

MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT TOWARD SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASED PROJECTS

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—Abstract—

The study aimed to explore the management capability of Community-based Projects (CBP). It also looked into the management practices, its prospects and challenges affecting the sustainability of the projects. It suggested other factors

that affected its sustainability. Moreover, impacts of these projects were also identified. Using the qualitative research method, the researchers were able to assess the capability of the People's Organizations (PO), Non-Government Organizations (NGO) and Local Government Units (LGU) and were able to recognize gaps in the implementation of these projects. Data revealed that the management capabilities of the POs are significant in the sustainability of these projects; however their capabilities are not enough to sustain it and are dependent to their partners including the NGOs and LGUs. NGOs have major loopholes in terms of empowering their partner POs, while LGUs lack initiative in helping the projects, since they only help when the communities need them or tap them for help. Finally, the researchers found out that POs have no capability to address their own problems. The researchers recommended that organization through the help of these partners, such as LGUs and NGOs but no limited to, improve their management capabilities to empower the POs for the sustainability of the projects and that POs must learn how to face and address their problems and challenges in their community.

Key Words: *Management Capability, Community Based Projects, Sustainability*

JEL Classification: Q56

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Community Bases Projects and the Challenge of Sustainability

CBPs are established in most of the communities as a strategy to create jobs and alleviate poverty (Marek and Mancini, 2007). These can be highly effective in managing natural resources, providing basic infrastructure or ensuring primary social services. It highly requires institutions that supports adoption of goals and processes which strengthen the capacity of a community, its networks or groups, to organize and most importantly to sustain development and its benefits (Narayan, 1995).

Sustainability, being a primary interest for many organizations, is the ability or capacity of programs to continuously respond to identified community issues, enduring challenges to achieve long-term success while having a positive impact

on the society and the environment in which the organization lives and works. It is important because all the choices that are pursued and all the actions that are made today will eventually affect everything in the future (Strassman, 2013). This care for the future implies, among other things, a wise management of the organization when regarded to community-based management footprint (USEPA, 2015).

In other countries, sustainability of CBPs is threatened. In Kenya, community based development projects are after the period of gestation the community is expected to continue running the project and make them self-sustaining. This is indeed a challenge because as the government organs and NGOs in partnership with communities establish community-based projects, the project activities collapse following the phase-out of funders support (World Vision, 2009). In Tanzania, however, the full potential of the CBOs has yet to be tapped due to the existence of a number of constraints such as lack of planning, improper financing and poor management (Longenecker, et. al., 2006). Poor governance has also been identified as one of the most serious constraints facing CBO projects and hindering their profitability (Oketch, 2000). Results show in one study conducted in Botswana, that although some benefits have been identified, there remain many challenges. On one hand, community-based tourism supposedly bring more benefits to locals if properly managed, this can promote the conservation of natural resources and increase local benefits through participation in tourism activities (Sabele, 2015).

In a workshop conducted by the State Department of Education of Idaho, several aspects were identified that challenged sustainability in organizations. These are Strategic Planning, Leadership and Administration, Marketing and Communication, Fundraising and Aid Effectiveness and Management Capability (Geangan). According to Burgoyne and his fellows (2004), there is a long history of research into what management is, what managers do, and what managers need to have in order to do their jobs well. Mabey and Thomson (2000) highlighted some management skills: managing people, leadership, team work and customer focus. Truly, management is an aspect of sustainability.

1.2 Rationale of the Study

The study is motivated by the fact that those mentioned issues were just few of the many challenges of sustainability of CBPs. Globally, billions have been spent for its success but there is failure on the part of the communities in managing or

sustaining the projects. Knowing that the success and failure of these projects will have a great impact on the standard of living of some if not majority of the Boholano people, the researchers aim to assess the management practices and techniques that sustain the CBPs. The researchers also looked into the factors which caused non-sustainability of some of these projects. After these factors were identified, the researchers formulated a strategy on what to do to be able to sustain community-based projects. Wanjohi (2010) points out that attainment of any form of sustainability is not an endeavor of a single day, but a lifelong process. The researchers hope that through this study, more strategies can be suggested to help sustain the community-based projects of the province of Bohol.

1.3 Theoretical Background

The study was supported by the Capability Theory, Management Theory, Contingency Theory, and on the Model of Sustainability. The Capability Approach is a theoretical framework that entails two core normative claims: first, the claim that the freedom to achieve well-being is of primary moral importance, and second, that freedom to achieve well-being is to be understood in terms of people's capabilities, that is, their real opportunities to do and be what they have reason to value (Robeyns, 2011). This can be understood in the context of achieving good life.

