CAPABILITY BUILDING OF KEY COORDINATORS OF DISTRICT I, BABATNGON, LEYTE, PHILIPPINES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bonfire Rangers of the 50th IATSS Forum believes that sustainable community design is one of the key outcomes of successful community building. To achieve sustainable community design, the community needs to take pride and has the desire to take the initiative to improve their lives and making their environment a better place to live in, with the support of a network of relevant stakeholders. The group has selected District I, Babatngon, Leyte, Philippines to be our case study where proposal is made to introduce community design concept in the area in hope to improve the economic and social situation in the area.

District I is located in the Municipality of Babatngon in the Leyte Province, situated in the central part of the Philippines which connects the Luzon and Mindanao islands. It is a coastal area with fishing and farming as the major sources of income.

The problems currently facing the district are no means of livelihood, unsustainable resources and social and economic stagnation and no key coordinators. After thorough analyses, the group delved into the root cause of the problem which is the lack of awareness and enthusiasm in community potential. This root cause can be addressed by implementing the group's project of capability building of key coordinators in the district through the four key elements in building and sustaining community pride: (1) Understanding the District Needs, (2) Enabling the District Leads, (3) Facilitating the District Ecosystem and (4) Sustaining the District Bonfire.

This report was the result of the entire IATSS program which includes seminars, workshops, field studies, and case studies. The group also resorted to secondary data from journals, newspapers, reports, etc. The group also utilized several techniques or approaches to generate ideas such as fish bone analysis, iceberg analysis, Total Quality Management (TQM), Gantt chart, round robin, mind mapping, brainstorming, and post-it notes.

INTRODUCTION

In many communities, unregulated, poorly planned development is spreading across the landscape at unprecedented rates that far exceed population growth. This often leads to social, economic, and environmental resources degradation which has an adverse impact on people's lives. The importance of achieving community sustainability is eminent and has to go beyond mere government's intervention but through a process-driven approach that values and believes in people. There is a need to create a community ecosystem with mutual understanding that seeks to improve lives by taking its own initiatives to look at strategic planning activities in new ways, offering opportunities for development that will promote sustainability. In short, this ecosystem seeks to achieve goals for community-based resource management, community awareness and capacity building that support informed choices to move communities toward sustainable design in order to lead healthy, productive, and enjoyable lives, now and in the future.

Concept of Sustainable Community Design

The theme of Sustainable Community Design for the 50th IATSS Forum is timely as it is a concept that could potentially enable nations to achieve successful community building.

Through a series of holistic theme study programme on Community Design by the IATSS Forum, the participants of the 50th IATSS Forum has reached a common understanding of the concept. A sustainable community design project is an action or outcome from a community that desires to take charge of its own destiny towards designing the means to secure a resilient and sustainable future. The process to achieve sustainable community design involves the following 3 main stages:

i.   Understanding the community needs
ii.   Empowering key community coordinators
iii. Implementing sustainable community design projects

Our Ideal Community

The group members shared their views and perception of an ideal community and agreed that an ideal community consists of elements such as community engagement, community spirit and ownership in cultivating their own shared values and identity.

