

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT OF SOUTH UPI, MAGUINDANAO, PHILIPPINES

Rovers S. Español
University of Mindanao
PHILIPPINES
roversespanol@gmail.com

Shiela Mae E. Gadia
University of Mindanao
PHILIPPINES
shielagadia87@yahoo.com

John Ramil P. Gonzales
University of Mindanao
PHILIPPINES
gonzalesjohnramil@gmail.com

Joel S. Pardillo
University of Mindanao
PHILIPPINES
forester005365@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study pertains to the public participation in project planning and implementations in the Municipality of South Upi, Maguidanao, Philippines. In particular, it has determined the degree of participation of the public in terms of project planning and implementations by the Local Government Unit. This study has used the descriptive correlational quantitative design and a sampling technique involving group of people involved in the development. Moreover, the study shows that there is a high level of public participation as well as the awareness of the community in terms of development and sustainability of the projects in the Local Government Unit of South Upi. This study presumes that the local government unit should continuously strengthen the public participation in the projects. In line with this, the government should prioritize cascading information for the future development of the community through seminars, workshops, programs and other propagandas. Thus, the participation of people in the project planning and implementation would make a difference since it creates a sense of ownership on the projects. If these insights are considered, more people in the municipality will participate in the project planning and implementation in the municipality.

Keywords: Public participation, project planning, LGU implementation.

INTRODUCTION

South Upi is one of the 36 municipalities in the province of Maguindanao. Founded on September 22, 1976, it has a total land area of 46,342.2338 hectares (LMB) with 11 barangays under its jurisdiction. Land classification in the municipality falls under three general categories: agriculture, forestland and built-up areas. Agricultural areas are dispersed and mainly in those portions of the municipality proximal to the fluvial bodies of the area. Built-up areas are limited to the Barangay Poblacion only. It also serves as local business centers of the localities. Presently, the LGU of South Upi have projects and programs which were actively participated by residents, partners and volunteers. As a result of converged effort and strategies of different LGU Offices and stakeholders, the Municipality of South Upi received the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) Award last 2018 and 2019. Thus, public participation played a crucial role in every project planning and implementation in the municipality.

Public participation is a fundamental condition in local democracy. It allows the citizen to participate and contribute to bring greater solutions to any issue. The citizen's active role in planning and making decisions should be highlighted to safeguard our shared values and basic

living conditions in a progressive society. In addition, conducting purposeful public participation is a way of gathering inputs from a wide spectrum of stakeholder interests which results in a wide range of views in producing meaningful involvement and social inclusion for all citizens regardless of national origin, sexual orientation, income, race, with respect to the development, implementation, and decisions made through the public participation process. Eventually, public participation in project planning and implementation is necessary to ensure the best use of given resources in producing sustainable projects.

Every territorial unit, including municipalities, which are regarded local social systems, has development as a primary purpose. Because of its social nature, it places a premium on involvement and social communication in the local development process. The concept of participation in this context has been described inconclusively in the subject literature, and thus may refer to: social participation – individual participation in collective actions undertaken in communities (in the process of forming and functioning local civic groups and non-governmental organizations, volunteering), public participation (civic, vertical, participatory management) – engaging individuals in collective actions undertaken in communities (in the process of forming and functioning local civic groups and non-governmental organizations), and public participation (civic, vertical, participatory management (Olejniczak, Dorota Bednarska, 2018).

Public participation is very important in planning process of any Local Government Unit in the Philippines. Particularly, the Local Government Unit of South Upi, in Maguindanao, encourages public participation on its project planning and implementations. Through citizen participation with the help of different partner agencies, stakeholders, barangay officials and Civil Society Organizations and the conduct of barangay assemblies, the local government unit identified the issues and concerns and how to address the problem of the people and the community. However, without the people's participation on planning and implementation, projects will not be successful. Thus, the degree of people's participation in project planning and implementations must be measured to produce effective and efficient strategies on implementing sustainable projects.

The objective of this research study is to determine the degree of public participation in project planning and implementation in the Municipality of South Upi, Maguindanao, Philippines. Specifically, it sought the following:

1. Public Awareness on the projects implemented by the Local Government Unit
2. Participation of the public in planning, forum discussions and implementations; and
3. The social acceptance, willingness of the community to support in terms of benefits brought, project sustainability and addressing the needs of the people;

LITERATURE REVIEW

Residents know what is best for their communities, which is a basic principle of neighborhood planning. All too frequently. Residents, on the other hand, are forced to react to the visions of "outsiders," planners and designers with a less direct and thorough understanding of the neighborhood. This can lead to an incomplete meeting of the minds about community design, with locals limited in their ability to visually articulate their thoughts and planners and designers - however well-intentioned - limited in their understanding of the local context (Al-Khomany, Kheir, 1999).

