Sustaining Women Empowerment Community Extension Project: A Tri-Focal Partnership Model

Imelda C. Montalbo¹, Blanca A. Alejandro², Steven L. Baylan³*, Rosita L. Lacea⁴, Genalen M. Pepito⁵, Gwendelina A. Villarante⁶

¹²³⁴⁵⁶Faculty of College of Teacher Education, Cebu Normal University, Cebu City, 6000 Philippines
montalboi@cnu.edu.ph
alejandrob@cnu.edu.ph
stevenbaylan@yahoo.com
lacear@cnu.edu.ph
pepitog@cnu.edu.ph
villaranteg@cnu.edu.ph

*Corresponding Author

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Abstract: Grounded from Theory of Change, this study aims to describe the impact of the extension project designed to empower marginalized women in Balamban Cebu, Philippines. Qualitative emerging themes obtained from interviews and focus group discussion revealed that women were empowered by nurturing positive emotions, enhancing self-worth, advancing environmental stewardship, and establishing accountability for sustainability, thereby improving the quality of their lives. A tri-focal partnership model as proposed that illustrates a dynamic interplay of the roles and functions among the University, local government unit, and other government agencies, which builds a sustainable community extension project in the community. Replication of an extension project would yield a good Return of Investment (ROI) to the University, which ultimately leads to a country’s more substantial economic growth and development.

Keywords: Women empowerment; a theory of change; extension project; tri-focal partnership model Philippines

1. Introduction

Women empowerment, as defined by Kabeer (2005), is the process of attaining the ability to make strategic life choices. It is to be able to think logically and act independently (Anderson and Funnel, 2010). It is the course that builds power in women over their own lives, in communities and Society (PCW, 2015). It is a way towards improving women's capability to manage intellectual, social, and financial resources of states, as measured by women's participation in personal, social, economic as well as political aspects (UN, 2011).

In the last decade, the Philippines achieved tremendous gains in women's welfare, equality, and empowerment. Since its adoption in 2009, the Magna Carta of Women (MCW) enacted significant
legislations that address women's economic empowerment. The Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), the lead executing agency for the Gender-Responsive Economic Actions for the Transformation of Women (GREAT Women) Project persistently promotes and supports a gender-responsive enabling environment for women's economic empowerment, particularly those in microenterprises. Furthermore, in the 2020 Global Gender Gap Index, the Philippines ranked 16th out of the 155 countries and remained as the most gender-equal country in Asia (World Economic Forum, 2017). It showed relevant progress on relative gaps between women and men on health, education, economy, and politics.

Despite all these improvements, over 12 million rural everyday housewives or mothers in the country, particularly the poor and disadvantaged, are still constrained to a lifetime of attending the needs of the children and family, which make them the most neglected and dormant women sector (PSA, 2017). They are attributed to primary responsibility for unpaid reproductive and domestic chores. The culture of the husband and wife affects the roles of the women indirectly. A study revealed that a woman’s perception of conventional gender-role values is affected by that of her spouse’s employment intent as a woman (Werbel, 1998). Hence, the spouse’s preference has influenced the woman’s employment decision (Gorman et al., 2002).

Moreover, women beneficiaries of a government subsidy program such as the 4Ps experience relief from financial distress due to its cash grant that helps in providing for their immediate and basic needs. However, alongside is the challenge of facing negative connotations of being under a government program triggers shame and self-pity (Pineda et al., 2019). They remain vulnerable to hunger, poverty, and a decline in family living standards due to many conditions working against them (Jaka and Shava, 2018).

The rural housewives in Sitio Dandoy, Barangay Nangka, Balamban, Cebu are composed of domesticated and uneducated women, wherein 70% of them have only attained elementary education, and 76% of their families have no permanent income. They are mostly preoccupied with the demands of domestic responsibilities. It is an observation that these housewives spent much idle time after doing household chores. They spent time chatting with other women in the neighborhood, while others are into gambling. They lack the enthusiasm to use their time productively, access resources, and translate those resources into augmenting the income of the family. These poor women mainly focussed on unpaid family labor wherein they have neither independent earning power nor the opportunity to expand their social networks beyond those afforded by family and kinship (GAGE, 2018). Moreover, they have minimal learning opportunities to capacitate them to become productive women in the community due to their poor literacy (Leach, 1998). Initiatives from the local government and other agencies to improve women’s wellbeing and economic capabilities have failed to reach these underprivileged housewives sector in the community (SOFA Team & Cheryl, 2011).