Selecting the Country as Case Study

The group also studied and analyzed the respective selected communities shared by each member and selected District 1 of Babatngon, Leyte, Philippines as the case study for our group study using the Total Quality Management (TQM) decision making tool. Criteria were set by the group to support the evaluation process in selecting the individual case studies presented by the group members. The table below explains the process and how the group decided to choose Philippines as the focus area for the Group Study.
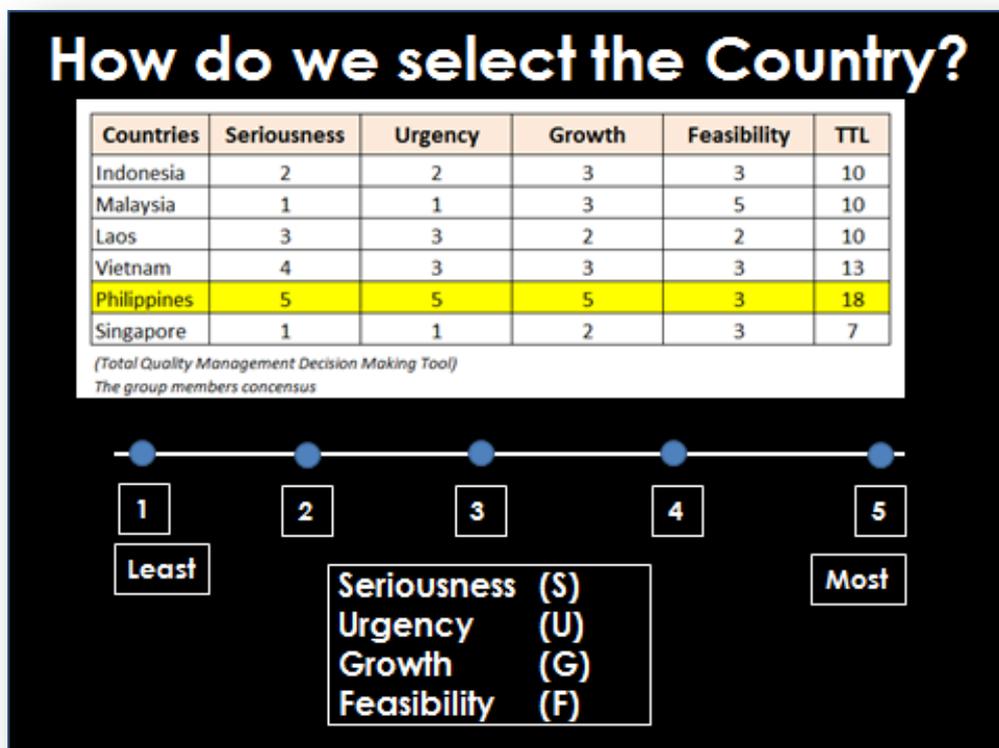
How do we select the Country?

Countries	Seriousness	Urgency	Growth	Feasibility	TTL
Indonesia	2	2	3	3	10
Malaysia	1	1	3	5	10
Laos	3	3	2	2	10
Vietnam	4	3	3	3	13
Philippines	5	5	5	3	18
Singapore	1	1	2	3	7

(Total Quality Management Decision Making Tool)
The group members concensus

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Least   Most

Seriousness (S)
Urgency   (U)
Growth   (G)
Feasibility (F)

Table 1: Criteria as guiding principle in selecting the Country as case study

FUTURE OF DISTRICT I

After the sharing and brainstorming sessions on the group's view of an ideal community, the group envisioned the future of District I, Babatngon, Leyte as follows:

A District where the Citizens together with the Key Coordinators take pride and initiatives in making their community a better place to live in

OBJECTIVES

With the aforementioned vision for District I, this project will specifically focus on the following objectives:

- To identify and build the capability of the key coordinators in District 1, [1]Barangay of Babatngon, Leyte

- To achieve constructive partnership by establishing a network of key stakeholders for community support

- To empower and support the key coordinators to spearhead community design projects

BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF DISTRICT I

Region VIII, also known as the Eastern Visayas Region, serves as the geographical backbone of the Philippines as it lies in the mid-eastern border of the Philippine archipelago which links the islands of Luzon and Mindanao. It has two main islands—the Samar and Leyte, connected by the San Juanico Bridge, considered to be the longest bridge in Southeast Asia. The region is consists of six provinces namely; Leyte, Biliran, Southern Leyte, Samar, Eastern Samar and Northern Samar.

Babatngon is located in the northern part of the Leyte province, bounded on the north by Carigara Bay; on the east by San Juanico Strait and Leyte Gulf; on the west by San Miguel, Leyte; and on the south by Tacloban City. Based on the Philippine government's classification of municipalities with respect to their annual local income generated with 1st as the highest and 6th as the lowest classification, Babatngon is a fourth (4th) class municipality. The focus of the group study is District I. District I is one of the 25 barangays/villages in the municipality of Babatngon. It is a coastal district with a total land area of 1,206.2099 hectares (ha) with 776.35ha timberland, 407.3599ha residential/commercial land, and 22.50ha mangrove area. It has a population of 2, 241 roughly around 9% of the total population of the municipality. It is accessible by land and water transportation like public utility vehicles and bancas (small boats or pump boats). The district's source of livelihood includes farming and fishing. Others work as government employees, teachers and overseas foreign workers. The area also has potential for nature eco-trail and trekking, fish cage and fish pen establishments, seaweed culture/farming, oyster production and mangrove development.

