAR Project Staff. Likewise, 12,252 participants attended the ARC-level training activities conducted nationwide. These training activities aimed to create new breed of volunteers committed to serve the community and other neighboring areas through sharing of the acquired/"newly developed" adaptable technology(ies).

**Learning Fields and Learning Centers.** 5,097 learning fields were established by individual cooperatives. 148 Learning Centers were also established by the cooperatives to complement these learning fields and 325 different tarpaulin posters, 73 Soil Test Kits (STKs), 93 MOET Kit and 71 Leaf Color Charts were made available in the learning centers.

A total of 12 types of Technology Guides were developed and placed in the cooperative's offices. These included production of techno-guides and management of eggplant and corn, cutworm management using Spodoptera Nuclear Polyhedrosis Virus (SN PV,) rodent management in rice fields.

**Yield Increase.** There was an increase in the number of farmers having yields of 4MT/ha and above from 41.5% to 65% out of 200 farmer-respondents (Figure 2).

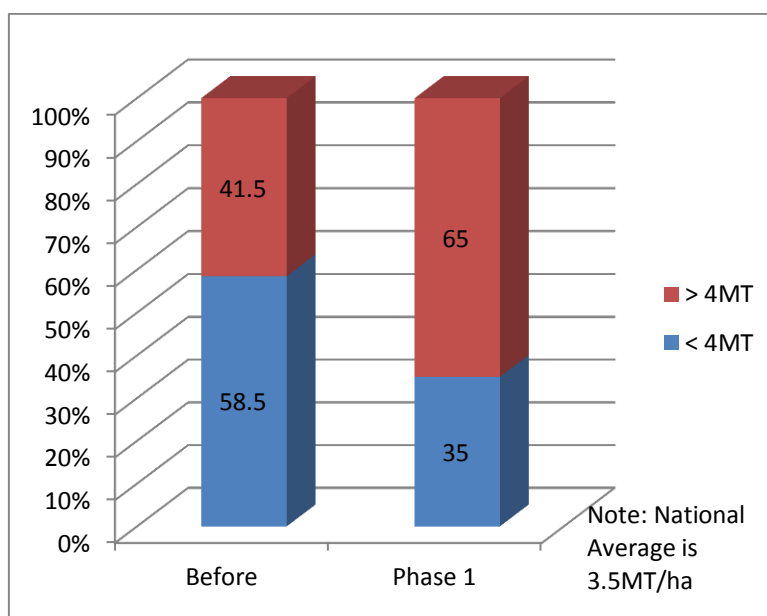


Figure 2. Percent distribution of rice farmers in terms of yield (kg/ha) before after Phase I in seven regions, VPAD, 2005

Among the farmer participants that have completed Phase I implementation, the highest percentage of continuous adoption of technology by the cooperators for both Phase II and III were those engaged in rice seed production with 60.61% and 46.54% adoption rate, respectively (DAR, 2007).

**Networking and Mobilization.** The SCUs, PhilRice and IRRI provided the technical support and expertise needed for knowledge enhancement in agricultural production, while LGUs and NGOs provided financial and logistical support. This resulted in the pooling of resources for ARCs' identified project activities especially in rice production and other agriculture-based livelihood projects. It also provided a unified direction in promoting the development of DAR-ARISP Agrarian Reform Communities. Partnership in the project involves costsharing, technological sharing with reference to the needs of farmers, established rapport and interaction with all stakeholders. Specifically,

- 148 MLGUs were likewise tapped to provide at least 20% equity of the total project costs in the form of technician/resource persons, supplies and materials, and other logistics support. The MLGUs deployed agricultural technicians to oversee the adoption and replication of technologies in their assisted ARCs.
- 15 SUCs, through their extension units, served as channels for the dissemination of technologies. The SUCs rendered technical advice, conducted local-level technology-transfer training activities, among others. SUCs included (1) Benguet State University; (2) Central Luzon State University; (3) Isabela State University; (4) Ramon Magsaysay Technological University; (5) Aklan State University; (6) Leyte State University; (7) Mindanao State University-Nawaan Branch; (8) Bulacan State College; (9) Bataan State College; (10) Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College; (11) Tarlac College of Agriculture; (12) Nueva Ecija School of Science and Technology; (13) Romblon State College; (14) Camarines Sur State College; (15) Don Emilio B. Espinosa Memorial State College of Agricultural and Technology. (Table 2).