The Capability Approach contains three central concepts: functioning, capability and agency or utility. Functioning is a valuable activity or state that makes up people's wellbeing. Functioning refers to states of 'being and doing' such as being well-nourished, and having shelter. They should be distinguished from the commodities employed to achieve them (as 'bicycling' is distinguishable from 'possessing a bike'). Capability, on the other hand, refers to the set of valuable functioning that a person has effective access to. For example, an individual's capability set may include access to different functioning relating to mobility, such as walking, bicycling, taking a public bus, and so on. Utility is considered both an output and a functioning. Utility is an output because what people choose to do and to be naturally has an effect on their sense of subjective well-being (for example, the pleasure of bicycling to work on a sunny day). Agency is a person's ability to pursue and realize goals she has reason to value. The Capability Approach also considers subjective well-being – feeling happy – as a valuable functioning in its own right and incorporates it into the capability framework (Clark, 2008).

The Capability Approach addresses various concerns that Sen had about contemporary approaches to the evaluation of well-being, namely: (a) Individuals can differ greatly in their abilities to convert the same resources into valuable functionings ('beings' and 'doings'); (b) People can internalize the harshness of their circumstances so that they do not desire what they can never expect to achieve; (c) Whether or not people take up the options they have, the fact that they do have valuable options is significant; and (d) Reality is complicated and evaluation should reflect that complexity rather than take a short-cut by excluding all sorts of information (Wells, 2013).

In community based organizations the diversity of persons involved in the community not only mean attitude towards work and behavior differ but also their ability to work. Individuals may differ in converting resources into functionings. Others think that they cannot do it because of limited resources but is not able to open for possible solution. In other words if they think they cannot they will not care to do something; thus, relying only on the help of other people or group. This is also true in times when the NGOs who are supporting them would turn over the projects. The question as to whether or not the people have the ability to maintain the projects handed to them by NGOs remain unanswered.

One of the earliest systematic analyses of management was proposed by Henri Fayol. In his view, management can be divided into five functional roles performed by managers, which are: (1) planning, (2) organizing, (3) commanding, (4) controlling, and (5) coordinating. This analysis of management centers on the output of actions of managers, and categorizes these actions into five classes according to the predominant characteristics of the output of these actions. By choosing this particular viewpoint for the analysis of management, Fayol theory ignores the subtleties of interactions with members of the organisation. Ignoring these matters implies that the Fayol theory is unlikely to be able to handle management problems arising from cultural differences (Kinicki & Williams, 2013).

Another approach in this analysis of management capabilities is the Contingency Theory. It was proposed by an Austrian psychologist Fred Edward Fiedler in his landmark 1964 article, "A Contingency Model of Leadership Entrepreneur" (Virkus, 2009). The contingency approach sometimes called (situation approach) was developed by the managers, consultants and researchers who tried to apply

the concepts of the major schools to the real life. When methods highly effective in one situation failed to work in other situation they sought an explanation why for example did an organization development work brilliantly in one situation and fail miserably in another. Advocates of the contingency approach had a logical answer to such question. Results differ because situation differs. A technique that works in one case will not work in another. According to the contagious technique the manager's job is to find which technique will in a particular situation, under particular circumstances and at a particular time best contributes to attainments of management goals, where workers need to encourage increasing productivity.

Sustainability is a primary interest for many organizations. It is the ability or capacity of programs to continuously respond to identified community issues, enduring challenge to achieve long-term success while having a positive impact on the society and the environment in which the organization lives and works. This is especially true at United States' Environmental Protection Agency, where it stated that sustainability is not part of the work – it is a guiding influence for all of the work. Sustainability is important because all the choices the people pursue and all the actions that they make today will eventually affect everything in the future. This emphasizes the aspect of future orientation as a basic element of sustainability.

In gauging sustainability, the researchers adopt a tool employed by Marek and Mancini (2007) of the Department of Human Development, Virginia Polytechnic University, Virginia, USA. They used the tool in their quest for sustaining community based programs and the relationships between the sustainable factors and program results. In their study they used a model which they divided into three: the Sustainability Elements, Range Program Results and Ultimate Result. This study aimed to assess how the management capabilities of People's Organizations (POs) contributed to the sustainability of Community Based Projects (CBPs) in Bohol.

Sustainability Elements are factors that would help the researchers identify if these activities have taken place in the community based organizations are for sustainability. These are indicators that the practices made by community based projects are on the road toward sustainability. These elements are: Leadership Competence, Effective Collaboration, Understanding the Community, Demonstrated Program Results, Strategic Funding, Staff Involvement and Integration and Program Responsiveness.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. The Problem and Its Scope