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[1]*Barangay is the smallest administrative unit of governance in the Philippines and is the native term for village, district or ward.*

SITUATION ANALYSES

According to the information presented in the previous parts, the group has identified the problems faced by the community of District 1 using the fish bone analysis:

Figure 1: Situation Analysis of the Current Situation in District I

i. The area has very poor facilities such as no hospital, only the local health units, few schools, no higher education institutions, conventional water supply system, and no transportation service after 5:00 pm.

ii. The villagers know how to produce but they don't know how to sell the products and there is no demand. This leads to economic stagnation in the village.

iii. Furthermore, the group reached the consensus that the head of the village will play an important role in leading the village. He can be the key actor in inspiring and helping the villagers as well as leading them to a better life. However, according to the information mentioned above, the head of village cannot realize what is going on and it seems that he lacks motivation to lead. On the other hand, he has the power to convince his people so it would be a good chance for us to approach him to get involved in the community design process.

Therefore, the group has analyzed the problems and needs of the village and come up with choosing the No Key Coordinators as the key issue the village is facing. The group believes that of having key coordinators, it will initiate and encourage the residents to take action and all the other problems can be remedied or even solved.

CLARIFYING KEY ISSUES

The iceberg concept has helped us identified the root cause of the key issue which is illustrated in the following diagram:
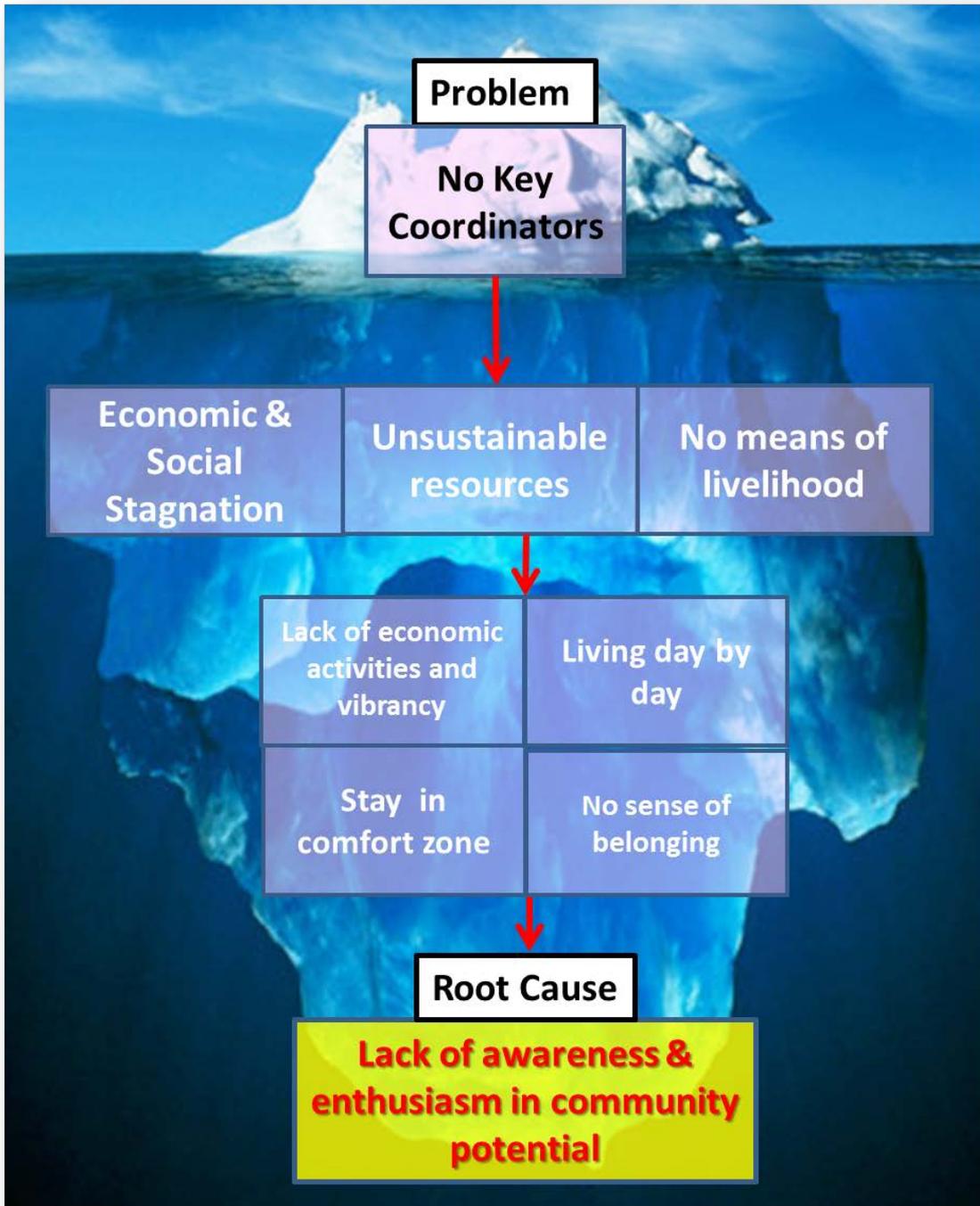