Superwoman: Empowering Housewives in the Society is an extension project of Cebu Normal University that supports the Sustainable Development Goals of Gender Equality. It aims to empower homemakers in the community to become aware of their rights, potentials, abilities, and capabilities to stand out and rise in the society as individuals who are well-informed and knowledgeable of the roles they play in the family and the community. The project proponents designed gender-sensitive modules and conducted seminars on gender-sensitivity. The project also supports Sustainable Cities and Communities by offering livelihood opportunities and financial literacy seminars to enhance the quality of life in the community and strengthening their accountability for the sustainability of the said extension project.

The project also adheres to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts through the creation of a utility model entitled “A bio-degradable seedling bag from indigenous material.” The primary objective of this utility model is to provide an organic seedling bag made of woven coconut leaves that is ideal for seed sowing and other means of propagation that decomposes after planting. Such a bio-degradable seedling bag is environment-friendly and low-cost. There was actual training on vermiculture among women that provided them such skills to produce bio-degradable fertilizer for their backyard vegetable gardening.

Likewise, the project strongly supports Sustainable Development Goal: Life on Land wherein the women developed social responsibility as stewards of the environment and increase land productivity
through the backyard vegetable gardening and horticulture in their community. It also distinctly equipped
them to plant using different agricultural methods.
Furthermore, the project supports the Sustainable Development Goal on Partnerships for the Goals
through the integration of a tri-focal partnership with the University, Local Government Units, and the
Department of Agriculture. A memorandum of agreement between Cebu Normal University and Local
Government Unit of Balamban was signed by both agencies, which builds strong collaboration for a
sustainable extension project on women empowerment. The Department of Agriculture commits and
supports the said extension project through its donations of seeds and seedling of vegetables and the
provision of trainers on horticulture.
Efforts to promote women’s capabilities are most effective when they addressed the needs, roles,
and problems of women in the community. A theory of change is used as an instrument to determine the
requirements that one is trying to address, the changes that one is trying to make (outcomes), and the plans
(activities) one is going to do (Harries, Hodgson and Noble, 2014).
Three-dimensional theory of change is used among women and girls in Africa in accessing
resources to capacitate them to achieve valued livelihood outcomes (GAGE, 2018). The Integrated
Agricultural Training Program in Papua New Guinea has succeeded in improving the livelihoods of rural
communities by ensuring the integration of rural women’s interests and needs where gender inequality
prevails (Cahn and Liu, 2008).
In Kenya, rural women attained an impact on their lives by utilizing basic agricultural training
manuals to cater to the low level of literacy among women (GAGE, 2018). Moreover, resilient rural women
in Peru have achieved economic empowerment through livelihood programs and various commercial
activities (Jaka and Shava, 2018). Applying the theory of change in agricultural research in Tanzania
showed several benefits and impacts on the development of farming programs (Omore et al., 2019).
Framework
A Theory of Change is the core process through which individuals, groups, or communities
manifest significant change (Funnell & Rogers, 2011). Harries, Hodgson, and Noble (2014) established
the steps that identify the problems to address, the desired favorable changes (outcomes) to achieve, and
the course of action to undertake (activities). Impacts are what the program or project attempts to
accomplish.
The figure describes the logic model of the Theory of Change on empowering women. It starts
with the identification of the problems or needs of the housewives to be changed and deliver the essential
inputs to capacitate them. Then it moves to implement the well-designed program of activities, strengthen
the partnerships with local agencies, and attain the different dynamic outcomes of the project to achieve the
final goal – empowered woman.
Fig. 1 Theory of Change of an Empowered Woman

1.1 The Objective of the Study

This study primarily aims to describe the impact of the extension project designed to empower women in the community.

