



## **GSC-TAREC Partnership: An Initiative towards Community Development and Sustainability**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Guimaras State College (GSC) being the center of Higher Education in the Province of Guimaras has a role in making a difference in the lives of the people living within the portals of the community. As a center for higher education, GSC has the responsibility of helping the people in the community to become productive citizens in the country.

TRANS-ASIA Renewable Energy Corporation (TAREC) currently implemented the construction of the 54MW San Lorenzo Wind Project, the first of its kind in the Visayas Region. The wind project with an area covering four barangays of San Lorenzo is expected to bring not only a sustainable source of energy but also new opportunities for the community and people of Guimaras.

There are many prospective ways the wind farm help the community. First, the wind farm increases the Local Government Funds that may be used for services and development of its locality. A portion of the income from power generation is allotted for the province and the host communities as stated under Renewable Energy Act of 2008 and EPIRA Law. Second, the wind farm is expected to boost Local Tourism and stimulate the local economy by creating livelihood opportunities not only in San Lorenzo but in the entire province. Lastly, the construction of wind farm generated local jobs through contracting of manpower. Individuals from the community were hired if they are equipped with the right skills and qualified for the jobs.

Because of the positive impact brought by the wind farm, TAREC harnessed these opportunities by providing programs relevant to their lives and realities. Hence, they collaborated/tapped Guimaras State College (GSC) Extension Services for a partnership

As part of the continuing commitment to make life better for partner communities, Guimaras State College (GSC) and TRANS ASIA Renewable Energy Corporation (TAREC) who are now partners for development, conducted the program, "GSC-TAREC Partnership An Initiative Towards Community Development and Sustainability".

The GSC-TAREC Partnership used the Participatory Resource Appraisal (PRA) approach to enable local people to share, enhance and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, act, monitor and evaluate. Its extensive and growing menu of methods includes designing visuals such as mapping and diagramming with the community and its stakeholders. Practical applications of PRA have proliferated, especially in resources management, agriculture, health and nutrition, poverty alleviation and livelihood program and urban contexts. PRA is deemed to be a powerful tool in developing communities and helping them help their selves.

The Partnership aimed to provide opportunities for local people in the community to participate in the planning process by sharing their culture and identify their own needs. Specifically, the partnership intends to achieve the following goals:

#### **1. To strengthen community organizations and self-management of the various communities.**

The basic goal of the partnership and the PRA is to help the community address their own opportunities by encouraging every sector of the community to participate in the data gathering and planning out their projects. A sense of accountability is also promoted during PRA and the community is viewed as partners rather than beneficiaries. This set-up can boost their confidence and strengthen their organization.

#### **2. To support people's initiatives towards community development and sustainability.**

PRA gives the community a sense of ownership by integrating their own ideas and actions. Community members have the tendency to take care of what they built rather than what they received. Ownership ensures the sustainability of future projects. The processes involved are also empowering the community members because it promotes awareness, enhances observation skills and develops critical thinking leading to the development of their community



### **3. To facilitate the social integration of the company to the communities.**

The PRA approach can provide a venue for the company and Guimaras State College to know the plight, success, history and everyday life of the community. Through PRA, the partners (GSC & TAREC) would know the habits, beliefs, and culture of the community that may help them during the implementation proper. The workshop can also help develop trust between the parties knowing that both are willing to listen and collaborate.

### **4. To provide livelihood skills training to the beneficiaries to prepare them for more challenges and opportunities the wind project could offer.**

By providing skills training, the beneficiaries would be able to find other sources of income that could augment their daily needs. In this way, they will be equipped with skills they could utilize to welcome any opportunities and privileges that may arise in the implementation of this wind project.

### **5. To increase the income of the beneficiaries at least 10-20% per month.**

This is to provide an additional source of income especially for affected families of the wind project so that they could still cope with the changes and the real situation they are facing

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION: (Situation before the conduct of Intervention)**

When the Wind project was implemented, some land areas and properties of the four barangays namely Cabano, Cabungahan, M Chavez and Suclaran, all in San Lorenzo (which were beneficiaries of the installation of the project) were paid and purchased by TRANS ASIA in big amounts. Because of this, some farmers had to look for other alternative sources of income for their living. Some of them were hired and some engage in other businesses. But of course, TRANS ASIA did not just ignore them but facilitated what they need, the reason why TAREC collaborated with GSC. The partnership is focused on empowering the people by providing skills training, livelihood projects after knowing the real need of the communities. So the Participatory Resource Appraisal (PRA) approach which uses tools like resource map, reasonability diagram, Historical map, and stream analysis were conducted after the workshop and were presented to each barangays; with the following participants and results.