Figure 2: Clarifying Key issues

- *No means of livelihood* - The villagers have no sense of belonging as they live day by day

- *Unsustainable resources* - As they just live day by day, the villagers don't have the idea of how important the mangroves are. They just harvesting them without realizing that the resources are depleted day by day until it will be unsustainable anymore.

- *Economic and social stagnation* - The people are staying in their comfort zones and nothing else. No market opportunity, no market initiatives, no local festival to promote their produce and services which contributed to the lack of economic activities and vibrancy in life.

After understanding the different causes above, the group was able to identify the root cause that is lack of awareness and enthusiasm embracing the community of District 1, Babatngon, Leyte.

CONSEQUENCES IF NO ACTION TAKEN

Having analyzed the current situation in District 1, Babatngon, Leyte, we realized the negative impact that will have on its economic, social, and environmental dynamics concurrently in a system context if no action is taken in this area. The diagram below illustrates the interconnection of these elements and its negative effects.
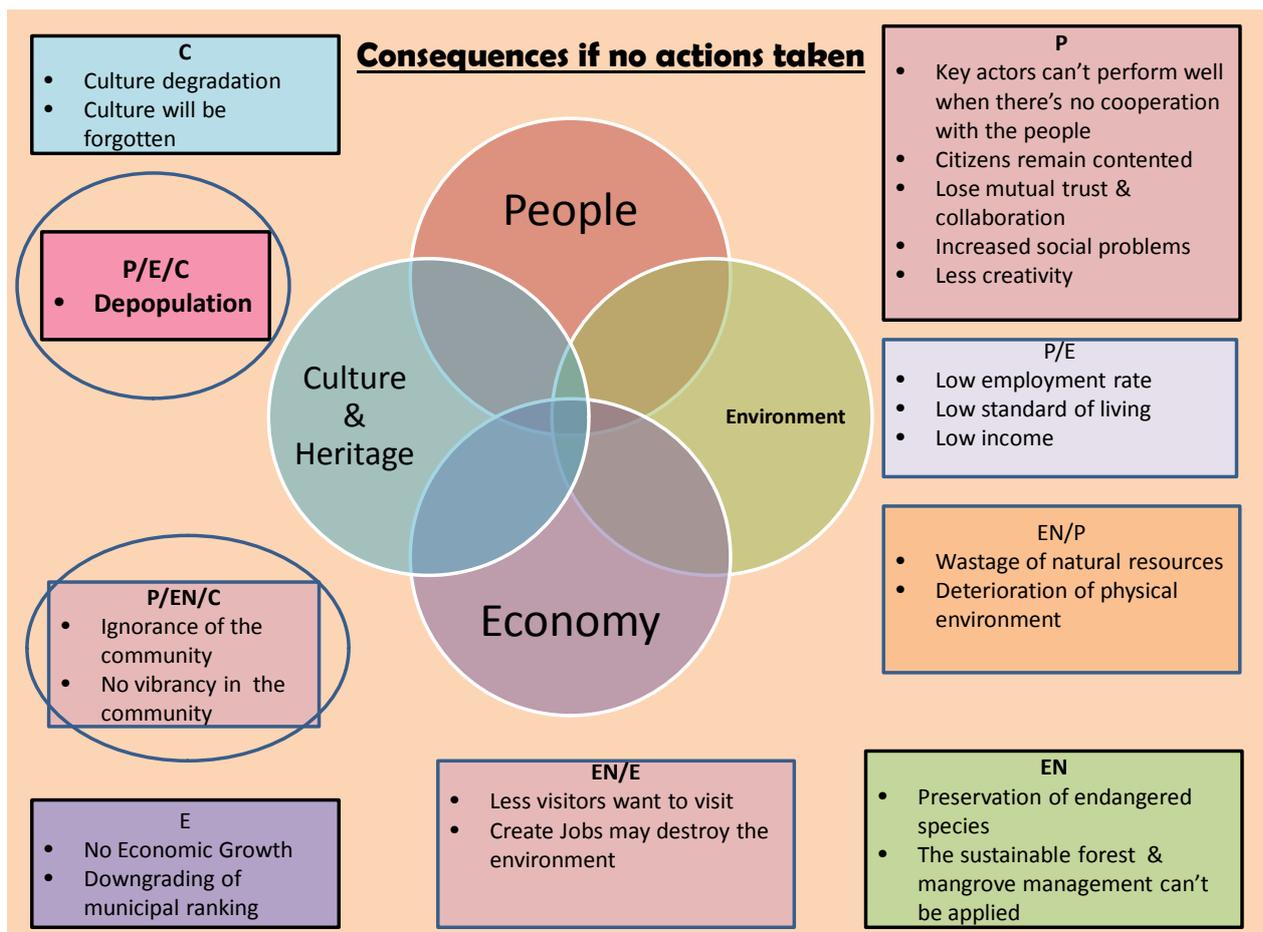