2. Methodology

This study used a descriptive research design. It used a qualitative-quantitative method to describe the impact of the said extension project. It utilized a questionnaire to explain to what extent the varied activities have enhanced their experiences as beneficiaries of the project. A 4-point Likert Scale was used with 1 as not at all, 2 to some extent, 3 as a moderate extent, and 4 to a great extent. Furthermore, women beneficiaries, barangay leaders, community members, and project implementers conducted comprehensive interviews and focus group discussions on gathering qualitative responses, which were collated, transcribed and further analysed using a thematic approach. To remove the biases in the collection of data in focus group discussions and interview, a research specialist of the university was tapped. Data collection was done after the termination of the extension project.
Superwoman: Empowering Housewives in the Society an extension project of Cebu Normal University in Barangay Nangka, Balamban, Cebu has thirty housewives as beneficiaries. Twenty-seven percent (27%) of them are between the ages of 46 to 50 years old. Seventy percent (70%) of the housewives have finished elementary education, twenty-three percent (23%) finished secondary school while only six percent (6%) finished college level. Most of the housewives are less educated compared to their husbands. Seventy-six percent (76%) of their families have no permanent source of income. Forty-six percent (46%) of their families have 2 to 3 children.

3. Results and discussions

3.1 Descriptive statistics

The results presented below are consisted of two sections. The first section presents and discusses the quantitative aspect of the study and the last part is the quantitative part. Table 1 below presents the means of experiences of the women in their participation of the extension project as beneficiaries.

Table 1: The Experiences of the Women in the Varied Activities of the Extension Project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Qualitative Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The activities enhance my self-concept/self-esteem and wellbeing as a woman.</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. It enriches the understanding of my role as a woman in the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. family</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. community</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It helps me develop skills in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1. vermiculture production</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. vegetable gardening</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3. succulent/dish gardening</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4. topiary making</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5. biodegradable seedling bag production</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6. vertical gardening</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7. household budgeting</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It helps me beautify our area in the community</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It allows me to use biodegradable materials in vermiculture production.</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It permits me to utilize eco-friendly materials (coconut leaves) in our community for seedling bags production.</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It teaches me ways to take care the environment</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. It strengthens my relationship with other women/housewives/beneficiaries.</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. It promotes unity among women in Sitio Dandoy</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Great Extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. It promotes livelihood in barangay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Items | Mean | Qualitative Description
--- | --- | ---
Nangka. | 2.94 | Great Extent
11. The vegetable gardening provides our daily consumption and additional income for the family. | 3.00 | Great Extent

Legend: 0.00 - 0.75 - Not at all
0.76 – 1.50 - Some Extent
1.51 – 2.25 - Moderate Extent
2.26 – 3.00 - Great Extent

It can be observed from the table that participants seem to have significant experiences on the different activities provided for them by the extensionists and project implementers indicating their responses on the questionnaire as follows: the activities enhance my self-concept/self-esteem and wellbeing as a woman (M=2.84); it enriches the understanding of my role as a woman in the family (M=2.73); it enriches the understanding of my role as a woman in the community (M=2.94); As to the aspect in gardening, participants reported it helps me develop skills in vermiculture production (M=2.73); vegetable gardening (M=3.0); succulent and dish gardening (M=2.73); topiary making (M=2.68); biodegradable seedling bag production (M=2.57); and vertical gardening (M=2.68). On the aspect of household budgeting a mean of (M=2.73). It helps me beautify our area in the community (M= 2.89); it allows me to use biodegradable materials in vermiculture production (M=2.89); it permits me to utilize eco-friendly materials (coconut leaves) in our community for seedling bags production (M=2.84); it teaches me ways to take care the environment (M=2.94); it strengthens my relationship with other women/housewives/beneficiaries (M=2.84); It promotes unity among women in Sitio Dandoy (M=3.0); it promotes livelihood in barangay Nangka (M=2.94); and The vegetable gardening provides our daily consumption and additional income for the family (M=3.0) respectively.

It can be shown from the same table that the participants described their experience as a great extent which goes to mean that women had positive and valuable experiences from engaging the extension projects as beneficiary. These results support to the quantitative component of this study discussed in subsequent section.

A research specialist from the University Research Council (URC) conducted the interview and focus group discussions comprising the project beneficiaries/participants, project implementers, and local government unit on revealing the impact of the extension project. The following themes of meaning that emerged were the following.

3.2 Theme No. 1: A Nurturing Positive Emotion

One of the emerging themes from the qualitative data analysis is that the participants explicitly expressed a pattern of lingering positive emotions. For instance, a feeling of gratefulness was a common expression among participants.

One respondent said: “Nagpasalamat mi nga nakasulud sila diri” (We are thankful that project implementers are in our community). Another participant expounded this: “Nagpasalamat nga nisud ang CNU diri kay dako ang natabang nako parti sa pagpananum og pamaagi.” (I am thankful that CNU taught me the methods of gardening).