Table 2. Assistance provided by SCUs in different ARCs, VPAD 2005

Name of Partner Agencies	Region	Province	Target ARCs	Assistance Given
State Colleges and Universities				
1. Benguet State University	CAR	Benguet	Aduyon	Training on Soil Analysis Materials (Liquid fertilizer, Inoculant)
			NPC	Training on Swine production Technical Assistant on Veterinary Services
2. Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College	Region I	Ilocos Sur	ARAPAAP LITA Highland Barbar	Training Assistant on Organic Farming
3. Isabela State University	Region II	Isabela	Minagbag-Abut	Training on Biogas
4. Central Luzon State University	Region III	Nueva Ecija-South	Palayan City Cabanatuan City Laur	Training on Goat Production
5. Ramon Magsaysay Technological University		Zambales	SAPA	Training on Ampalaya Production
			Maloma	Training on Goat Raising
6. Bulacan National Agricultural State College		Bulacan	Maronquilo	Training on High Value Crop Production
7. Bataan State College		Bataan	Saguing-Maligaya	Training on Goat Raising
			Balanga	Training on Mushroom Production
8. Tarlac College of Agriculture	Tarlac	PSP	Training on Rice Production	
		Tinang		

Table 2. (continuation)

Name of Partner Agencies	Region	Province	Target ARCs	Assistance Given
9. Nueva Ecija School for Science and Technology		Nueva Ecija-South	Gabalдон	
10. Romblon State College	Region IVB	Romblon	Camili	Training on Rice Production
			Taclobo	Technical Assistance of ARISP II Project
11. Camarines Sur State Agriculture College	Region V	Camarines Sur	San Antonio	Training on Pasture Development
12. Don Emilio B. Espinosa Memorial State College of Agricultural and Technology	Region V	Masbate	Tajam	Technical Assistant on implementing on Soil Analysis and other ARISP II project
13. Aklan State University	Region VI	Aklan	Ibajay Upland	Technical Assistance on ARISP II Project
14. Leyte State University	Region VIII	Biliran	Naval 1 Biiran	Technical Assistant on AgriDev't Project(Monitoring and Evaluation)
		Leyte	Puertobello	
15. Mindanao State University-Naawan Branch	Region X	Misamis Oriental	Mambuaya	Technical Assistant on Fisheries Project

At the field level, other agencies like the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Department of Science and Technology (DOST) were tapped to assist the farmers and their cooperatives in product standardization and development.

**Major lessons learned:**

The interactive educational intervention among scientists and farmers shortens the gap between technology development and adoption and encourages farmer ownership of technologies developed. Farmer-managed varietal selection trials are found to be the most promising and effective approach in identifying appropriate varieties or lines to be grown in the problem areas. The interactive approach facilitated more than a change in crop practices as it resulted to changes in attitudes and skills and knowledge learning different aspects of their livelihood. The partnership also resulted to sharing of resources which reduced over-all cost on a per agency level.

However, while there were increases in yields, there was a gap in the implementation project as the market for the livelihood projects were not studied and developed. Recommendation included value adding activities and evaluation of market potentials of the products.

## **B. GURONG PAHINUNGOD PROGRAM (GPP) in Calait, Palawan**

The GP is a program for a select group of UP graduates who commit themselves to teach in public schools in underserved areas. They are tasked to handle Sciences, Mathematics, English, History and Practical Arts subjects for public schools. GP also served as a venue to deepen social sensitivities of UP graduates. These new professionals were after all, the country's future corporate and political leaders, who by their volunteer-teacher experience may be moved to exert greater effort at addressing the problems of basic education.