Figure3: Interconnected relations of the negative effects to the District if no actions are taken

4 KEY ELEMENTS CONTRIBUTING TO A CONTINUOUS CYCLE OF BUILDING AND SUSTAINING COMMUNITY PRIDE

Based on the key issues mentioned above, we know that it is important to have the key coordinators so we come up with the four elements which contribute to a continuous cycle of building and sustaining community pride. The followings are the four elements which should be taken into practice one by one:
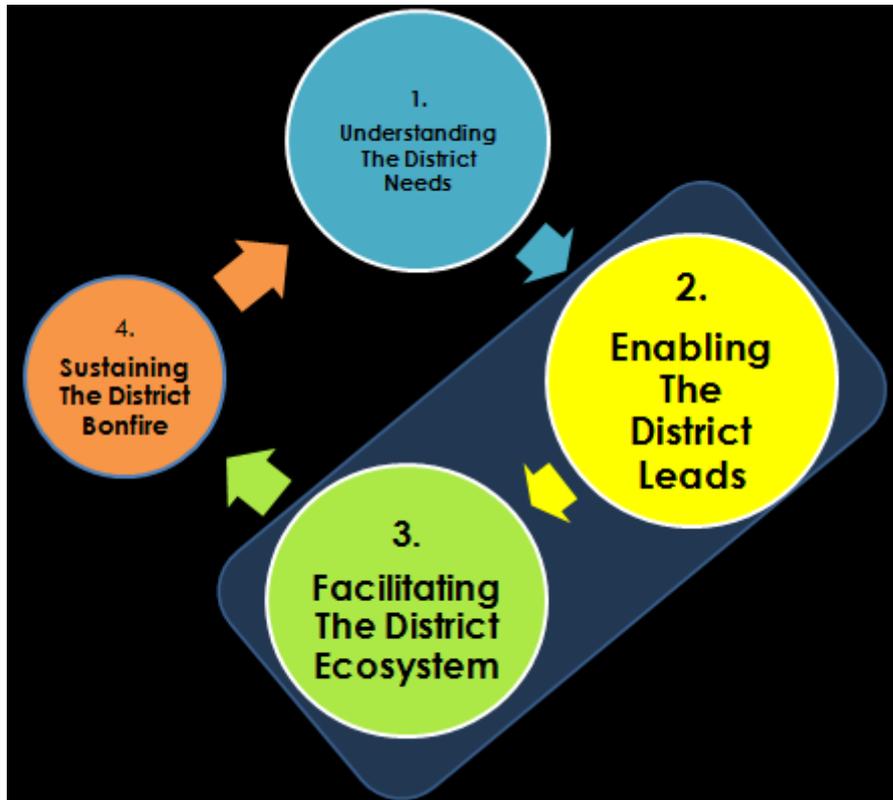