The emergence of this positive emotion is not surprising for indeed, the extension projects have brought enormous impact to them as women in their community and to their local environment. This result is conclusive of the quantitative aspect of this study.

Some reported a feeling of excitement. For example, “Excited sad kaayo me kay naa me mahibawan nga onsa nasad itudlo nila maam og sir.” (We are excited of the teachings that they will teach us).

Others mentioned a feeling of joy and happiness: “Naa mi malingaw dinhi sa among paganhima lingaw raman sad mi sa pagpananom.” (We enjoyed in doing the gardening). “Nalipay kog dako nga nakatabang ang Superwoman” (I am glad that Superwoman helps us).
When asked whether participants could already stand on their own without the presence of the project, surprisingly, there were uncertain and conflicting emotions. As one participant briefly said: “Haw-ang na among kalipay.” (Our happiness is not complete)

Another respondent also mentioned: “Pero lahi ra gyud nga mingawon me.” (It is different because we will miss the project).

In a different vein, a participant expressed a feeling of adequacy: “Lig-on among paminaw.” (We are confident).

These results corroborate with the quantitative aspect of the current study wherein participants reported positive experiences in their involvement in the various activities of the extension project.

### 3.3 Theme No. 2: Enhancing Self-worth

Project Superwoman has developed and enhanced self-worth among women, and their value on the importance of family has increased significantly. The growth of women's self-esteem has contributed to the development of their self-worth, which is vital to their empowerment (Blascovich and Tomaka 1991).

Self-esteem strongly influences on how individuals assess and project themselves (Bagley and Mallick 1996). The partner-women claimed that being in their group, together they see each of their capacities and capabilities to help them fit in, belong, and become relevant part and parcel of the group. Such feeling has given them a boost of their morale as a woman with innate strength and purposefulness.

Personal empowerment for women in the project enhances their self-reliance. It refers to make their choices and influence the direction of change. Also, personal empowerment involves positive changes to one’s own beliefs like collective efficacy, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and a proactive attitude (Lord 1991).

### 3.4 Theme No. 3: Advancing Environmental Stewardship

One significant contribution of the project towards women in the community is the awareness and development of their sense of stewardship to the environment. They have taken actions to protect, preserve, conserve, restore, recycle, regenerate, and use environmental resources with prudence taking responsibility for their choices.

Women observed aesthetic values in the beautification of their surroundings. Their knowledge and new skill about backyard gardening, topiary, marcotting, grafting, succulent dish gardening encouraged them to grow different kinds of ornamental, shrubs and edible plants.

The informant narrated: “Akong balay kay daghan na ug tanu. Musamot kanindto ang among palibot.” (My house already has a lot of plants. It made my surroundings beautiful).

It clearly showed that planting in the surroundings gave it an added beauty. People loved flowers for their beauty, aroma, and diversity. Plants can make our lives more pleasant. Besides beautifying the surroundings and source of additional income, plants can modify the climate. It gives the freshness of the air in the area.

According to one of the studies of NASA, indoor pollutant levels can be reduced by the presence of plants and other soil microorganisms. Specifically, plants in pots decrease the presence of PM10 concentrations of harmful gases. The study of Lim et al., (2009) reported that household plants improves the quality of indoor air by reducing some chemical substances. This idea of the women on beautification and its advantages to air quality is aligned with the NASA studies’ findings that plants improve the quality of indoor air thus, making healthy breathing space.(Pegas, 2012). Further, Some species of indoor plants proven to reduce concentration of ozone are snake plant (Sansevieria trifasciata), spider plant (Chlorophytumcomosum), and golden pothos (Epipremnumaureum) (Papinchak et al., 2009).

The women’s knowledge and skill on recycling have motivated them to innovate on the efficient use of the coconut fronds or buri leaves, locally available indigenous materials as the raw source of the organic seedling basket for the germination, stocking, and growing medium of plants. The women were able to create an environment-friendly biodegradable seedling bag from indigenous materials, particularly the palm fronds. The skill to improve their capabilities, augment the family income, reduce waste and
minimize undesirable or negative impacts on the environment have become the women’s driving force to use their resources in the community with little cost and energy. As such, the women have benefitted from the product in terms of economy, human health, and conservation of the environment.

The informant quipped: “Buhat ug banig-banig, bukag-bukag, and sudlanan sa tanum” (We made mats, baskets, and bio-degradable plant bags).