In the Philippines, the legal structure encourages citizen participation in governance. Thousands of non-governmental groups operate in the country, interacting with the government at the national and local levels at various stages of the governance cycle. The 1987 Constitution's Articles II, X, and XIII emphasize the promotion and protection of people's rights, as well as civil society groups and platforms for "effective and reasonable participation at all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making." The 1991 Local Government Code, as well as the annual General Appropriations Act, both support and emphasize the necessity for enough space and resources (Czarina Medina-Guce and Anna Martha Galindes). Over the last four decades, the need for effective and acceptable ideas, methodologies, and instruments in development planning has grown increasingly evident and decisive among development practitioners around the world. In the Philippines, initiatives to encourage and institutionalize participatory planning have escalated, posing numerous problems to public and private sector development planners. The Philippine Rural Institutional Strengthening Program (PRISP) of the Department of Agriculture is one such program that aims to foster participatory development planning (DA). This program is primarily focused on building rural institutions, particularly local government units (LGUs). (Banzuela, S.1996).

The engagement between government and civil society through various channels to design, analyze, and implement development policies, projects, and programs is referred to as public involvement. Direct participation is possible, as well as indirect participation through lawful intermediary institutions. It must be informed and organized by its representatives. This entails freedom of association and expression. On the one side, there is freedom of expression, and on the other, there is an organized civil society. Participation of the general public is an important part of successful governance (Anonymous, N.D.).

Agencies should not be anxious that soliciting public feedback will require them to do "what the public wants," because there is no such thing as a single public. Rather, the public is made up of a variety of stakeholders with differing perspectives and concerns on a given subject. When conducting meaningful public participation, an agency will solicit input from a diverse range of stakeholders, resulting in a diverse set of perspectives and concerns, as well as fair treatment, meaningful involvement, and social inclusion for all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, or income, in the development, implementation, and decision-making processes. The willingness and ability of a sponsor agency to involve the public in the decision-making process is critical to effective public involvement. While sponsor agencies must have the abilities to think through, prepare for, and implement a public participation process, the public must also build the capacity to successfully participate in decision-making processes. If the public lacks the requisite participation abilities, even a well-designed and sincere participation process will fall short of its promise. As a result, it is critical for government entities to increase citizen participation. (Anonymous, N.D.).

Selecting the Right Level of Public Participation is a section of this guide that explores the many levels of public participation that can be used depending on the possibility for public influence on a decision. Presenting information to the public to assist them grasp the concerns, options, and solutions obtaining public comment on options or decisions through engaging with the public involving the public in the decision-making process to ensure that their concerns are taken into account throughout the process, notably in the establishment of decision criteria and options cooperating with the public to generate decision criteria.

METHODOLOGY

Method

The study follows the methods and procedures utilized in gathering information, analyzing the data, and the presentation of the instrument thru survey questionnaires, interviews, and observations to obtain data concerning the community's participation in project planning and implementation of the Local Government Unit of South Upi, Maguindanao, Philippines.

The data gathered from the survey questionnaires involving officials and employees of the local government unit including its residents therein, were statistically utilized to generate analysis, charts presentations, and appropriate interpretations.

Research Design

This research employed Descriptive Correlational Quantitative Design. According to Quaranta (2017), this type of method is undertaken when the researchers are primarily interested in describing the relationship among variables, without seeking to establish a casual connection. It sought to determine if the public is involved in the planning and implementation of the development of the community. It has also determined if the projects implemented by the LGU of South Upi benefits the needs of the public.

Research Respondents/Source of Data.

The selected research participants are Officials and employees of the LGU of South Upi and some residents of the said municipality consisting of 30 respondents using a random sampling method which relies on data collection from population members and are conveniently available to participate.