As part of its working mechanism, DECS (now, DepEd) provided financial grant to UP to defray the costs of the program and undertake its mandate to supervise the GPP and establish the necessary arrangements with school principals and other DECS officials. UP, through the system wide initiative, the Ugnayan ng Pahinungod (UPOC) implemented the program. Pahinungod recruited and trained volunteers willing and capable of teaching for a period of one entire school year. It also trained the volunteerism in the spirit of selfless service. It was hoped that the volunteer-teacher will bring unbridled idealism and youthful enthusiasm to the classroom while imparting newly acquired knowledge in the graduates' field of specialization.

In 2007-2008, the Balik-Calait Movement, a member of the Federation of Calamian Tagbanua, requested UPLB Ugnayan ng Pahinungod for teacher volunteers to be fielded to start the proper basic education in the island. UPLB Pahinungod deployed two GP teachers in the area.

GP volunteers taught all subjects in Grade IV and Grade V in addition they also taught Alternative Learning System (ALS) to older out-of-school-youth which aided in the programs educational support endeavor.

### ***Accomplishments***

As a result of the GP program, an elementary school was established in Calait. A Bahay Karunungan or library was also established through the initiative of the Ugnayan ng Pahinungod and its GP. In addition, ten graduates of the ALS program was admitted to the regular high school program in Coron. Given the volunteerism concept of the GP, the Balik Calait movement also installed a local volunteer teacher funded by their common funds from the community management seaweed livelihood project. In the Alternative Learning system, 15 pass the equivalency test, 5 are enrolled in high school education in the mainland and 3 are now about to graduate from high school this April 2012.

Moreover, the GPs contributed to the non-formal education of local indigenous groups in the area as reflected in the community-based project interventions (Table 3).



Table 3. Project Interventions in Calautit

Name of Project	Year	Volunteer	Intervention
1. Varietal Selection and Seed Production	2007-2008	2 UPLB expert	10 promising varieties were introduced in the area for farmers' observation and selected Output: 2 identified varieties are now planted in the area
2. Induction of new banana varieties for production	2007-2008	1 UPLB expert	6 varieties from IPB were introduced in the island for multiplication Output: 2-4 of the varieties are now widespread in the area as a source of food
3. Container Organic Backyard Vegetable Gardening	2007-2008	1 expert from IPB	Training on Container vegetable production and seed production Making foliar fermented Juices (fruits and plants as organic foliar spray)
4. Seaweed Livelihood	2007-2008	1 expert from UP Visayas	Provide planting seaweed stocks Output: Project of PTCA with which the community generates income to sustain 2 local school teacher
5. Goat Dispersal	2009-continuing	1 expert UPLB Pahinungod	Provided 2 female and 1 male as stock for breeding stock Output: 4 female goats are already distributed to BCM member for livelihood
6. Herbal Making	2012	2 expert from UP Manila	Citronella as mosquito repellent Lagundi as cough syrup
7. Food Processing	2012	2 experts from UP Diliman	Sardine making and other food preservation such as banana jam.

**Sustained project.** The Seaweed livelihood project proved to be the most sustainable income generating project as income is used to fully fund one local volunteer teacher in the area to supplement the number of DepEd teachers.

**Partnership and social mobilization.** Through their various “extra-curricular” activities, GPs indirectly functioned as an effective catalyst for the formation of partnerships and acted as active networking agents. Networking became an eventual strategy of GPP to mobilize local partners particularly parents and local government units and establish strong linkages among the communities, people’s organization (POs) and numerous national agencies like the Department of Agriculture (DA), local, regional and national units of the Department of Education (DepEd), local government units (LGUs) at the barangay, municipal and provincial levels which resulted into unique pooling and sharing of resources in the implementation of GPP as well as in the realization of community-based programs in the areas.

Partnerships were often based on cost-sharing, technology transfer and ownership, and participatory with regards to the real needs of local stakeholders (Table 4).