Moreover, the women identified the significance of vermiculture. The women learn the basics of composting, which is necessary to produce organic fertilizer to rehabilitate the soil. Specifically, the acquired skill on the management of composting to vermiculture helped them in the process of preparing the compost as feed to the worms, Eudriluseugeniae, also called the "African Nightcrawler" to the harvesting of the vermicast, manure of the earthworms which can serve as a soil conditioner, booster, and fertilizer.

One beneficiary said: “Kahibaw me unsaon pagtrabaho sa wati… naa na mi nahibaw-an, unsaon pagpakaon, paghabwa ug pagpunit sa wati” (We learned how to manage vermiculture, particularly on how to feed, dig and take the worm out from the pit).

With this, the women find vermiculture a big help, especially on their household solid waste management, proper disposal, and the easy and fast decomposition of biodegradable trash while gaining additional income through vermicast selling. Dominguez et al., (1997) supported that organic wastes can be broken down and fragmented rapidly by earthworms, resulting in a stable, non-toxic material with a good structure that has a potentially high economic value as a soil conditioner for plant growth. Vermiculture, either small scale or large scale, may have an important role to play in animal waste management. Preliminary research in our laboratory showed that vermicomposting involves a significant reduction in populations of pathogenic microorganisms. Proper management retains high nitrogen levels in the compost (Gajdos, 1992).

3.5 Theme No. 4: Establishing Accountability for Sustainability

The women beneficiaries of a community project have an indispensable contribution in fostering the development of social, environmental, and economic aspects that will eventually bring about sustainability in the activities that were initiated by the tri-focal partnerships. The significance of the women’s developing sense of accountability as the responses manifested their ownership of the project. The development activities that these women are engaged in, aim to create communities with sustainable social and economic facets. Therefore people work cooperatively with a sense of volunteerism (Olukotun, 2008).

In view of Afshar (1998) anything that can boost women's breakdown status, or strengthen their sense of self-interest, or increase their perceived contribution to the family, can reinforce their bargaining power, allowing them to boost their role within their home. It is demonstrated as the informants narrated: “Makaya ra kay nakakat-on na man mi.” (We can do it because we have learned). They performed with a sense of responsibility and capacitate themselves to alleviate their present circumstance with perseverance and a sense of purpose.

Another quipped: “Makaya kay daghan man mi; magtinabangay lang jud mi; ipadayun lang namo ang inyong mga gitudlo.” (We can do it because we are many in our group and we will cooperate. We will continue the teachings we learned). It showed that they would do the process on their initiative.
3.6 Theme No. 5: Contribution to Quality of Life

The women have claimed that the project has contributed significantly to their lives. Firstly, it has provided them food for family consumption. It is evident when they narrated that Superwoman project has motivated and encouraged them to plant for their use and augment the income of their family. Meeting the basic needs of the family is one direct contribution to the project. Besides, it has contributed to augmenting their resources since they don’t need to spend on these food items anymore. Secondly, the project has given them an extra source of income. In this manner, it contributes to raising family income, which is the stepping stone to a more improved economic status.

Further, the women narrated that the project has significantly capacitated them on their livelihood skills. They claimed to have learned the skills in gardening, vermicomposting, marcotting or air-layering of plants, and topiary. Further, they discovered the proper methods of growing a variety of plants, how to do vermiculture, how to handle and harvest them. These skills equipped the women to become more productive, which eventually improve their livelihood. “We learned many skills, and we can use them to earn money and have additional income for the family.” The women see these learning as a tool which they can use to enhance their economic status.

Moreover, the project has broadened their awareness of time management as a valuable resource to improve their quality of life. It has capacitated them with a foundation skill, that is, the value of time.

The women narrated that, before the launching of the project in our barangay, they usually loiter, engage in gambling (tong-its), just stayed at home with nothing to do after the household chores. However, when the superwoman project came, we already made use of our time to plant vegetables, grew some ornamental plants, and have used our time efficiently, and felt that they had done more. The women have realized that they were productive and contributed to enhancing their family’s status in life.

Overall, the project has initially contributed to the quality of life among the women in Barangay Nangka. Researchers have shown that defining the quality of life is complicated. However, the elements can be categorized into sub-themes to simplify and enhance understanding.

The first sub-theme focused on the physical aspect, which includes mobility and health. Second, it emphasized economic status, which centered on the income of an individual and the kind of life one has under its financial capability. The third sub-theme is on the lens of the social domain of an individual. This area looks into how an individual relates to one’s environment, which is greatly influenced by society. In this project, the quality of life revolves around the second sub-theme, which is the economic factor.