Participants:

1. Barangay Captains
2. 8 Barangay councilmen/women
3. 2-3 representatives from the youth sector
4. 2-3 representatives from the women sector
5. 2-3 representatives from the elderly sector
6. 2-3 representatives from the farmers' sector
7. 2-3 representatives from the fisher folks sector
8. 20-25 local leaders from each barangays

### **Analysis:**

#### **1. Cabano**

The strongest point for Cabano is its agricultural system. Compared to other barangays, Cabano is capable of aligning its tourism projects to the agritourism plans of the province of Guimaras. Organic rice and products are sought-after products in the tourism market, and the presence of water irrigation can make it possible for Cabano to implement the farming system. The barangay can also make a partnership with Guimaras State College in their community extension project to learn new agricultural technologies as well as assist the students in their learning process. Aside from the Lover's Mountain of M Chavez, Cabano also offers a good location for sightseeing of the TAREC's wind turbine generators in all four barangays.

#### **2. Cabungahan**

Cabungahann is rich in natural raw materials that can be developed into handicrafts and tourism-related products. Likewise, to prepare for the influx of tourist in the area, Cabungahan is planning to complement it by showcasing their culture and history, particularly the significance of betel nut in their community. This is one of the priority areas of the Tourism Committee of the barangay. The challenge for Cabungahan is to create something unique and different to attract the attention of tourist to their barangay.



### 3. M Chavez

Among the four barangays, M Chavez is one of the more suitable spots for tourism center and viewing area. The Lover's Mountain, the highest point of M Chavez which houses one of the turbines, offers the best viewing spot for all the wind turbines of San Lorenzo. It is also situated at the center of the four barangays and has a quick access for all areas. Coincidentally, the municipal market is also located in the barangay so the issue for infrastructure may not be a problem. Based on the PRA the community is interested to explore new opportunities through alternative livelihood.

### 4. Suclaran

Like the four other barangays, Suclaran is an agricultural community with rice farming, fishing and salt industry being the top industries existing at the barangay. The farmers in the barangay practices rain-fed agriculture and harvest rice in two cropping seasons. For the salt industry, Suclaran is one of the better producers in San Lorenzo producing finer salt than most barangays. And the most progressive in terms of creating opportunities for its constituents.

In answering the objectives the following activities were conducted:

1. After the presentation of the results, the barangays were asked by GSC and TAREC what they really want to do to make them more productive. They agreed to have a training which would prepare them once the tourism industry would improve.
2. Planning of activities for the training was conducted and each barangays sent their selected participants.
3. The training on Photographic Silk Screen Printing was conducted wherein TAREC provided all the materials needed for the training.
4. The training on Hospitality skills like table skirting, table napkin folding, table setting were also conducted with financial assistance from TAREC for the materials for 4 barangays.
5. The training on cooking and baking were also conducted with a focus on mango products for four barangays. Materials and equipment were also provided.
6. Workshop on Financial management and simple bookkeeping was also conducted for the participants of the 4 barangays.
7. A skills training on Macrame weaving that is on making bags, wallets and belts were also conducted but for Suclaran only, since they were the first group to request, others will just follow.

### Results of the interventions

After training, the participants were asked to prepare their own action plan and were provided with all the materials they need with a startup capital to ensure they have really utilized what they have learned. In cooking and baking, Each barangay was provided with oven, utensils, ingredients and a start-up capital too. A monitoring and evaluation are being done to know the progress of the project, and to know who among them have really succeeded. As a result, we have learned that Cabano excels in Photographic silk screen printing for their products are displayed in the pasalubong center and during their Harvest festival. Each participantis wearing their printed T-shirts. During one of the interviews, it came out that some beneficiaries of the training on hospitality skills are being hired during weddings, fiestas or if there are special occasions to do the skirting & table setting.

In cooking and baking, since each barangays were provided with oven, utensils, ingredients and a start-up capital, each group regrouped themselves and take a turn on their cooking and baking. They are doing their activities at their barangay hall where electric power is being provided by the barangay free of charge. They are selling their products in schools, market, the workplace of the TAREC and earning at least Php 300.00 or more per day and every week they divide equally among themselves their profits with consideration to those who rendered more time than the rest. Their Macrame products are being sold also in any offices in the province, to their friends and relatives and by guests who visit the wind turbines. More trainings will still be conducted.

### Lessons Learned:

1. Once the needs are really felt by the people/beneficiaries and the solution also emanates from them they would really strive to achieve it.
2. Tapping the right people, agencies or institutions at the right time could make some things possible.
3. If the stakeholders are involved in the planning process and they really understand their roles on it, all you got to do is ask and they would give.
4. Continuous monitoring and evaluation are very essential in every projects/programs being undertaken to ensure the sustainability of the program.



### **Recommendations:**

1. The use of the Participatory Resource Appraisal tool in identifying problems, needs, and resources of the community is very useful in the conduct of any programs/activities in a community.
2. The activities to be conducted must be in line with the curriculum/program of the college so that it would be useful to the community and the institution.
3. The target of the program must not focus on the number of accomplishments but on the impact and services it could give to the clientele/beneficiaries of the program.
4. Follow up and feedback are important to know how and why the project succeeded or failed and learn from it.

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