Table 4. Partnerships and resource sharing schemes established through GPP

Organization/Agency	Assistance
Department of Education (national)	GPP program funding
Department of Education (regional)	Technical assistance
Department of Agriculture	Seeds, farming input and technical support
Local Government Units (municipal)	Training sponsorships and other logistics
Local Government Unit (barangay)	Logistics, security
UP System	Technical experts and technology

**Major lessons learned.** The major accomplishment here is the sustainability of the community based livelihood seaweed project which up to now, funds the allowance of a local volunteer to augment the DepEd teachers assigned in the area. The critical factor which led to the sustainability of the project was the strong mass base support of local leaders for the project. While the need for basic education was partly addressed through putting up of a school, illiteracy rate remained high. Malnutrition likewise remained high. Agricultural production continues to be subsistence while vegetable production has decreased.

### C. Enhancing Integrated Rice-based Production Through Grassroots Life School Education

The project is ongoing and aims to enhance rice productivity in a rainfed rice growing area through a participatory extension model. Given the livelihood thrust, the project centers on developing scientific capacities in rice farming, involvement of the family members in community based projects and strengthening the local organization, a move considered strategic as local organization is seen as major mover in sustaining gains in capacity building.

#### **Major accomplishments:**

**Enhancing Farmer Capacities.** Capacity building activities to enhance skills in scientific farming is done through several activities such as the establishment of community based learning fields.

The learning field aims to enhance farmer experimentation studies on the effects of compost, spraying on pest and diseases, effects of spacing on yield shown below:



Figure 3. Community based learning fields

A community seed bank, which serves as sites for varietal selection has likewise been established.



Figure 4. Community Seed Bank

Training on the use of STKs for the correct measurement of soil fertility was conducted. Ten farmer experts are now doing soil fertility check using STK.

As a result of these activities, yield increases have been realized as exemplified below by the harvest of the focus group participants during the recent monitoring and evaluation:

Table 5. Yield differences of farmer participants

Farmers	Area	Inputs			Canvans/ha		%
		Urea (bag)	Complete (bag)	Seeds	Before	After	
1	0.5	1	1	NSIC 122	64	128	50.00
2	0.5	1	1	NSIC 122	64	93.6	31.62
3	1	1	1	NSIC 122	60	60	0.00
4	1	1	1	NSIC 122	62	80	22.50
5	1	1	1	NSIC 122	50	70.2	28.77
6	0.5	1	1	NSIC 122	80	120	33.33
7	0.5	1	1	NSIC 122	80	120	33.33

With the focused group discussion with seven participants in 2012 in Sipa, a yield increase range from 22.50% to 50.00%. They attributed the yield increase on the use of quality seeds and proper nutrient management. In addition to the training, farmers were provided with various informative materials such as brochures and leaflets from PhilRice to further enhance their knowledge on rice farming.

Moreover, training on functional literacy specifically on ‘Basic Mensuration Techniques’ was conducted. To enhance literacy skills, farmers are required to maintain journals of what they did in the field, their farm problems and solutions.

**Involving Other Members in Community-based Activities.** Other activities sought to encourage engagement of family members by providing hands – on training on nutritious food preparation for mothers. Food prepared were vegetable based such as “*puso ng saging burger*” and “*kamote and lemon grass*” juice.

Children enrolled in the nearby elementary schools where the sons/daughters or other relatives are enrolled are given yearly educational activities such as eco-camp and tutorials. The vermicompost, which is used in vegetable gardens of the school, is placed within the school as a learning site for children to understand the science behind creating healthy soil.



Figure 5. Vermicompost

**Networking and Mobilization.** The Municipal Agriculture Office is a partner in these activities and is very much willing to participate in the next cycle of activities. The Mayor is likewise interested to provide logistics in the next cycle of activities, including the local College, Quezon National Agricultural School (QNAS.)

The Sipa Elementary School and the PTA of the elementary school are strong partners of this project and have created strong bonds among themselves. The vegetable garden, set up by the students in partnership with the PTA where our farmer participants are leaders, have won regional award in the recently concluded DEP Ed contest.

Through the initiative of UPLB volunteers, a school library or Bahay Karunungan, which houses elementary based books as well as farmer books and reading materials, has been set up.