Figure 5: Key Focus Areas of the Project

In each step, we will discuss how to do it, who will be in charge of each step and the expected outcomes which we expect from the process.

<u>Understanding the District needs</u>

The first step we need to consider is to understand the District needs. It means we need to learn about what the villagers in Babatngon need, what they want, what their personalities are, and how they look at things from their different perspectives. Once we have deeper comprehension of such characteristics, we will think of the ways to satisfy their needs.

In order to learn about the District needs, it is needed to conduct an ethnographic research in which a research plan, field observation and interviews would be carried out. First of all, a research plan should be conducted. The plan should focus on how to access the leader of the village, how to get communication with him/her, how to set up a network with people around him/her. After a ground interaction with the leader, we will set up a meeting with his/her friends and then the residents. The meeting will be about what the residents' need, what they desire for a better community. The people in charge will help them to brainstorm ideas of an ideal community based on the help of the key coordinators and us.

The next step should be the field observation, we are going to conduct a field study so that we see the situation through our lenses in terms of how the residents live their daily lives, environment, types of services, etc.

The final step in ethnographic research is interviews. The interviewees will be the potential district leads, various households living in the village and potential stakeholders.

Methodology for data collection of the group project

For data collection, an ethnographic research will be done in a three-month period involving a description and interpretation of behavior, language and social interactions of people in District 1 of Babatngon, Leyte. Wolcott (1987) stated that ethnography consists of looking for what people do (behaviors), listening for what they say (language) and what they make and use (artifacts). The two important methods for the data collection that will be executed are interviews and field observation in which will takes two months and one month digestion periods respectively. This research is important as to understand what the people in the District 1 of Babatngon really need in the immediate term. The group will later match its resources based on what the people need rather than what the group has.

Interviews would be conducted on potential district leads, various households and potential stakeholders who had been identified beforehand. The interviews will be conducted by having informal conversation with the people in a two-month period. The questions are semi-structured where topics are selected in advance and the interviews would be done based on the current setting of Babatngon and in informal ways such as during lunch, tea break, small ceremony, get together party, etc. The interviewers are selected by using the resources available at Eastern Visayas State University (EVSU) and in collaboration with the group members.

On the other hand, field observation will also be conducted within a one-month period. The data will be collected where and when an event or activity is occurring. It does not rely on people's willingness to provide information and the researchers can directly see what people are doing in their natural setting rather than relying on what they say or they do.

As for the data collection method i.e. interviews and observation, more time, resources and effort have to be employed so as to achieve the desired objectives. It will surely need concerted effort not only by the group members but also close cooperation between various stakeholders, especially the people of Babatngon.

Our expected outcomes should be:

- We want to develop effective plans to enable residents to realize the importance of taking ownership of their community. Taking ownership means realizing the importance of the village. This is important as when the residents take ownership of the community, they will be very willing to get involved in the activities as they have the sense of belonging which was presented in the previous parts. And the problem of lack of the sense of belonging will be solved.

- We would like to see if we can build the relationships and trust with the community during this first step. Once we gain the trust, everything will be easier for us. Our future activities and programs will receive much attention from the community. More relationships are built and maintained, which will support us later (during the community design process).

- We want to identify district leads by arranging meetings and initiating conversations with the district chairman, we hope we can encourage the district leads to be the key coordinators for our community design project.

Enabling the District Leads

Once we identify the district leads, we will equip them with leadership skills, mangrove management, parenting and piloting community events and activities.