This study aimed to assess how the management capabilities of POs contributed to the sustainability of CBPs in Bohol. The study was limited to the exploration of the management capabilities of CBPs in the Province of Bohol which selected NGOs has already turned over, in terms of management, to the POs. It also includes external factors that would affect the management capabilities such as NGOs and LGUs. The selection of CBPs was according to its vulnerability and its great contribution to the society, for example tourism and livelihood CBPs since it has been proven that Bohol is rich in tourism assets which may turn into livelihood capabilities. The researchers purposively chosen only four NGOs. Of all the NGOs that would like to be accredited by the Provincial Government were some of which the researchers selected to be part of the study: the Bol-anon United Sectors Working for the Advancement of Community Concerns, Inc. (BUSWACC); Participatory Research, Organization of Communities and Education towards Struggle for Self-reliance (PROCESS-Bohol), Inc.; Bohol Integrated Development Foundation (BIDEF) Inc.; and, World Vision (WV) Development Foundation. These NGOs will be subjected by the researchers upon inquiry that they qualified to the standard set by them. Each of which has a community based projects with a People's Organization which is the core of the study. The study involves those community based projects that existed in the year 2005 up to the present. This study focuses on assessment of the management capabilities of community based projects by the People's Organization in order to analyze the sustainability of the projects chosen.

CBP transpired in different and wide variety of structure. This set-up hindered the researchers, considering also the geographical locations of the community based projects, the time which also limited the researchers to gather pertinent data for the study. The availability of the data also mattered to the researchers. The data that came only from the leaders, chairpersons, presidents of community based

organization were the bases of this analysis. Other pertinent data such as reports and records from the NGOs supporting the projects were included in the study.

2.2. Methodology

This study explored qualitative research approach. These are the Focused Group Discussion (FGD), Key Informants' Interview (KII) and the Institutional Capacity Assessment (ICA). The researchers utilized a self-made questionnaire as source of their qualitative data collection. The researchers conducted KII and ICA that centered on knowledge and participation on the sustainability of community based projects. The FGD was used to gather information from the randomly selected members of POs. It explored on the practices and challenges the members of the People's Organizations experienced.

3. FINDINGS

Based on the data presented, analyzed, and interpreted, the researchers were able to formulate the following findings:

- The structure of community-based projects is complicated. There are many NGOs that initiate projects. The projects itself have a diverse nature. Just before 2005, there are already many CBPs that are established and they can be seen in the different municipalities in the province of Bohol where the LGU is an active partner of the NGOs in the realization and sustainability of these projects.
- In every community-based project, there are POs involved. It is not necessary for a project to have only one PO beneficiary, but can also be numerous. Some of these POs already existed in the community before the arrival of the NGOs and some were established only after obtaining the idea of a project. In the selection of partner POs, there are criteria set by the NGOs.
- Looking into the management capabilities of the peoples organization, the researchers made use of Fayol's five managerial skills. It was observed that there are commonalities and differences of the POs management practices, depending on the situation. It was also identified that there are strengths and weaknesses on their management capabilities.
- Sustainability is important to every community-based project. Management capability is a major factor for sustainability. If projects are

not properly managed by the individuals involved, there is a big chance of non-survival of the projects.

- There are different kinds of challenges experienced by POs and NGOs, particularly in their management of projects. Others were effectively managed and others were not.
- Aside from management capability, there are six other factors identified that affected sustainability. These are: Sense of Ownership, Sustainable Livelihood, Trust and Confidence of Members to their Leaders, The Ability of Projects to Address the Needs of the Community, External Linkages and Strong Partnerships and Faith.
- Community-based projects contributed to the development of the community. Its impact is stratified as to: Social, Economic, Infrastructure and Political.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

- The management capabilities of the POs has a significant impact to the sustainability of community-based project. However, they must not only focus on management capability because there are still other factors that affect sustainability.
- The management capabilities of the POs are still not enough to sustain the projects. Some of the other factors affecting sustainability is also not visible in the POs.
- The trainings, seminars, and workshop implemented by the NGOs are insufficient in empowering the POs. LGUs' help do not focus on training the POs management capabilities but on promotion, financing and facilities.
- POs are still dependent with the assistance and projects initiated by their partner entities, like the NGOs and LGUs. They are not even empowered to conduct their own activities.
- These CBPs is presently sustaining having the fact that it existed up to this day. However, sustainability is still challenged by the issues and problems encountered by the organizations which endangered the continuous existence of the projects.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing conclusions, the researchers have the following recommendations to the POs, NGOs and LGUs:

5.1 Non-Governmental Organization

Trainings, seminars and workshops not only on management capabilities enhancement but also empowerment of the POs in terms of:

- Institutional Building and Strengthening
- Competencies of Officers
- Regularity of Meetings
- Regular Evaluation
- Extent of the Participation
- Capacity Training on Planning Activities

5.2 People's Organization

- Encourage POs to conduct their own activities.
- Encourage regular evaluation every after activity.
- Capacity trainings on planning activities.
- Team building activities.
- Collaborate with NGOs in creating modules for trainings how to empower POs on managing the organization.

5.3 Local Government Units

- Activate the participation of POs within the municipality in the Municipal Planning and Development Council. Activate spots where POs are required to be represented. LGUs must foster participatory representation in governance.
- Look for Champions of POs and NGOs in the municipality, giving awards and incentives to the selected champions.
- Provide POs with a sustainable livelihood.

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