Construction of and installation of cabinets were done through the joint effort of UPLB student volunteers, farmers, teachers and project staff.



Figure 6. Before (left) and after (right)



**Training of Local Farmer Experts.** A total of 10 farmer participants trained as local farmer experts were identified. They are now tasked to the journals of 3-4 member farmers in their practice of rice farming. Journal writing for all farmers are required and regularly inspected to encourage enhancement of literacy skills and reflective practice.

**Testing of New Extension Modalities.** Given the possibilities of communicating with farmers opened up by technology, a web based training was likewise tested as shown below:



Figure 7. Web-based training.

To sustain the activities of farmer extensionists and to provide incentives through community based activities and income, they were given two (2) goats, the offsprings of which will be distributed to other farmers.

**Development of training material for farmers and extension workers.** A prototype of the training material on common insect pest in the rice field and their natural enemies was developed and will be applied for copyright.



Figure 8. Prototype training material on “Common Insect Pest in the Rice Field and Their Natural Enemies.”

**Organizational Strengthening.** The participants have organized themselves into a people's organization, Anak Bukid Samahan ng Magsasaka. The organization is recognized by the LGU and now registration with DOLE as a farmer organization is being processed.

Anak Bukid now enjoys support from the local government and has been the recipient of local government agricultural projects like seed distribution and livestock dispersal. Moreover, as a support to the members, the group has its micro loan inputs with a small interest, payable for 6 months after the harvest. The members only pay 1.5 % interest per month.

To date, 32 out of 44 members are enjoying the loan benefits. They are paying the fertilizer amounting to P1000 per sack plus an additional P100 interest after six months. The interest is now being used to buy molluscicides as part of the inputs given to active members.

**Deepening the Spirit of Volunteerism.** The participation and activities of the Sipa teachers, farmers and their families, UPLB Pahinungod volunteers, LGUs, the MAO, QNAS and other stakeholders in the community showed how the spirit of volunteerism have been inculcated among them. Many of the farmers shared their new learning and even their own resources to ensure that fellow farmer members are able to practice sustainable rice farming. In addition, the farmer volunteers also help in conducting agri-related activities like vegetable gardening in Sipa Elementary School. The values of sharing and sacrifice have been awakened in them that the spirit of volunteerism is all about serving the people.

### ***Major Lessons Learned***

Partnerships are not built overnight and are sustained through community based activities. These have been achieved by the projects. To sustain the gains, it is important that the local actors themselves initiate projects on their own. The school based vegetable garden is an initiative of the principal and the farmers. In the next project cycle, while it is initiated by the project staff, the major actors that will be tapped are the agriculturists from the local government unit, the technical staff of the local school and the farmer extensionists of the project.

### **III. The Community Life School Model**

Despite gains in the various projects, community development remains elusive. The focus of the two livelihood based projects was on increasing yield and improving literacy in the community. Although yields have improved substantially, farmers who cultivate the land are becoming older and their children, particularly the youth, are not interested in farming. On the other hand, the focus of the GP program was improving literacy and expanding livelihood opportunities. However, despite the provision of basic education and training program for improving capacities to improve productivity, development could not proceed to the next level given the minimal resources of the people and the lack of government support in the island. Despite the interest of the project implementers to level up the struggle for development, the constraints have always been the very short nature of project funding.

How then do we proceed? The first recognition is that the process of community development does not happen overnight. Moreover, gains in any project are difficult to sustain if people have not been capacitated to plan and implement their plans based on

available resources and opportunities. Implementation of their plans, however, could not be done if they are not linked with the key movers of development – the local government units, civic organizations, schools.