- Leadership skills

  Leadership skills include facilitation skills, listening skill, empathy, and negotiation skill. We will organize the training programs based on what we had learned from the seminars, workshops and lectures as well as the Community Design Simulation Game.

- Mangrove management

  A training program on mangrove management will be conducted as the people lack the knowledge to develop and sustain the mangrove.

- Parenting

  Parenting means educating the parents in the proper upbringing of their children as they will be the successors of the community.

- Piloting community events and activities

  Some events and activities will be organized together with the district leaders and residents as to empower and motivate them to initiate future community projects.

Bonfire Rangers, together with the Eastern Visayas State University (EVSU), district leaders, training providers and local governments will be involved in implementing this step.

Facilitating the District Ecosystem

The objective to establish the network of stakeholders is for resources and financial support. Potential partners are identified and platforms such as social gatherings, courtesy visits, networking sessions, conferences, are created. Like-minded stakeholders can share ideas and explore collaborations to create win-win situation where both the stakeholders and the villagers will benefit. For example, when the stakeholders invest in the community for the mangrove planting, they are not only creating jobs but also promoting economic vibrancy in the community.

The expected outcomes from the above activities are the constructive partnerships and trust among relevant stakeholders are built, the awareness of the important roles that stakeholders play in the community is created and the sense of commitment among stakeholders is instilled where they will be willing to support and get involved in the current and future community activities.

Bonfire Rangers, together with the EVSU, private companies, the government especially the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), NGOs, NPOs and the civil societies will be the ones to implement Step 3.

Sustaining the District Bonfire

After completing the previous steps, this stage is where the community takes their own initiatives to implement the community design projects alongside other stakeholders. They will devote themselves and strive to achieve a sustainable community.

The group has come up with a few ideas that can potentially encourage economic development and social integrity in District 1. Below is a list of proposed community design projects:

     i.   One Kid One Tree
    ii.   Mangrove Youth Camp
   iii.   Planting Mangrove Competition
   iv.   Planting Mangrove Group Activities
    v.   Planting Mangrove Storytelling by the Elderly

TIMELINE

The proposed timeline for the project is presented in the Gantt chart below:

Plans	Implementation		Schedule (Month)										
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	36
Ethnographic research	Research plan		�										
	Field observation		▮										
	Interviews	Potential District Leads		▮	▮								
		Villagers (various households)		▮	▮								
		Potential stakeholders		▮	▮								
Capability Building for the district leads	Training design preparation					▮							
	Conduct of training						▮						
	Implementing the community events						▮	▮					
Establishing the network of stakeholders	Listing/ identifying potential partners for resources & funding supports								▮				
	Preparation of proposal								▮	▮			
	Creating the platforms for networking									▮	▮		
	Presentation/ sharing the proposal											▮	
Sustaining the district	Facilitating the community design projects in this district												▮
	Project evaluation												▮
	Finalize documentation process												▮
	Explore possible replication in other districts/ barangay												▮

Table 2: Gantt chart for Project Management

BUDGET ALLOCATION

Bonfire Rangers will receive USD2,000 from IATSS Forum to implement our project. We separate our fund for first, second and third stage. The fourth stage will be supported by local citizens of District 1 and other stakeholders and hence, no budget is needed. The biggest portion of the budget will be allocated on the second stage, which is capability building of the district leads by having some training courses and workshops for the key coordinators.

Plans	Implementation		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	36	Cost USD	
Ethnographic research	Research plan		■											50	200
	Field observation		■											50	
	Interviews	Potential District Leads		■	■									100	
		Various households		■	■										
		Potential stakeholders		■											
Capability Building the district leads	Training design preparation					■								50	1,500
	Training courses & workshops						■							1,350	
	Implementing the community events						■	■						100	
Establishing the network of stakeholders	Listing/ identifying potential partners for resources & funding supports								■					50	300
	Preparation of proposal								■	■				-	
	Creating the platforms for networking									■	■			150	
	Presentation/ sharing the proposal										■			100	
Sustaining the district (Funding Resources)	Facilitating the community design projects in this district											■		-	-
	Project evaluation											■		-	
	Finalize documentation process											■		-	
	Explore possible replication in other districts/ barangay											■		-	
Total Budget														2,000	2,000