Research Instrument

The survey questionnaire is composed of 10 items which were rated by the respondents. The rating of the respondents is based on the Likert-like scaling as follows:

Scale	Descriptive Level	Interpretation
5	Very High	If the item is always observed and manifested
4	High	If the item is observed and manifested most of the time
3	Moderate	If the item is sometimes observed and manifested
2	Poor	If the item is seldom observed and manifested
1	Very Poor	If the item is never observed and manifested

Research Procedure

The following are the procedures and steps in data gathering:

- 1. Seeking permission to conduct the study.** The researchers asked for permission to conduct the study by submitting a request letter to the Municipal Mayor of the Municipality for the conduct of the study.
- 2. Administration and Distribution of the Questionnaire.** Questionnaires were distributed to some local government officials, employees and residents of South Upi, Maguindanao to obtain data for the study.
- 3. Retrieval of the Questionnaires.** All the survey questionnaires that were sent to the respondents were retrieved after having the information in the questionnaires were filled-up.
- 4. Analysis and interpretation of data.** After having been able to distribute and retrieve the questionnaires with the complete response needed, the researchers analyzed the data and interpreted the result of the study.

RESULTS

The survey questionnaires were properly tallied and tabulated and came up the following the results:

Figure 1. This shows the awareness of the respondents in terms of having LGU projects. Where, 43 % observed to be very high, while 44 % and 13 % of the respondents answered high and moderate, respectively.

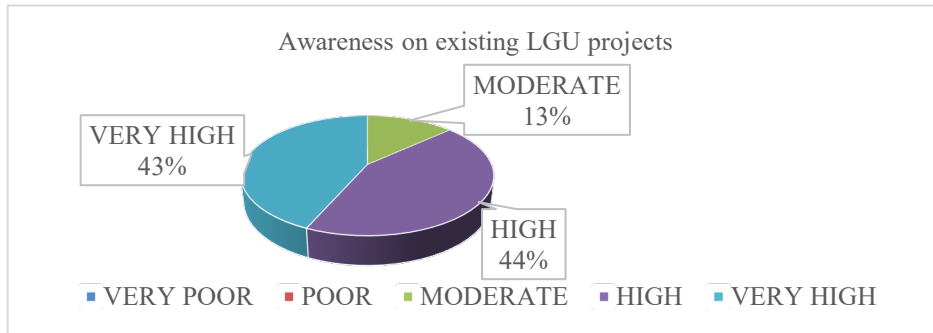


Figure 1

Figure 2. This shows that 57% of the respondents attended the assemblies conducted by the LGU for project planning, 30% responded “high” and only 13% moderately attending assemblies.

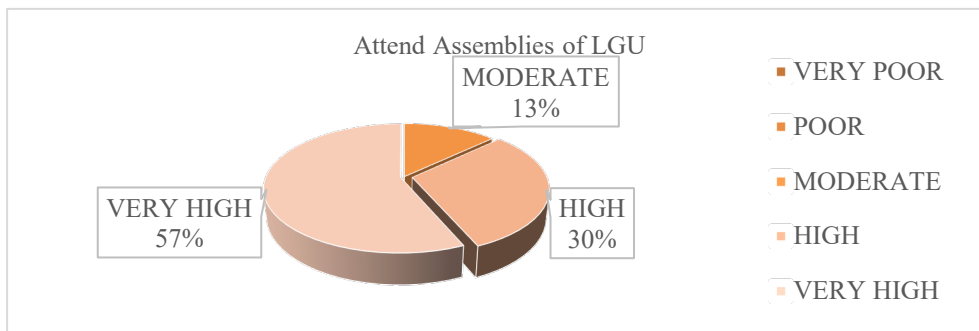


Figure 2

Figure 3. This shows the level of awareness on the projects implemented by the LGU where 50% of respondents rated “very high”, 37% rated “high” and 13% rated “moderate”.

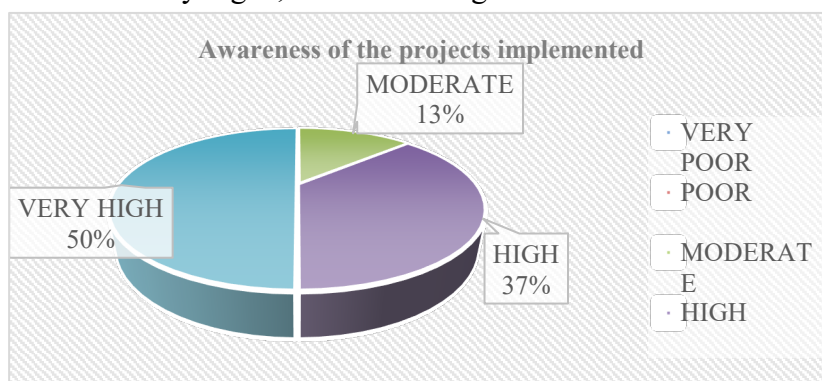


Figure 3

Figure 4. This shows that 35% of the respondents has a very high involvement in planning process of LGU projects. Meanwhile, 38% has a high involvement, 24% has a moderate involvement and 3% rated poor in involvement on the planning process.