The women have felt the impact of the project through their economic status. In essence, they have earned, which contributed to their income and eventual capability to make and control financial matters has a significant effect on their families and eventually to their community. It can give rise to the improvement of women’s and children’s health and welfare (Burges, 2007; Buvinic et al., 2008; Ferrant, 2010; Gowan et al., 2005; World Bank 2012). It covered all the factors that encompass quality of life. This showed that women performed multi-dimensional roles to advance women empowerment, which started with the uplifting economic status of the women in the community, which hope to improve the quality of life ultimately.
3.7 The Model

![Diagram of a Tri-Focal Partnership Model on Empowering Women in the Community]

Fig. 2 A Tri-Focal Partnership Model on Empowering Women in the Community

From the extensive collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, the study yielded a considerable impact of the extension projects on the many facets of women empowerment which is the core of the extension project. By incorporating a sectoral - collaboration to implementation of the extension project and program, may result to nurturing positive emotions, enhancing self-worth, advancing environmental stewardship, establishing accountability for sustainability, and contributing to the quality of life of women as beneficiary of the project. Hence, the model, a tri-focal partnership model on empowering women in the community. The model illustrates the dynamic interplay of the roles and functions of the university which serves as the implementing institution and local government unit, and government agencies as partners in endeavoring a successful implementation of the extension project. Given the salient results of the current study, the model, if adopted in extension project for empowering women in the depressed communities may bring similar outcomes disclosed in this study.

4. Conclusion

The investigation aimed to primarily explore the impact of the community extension projects on empowering women in economically depressed locality in Balamban, Cebu. Interestingly, both quantitative and qualitative data suggest significant impact. The extension project attained women empowerment by nurturing positive emotions, enhancing self-worth, advancing environmental stewardship, and establishing accountability for sustainability, thereby improving the quality of their lives. These findings, offer few useful implications for crafting extension projects that are initiated by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). First, since the study not only proved of the vital roles of partnering with different sectors for a sustainable extension project but also made positive impact, the model as proposed a tri-focal partnership among the university, local government units, and other government agencies may be adopted by HEIs for their community extension projects targeting women as project beneficiary. Furthermore, these results could provide valuable insights to university leaders, institutional policy makers, and extensionists, to spice their extension projects with strong collaboration with potential partners in the different stages of extension project development, from conceptualisation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to termination of the project. Given the limited resources in the context of state funded universities in the country which make them grapple in successfully implementing extension projects, tapping concerted support by partner agencies, government and non-government sectors may build a sustainable extension projects with bold impact.
5. **Recommendation**

Given the study tended significant impact to the community, the following recommendations are proposed. First, replication of such extension projects in other communities would yield a good Return of Investment (ROI) to the University, which ultimately leads to the country’s more substantial economic growth and development. Second, as for future studies, to see a broader impact of project impact, further investigation using longitudinal approach is suggested. Third, for the model proposed in this study, we are optimistic that adaption of the proposed model, a tri-focal partnership would most likely yield positive impact for extension project that has something to do with empowering women particularly in economically diverse communities. Replication of the current study also is needed to reaffirm present study results and the practical applicability of the model proposed. Finally, for the university to strengthen partnership with NGO’s, private sectors and government agencies, should it pursue another phase of the current extension project.

6. **Return of Investment (ROI) from the Project**

The university was able to save in a year a total of Php133,410.00. The amount includes harvest from vermiculture and vegetable gardening, which provides for household food consumption. It also includes bio-degradable materials for the seedling bag and vermiculture, which the housewives donated. Further, it includes pots and wires given by the teachers, and seedling and seeds provided by Dept. of Agriculture (DA). Part of it is the training time of teachers and resource speakers (DA) and work time of barangay leaders and housewives. Finally, the extensionists were able to register a utility model on biodegradable seedling bag in IPOHIL.

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We should like to acknowledge the contributions of those who collaborated in the actuality of this paper. We are thankful to the Cebu Normal University for granting the institutional fund of our extension project to the Local Government Unit of Balamban Cebu and the Department of Agriculture whose partnership and invaluable support made the conduct of this extension services facilitated and successful, and to the women in Sitio Nangka, Balamban, Cebu Philippines, whose active participation and full support played significance in the completion of this research.

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