The entry point of any development project should be based on the needs of the community. Hence, it could be education if the main problem is illiteracy, livelihood if the main problem is economic. However, given the complexity of the development process, a project intervention should not end on a particular concern only but should seek to expand its concern beyond what the its goals and objectives by exploring and maximizing local partners as it aims to achieve its project deliverables. Thus, The CLS model believes that empowered individuals, households and communities are key to sustained development. Moreover, it advocates tackling development in a holistic manner by involving all members of the households and addressing aspects on nutrition, livelihood, education, environment and governance. (Figure 9)

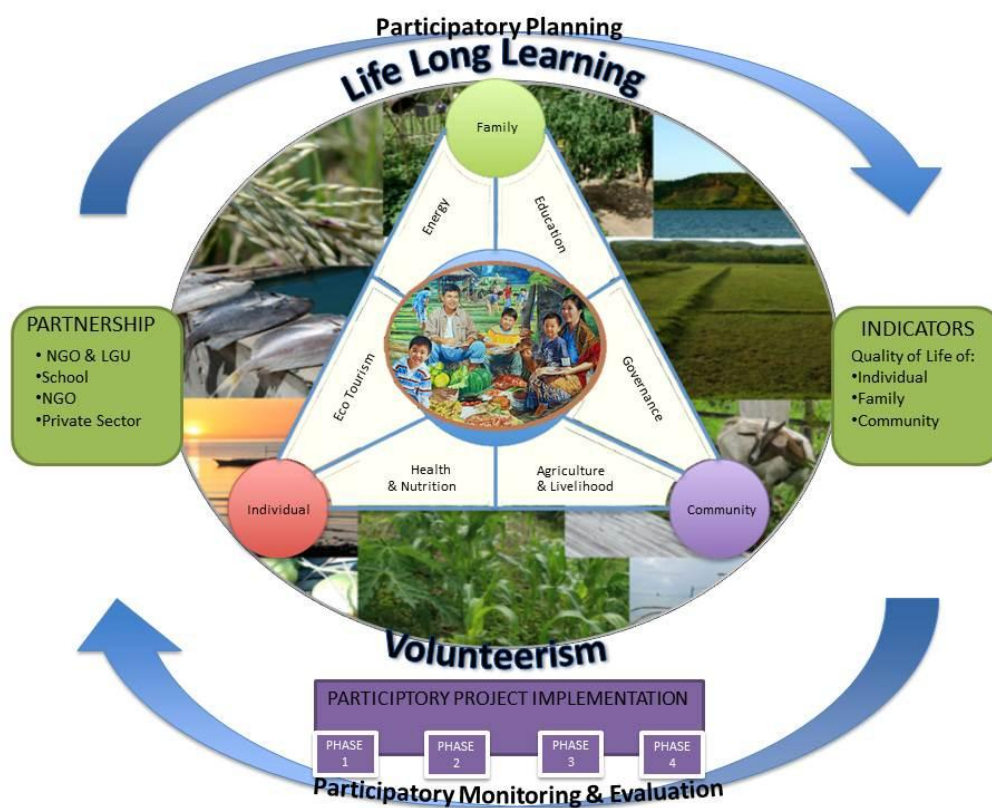


Figure 9. Community-Life School Model

In Calautit, Palawan for example, the entry point of the UPLB- Ugnayan ng Pahinungod was education considering that the community did not have an elementary school at that time. In partnership with the then Alternative Education Program of the Department of Education, UP sent two (2) alternative education volunteer teachers for a year to provide education to elementary level Tagbanua students. In the course of the intervention, UPLB likewise provided training in agricultural and seaweed production, set up a community library or the *Bahay ng Karunungan*, help the Tagbanuas gather data for their socio-economic profile and

draft governing rules as part of their struggle to assert ownership of their ancestral domain and negotiate for the establishment of a multi-level elementary school in the island. Local community volunteers were likewise developed to spearhead the sharing of knowledge and skills to other members of the community and take leadership roles in networking with other organizations. Given that only an elementary school was established in the locality, UPLB volunteers currently help support the education of high school students in the main island and provides tutorial sessions during summer or semestral breaks to elementary and high school students whenever possible. As a result of the education intervention, the local community continued the provision of alternative learning to out of school youth by tapping a Tagbanua education graduate who is currently a volunteer teacher in the local school paid by the Tagbanua community. As of the moment, UPLB Ugnayan ng Pahinungod is proposing a project to help establish a sustainable agro-eco tourism management project that encompasses related concerns such as food production and menu planning and ensuring safe water availability and alternative energy sources. The tourism project will be spearheaded and managed by the local people. Menu planning targets not only provision of a variety of food for visitors but also nutritional deficiencies and venue for absorbing vegetable production in times when marketing them to other islands may not be possible because of extreme weather conditions.