Table 3: Budget Allocation to implement the project

IDEATION TECHNIQUES IN THE GROUP STUDY

During the group discussion, the group had indulged into a few methodologies for ideation purpose such as round robin, post-it notes, mind mapping and brain storming session. The methods we used were of what we had learned in IATSS and also based on the experience of our group member. The first method we used was round robin test. It was a new method introduced by our group member. In this experimental methodology, a test was performed independently several times. This involved multiple members of the group performing the test with the use of the same method in different round. Further arguments for participating in round robin tests are supporting in-group quality of decision-making process, building confidence of the in-group results and creating a basis for accurately establishing group consensus.

Besides, we also used mind mapping technique for the group brain storming session which we had learned it during the workshop conducted. We found that it is a useful technique that helps the group to learn more effectively improves the way of recording information and supports and enhances creative problem solving. Through mind mapping, the group can quickly identify and understand the structure of the theme. The group saw how the pieces of information fit together and helping the group to remember the information better, as they hold it in a format that our mind finds easy to recall and quick to review. Integration of new ideas is also easy as those ideas can be branched out easily and with less disruption, rather than writing them in confusing set of lists. More than this, mind mapping helps the group break large topics down into manageable chunks, so that the group can plan effectively without getting overwhelmed and without forgetting something important.

For the ideation techniques, the group had tried and cross applied all the methodologies. The group found that some methodologies were effective for only that particular session and vice-versa. As such, it can be said that no methodologies fits all but they contributed effectively to the progress of the discussion.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE GROUP STUDY

Learning and sharing together was a challenging theme. As the group members are of diverse skill levels, backgrounds and experience therefore it was really difficult to reach a consensus on everything albeit upon discussion and debating them. Learn to logically convince the others based on mutual understanding was very important. The group has realized that each individual brings strengths to a group and responsible to not only contribute his/her strengths, but also to help others understand the source of their strengths. Any member who is at a disadvantage or not comfortable with the majority should be encouraged and proactively empowered to contribute rather than be left out.

In addition, the group has learned that sometimes it is better to give chances to other members to talk or give ideas. Each group members has distinctive personality, knowledge and experience. Although many ideas are concentrated on a few members of the group, the other group members have to be rope in as to make the discussion session to be more vibrant and effective. Learning together by having discussion and debate is positive influenced with a diversity of perspective and experience increased the options for problem solving, and expanding the range of points to consider. It will increase the effectiveness of the consensus decision making.

Learn to speak up is the vice-versa of the abovementioned issue. In a group, every members have the responsibilities to contribute ideas and opinions to the debated issues. Being silent would rather confusing the group as whether the person is understood and committed to the group or he/she is not interested or has other agendas. Sometimes the group members need more time to digest or keep in pace with the other group members during discussion but time is gold. Therefore keeping silent for a long time would not benefit the group and it would be wrongly interpreted as the way of escaping from the responsibility of contributing to the wellbeing of the group presentation later.

By having diverse group members therefore new methodologies and technical analyses are being learned. It is true especially during brainstorming session where sometimes need fresh methodologies for coming into a meaningful consensus such as Gantt Chart for project management, round robin for brainstorming session and above all, how to appreciate team work. Besides, some group members are well versed on the technical ways in interpreting data and information. This technical expertise added more values and relevancy on the outcome of the discussion.

In addition, the group had also learn about the way on how to always rationalize as much as possible and make constructive and objective analysis of each step taken. Debating and viewing the opinions on different angles are good but sometimes it takes toll on time and energy. The idea is good at the first thought, becoming bad on the second thought and can be good on the third thought. It circling the mind and at the end of the day, no consensus had been gained although much time has been wasted. This is where discipline take into the picture where the group must stick to the agenda and time table as to avoid going astray or having unfruitful discussion.

One great discovery of the group was that food and music caused the brains to work faster and better. These two factors had proven effective in stimulating the positive and faster thinking and shorter decision making process. In fact, on a particular session, the group has managed to come up to consensus and completing the task in less than one hour compared to no food and music session on the day before where the discussion has to be dragged longer than usual due to difficulty in having a consensus.