In Padre Burgos, Quezon, the entry point is rice production in partnership with the Municipal Agriculture Office. Learning fields which served as places for experiential learning for pest, nutrient management, alternative fertilizer production and seed selection were established in the fields of farmer partners. Farmers recorded what they did and what happened in a farmer journal to also enhance reading and writing skills. Partnership with the elementary school was formalized between the farmer organization and the principal with the vermiculture site established in the elementary school. The vermiculture site was to be a learning tool for elementary students at the same time that it serves as a source of organic fertilizer for the vegetable garden which the farmer organization helped establish and maintain. UPLB-Pahinungod volunteers support the organic vegetable gardens by providing posters in the garden that discusses key science concepts such as photosynthesis, parts of plants and other science related topics. With the volunteer farmers and volunteer UPLB faculty and students, a local library or *Bahay ng Karunungan* has been established in the elementary school. Currently, negotiations with the Department of Education -Quezon Province is underway to provide alternative learning to out-of-school youth. A chicken layer and vegetable production project is currently under negotiation in partnership with volunteers from the Quezon National Agricultural School, the Municipal Agriculture Office and a funding agency. The layer and vegetable production not only serves as source of additional income but more importantly, engages the women and youth and local school as active participants in the agricultural production.

Given the variations of rural community needs, the implementation framework starts with a rapid appraisal and opportunities analysis, after which an entry point project is determined (*Figure 10*). With the thrust for ensuring a sustainable livelihood, the framework emphasizes a participatory, experiential approach in capacity building followed by institutional strengthening and community sharing and reflection. Given the multiplicity of concerns of a community, the next phase in the development orientation should take off from the gains and lessons of previous development undertakings to proceed to the next learning loop.



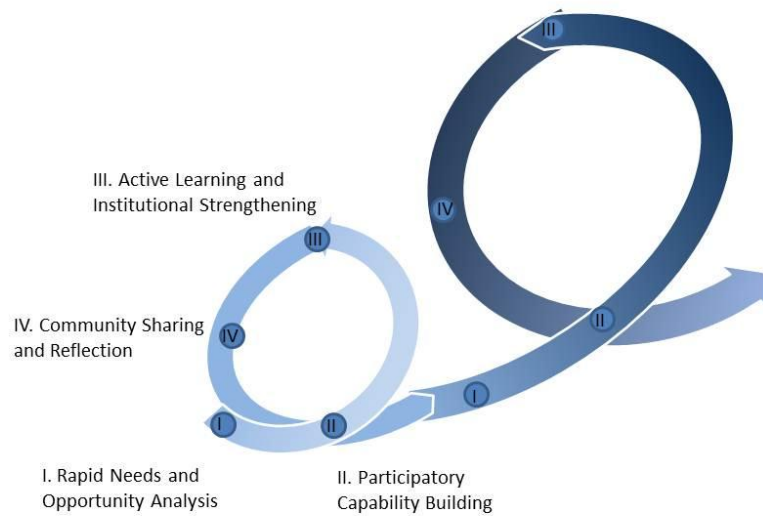


Figure 10. Implementation Framework of Community Life School

Community Life School Model works for the partnership within the household by engaging everybody in an experiential learning process, whether about agricultural production, eco-tourism or formal education. It promotes the concept of working together voluntarily by providing opportunities for collaboration among their group through group projects such as vermiculture and goat production or tourism management, with the schools around the area and the local government office, specifically the agriculture office, which are key institutions in helping ensure a vibrant rural community. Through a holistic endogenous approach, the community life school hopes to contribute to the struggle of the rural communities for a vibrant and productive rural life.

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