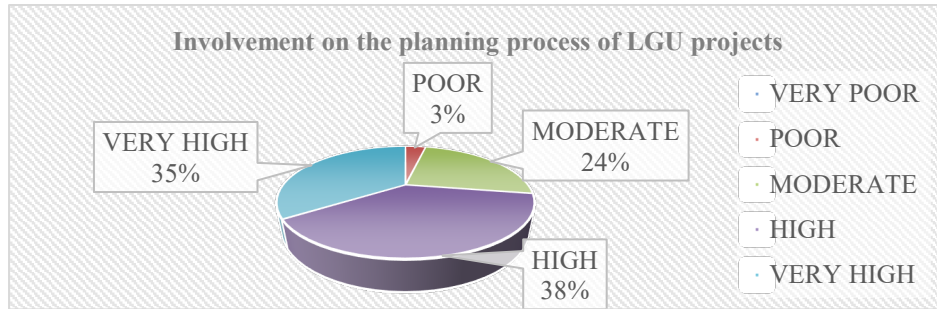


Figure 4

Figure 5. This shows that 10 out of 30 or 34% of the respondents has a very high involvement in implementation of LGU projects in the municipality. Meanwhile, there are 10 out of 30 or 35% had high involvement, and 7 out of 30 or 24% had moderate involvement. On the other hand, 2 out of 30 respondents or 7% had poor involvement in the implementation of LGU projects in the municipality

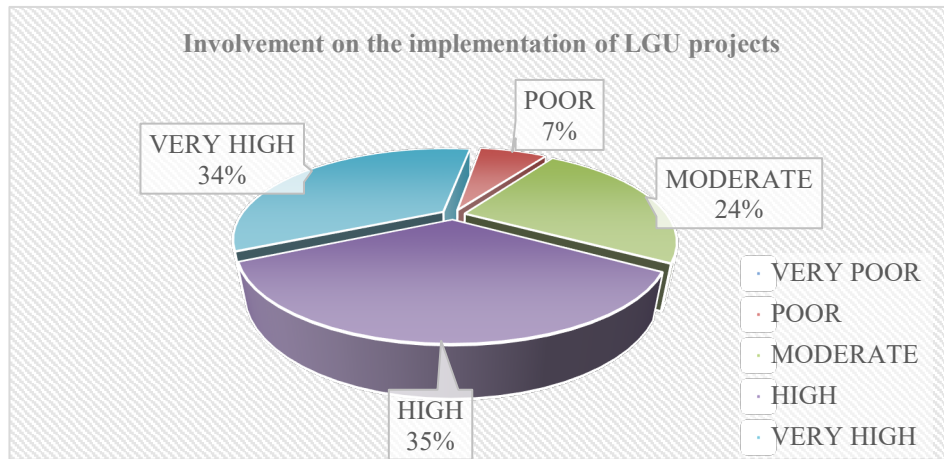


Figure 5

Figure 6. This shows that majority of the respondents or 73% answered that the community has a very high benefit to the project while 20% responded “high” and 7% responded “moderate”.

Figure 6

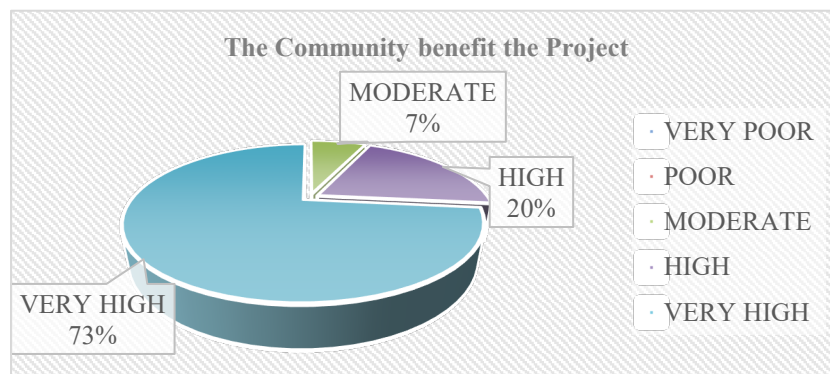


Figure 7. This shows that 15 out of 30 or 50% of the respondents responded “very high: on the sustainability of the project for the community. While there are 12 out of 30 or 40% of the respondents answered “high”. However, there are 3 out of 30 or 10 % of the respondents answered “moderate”.

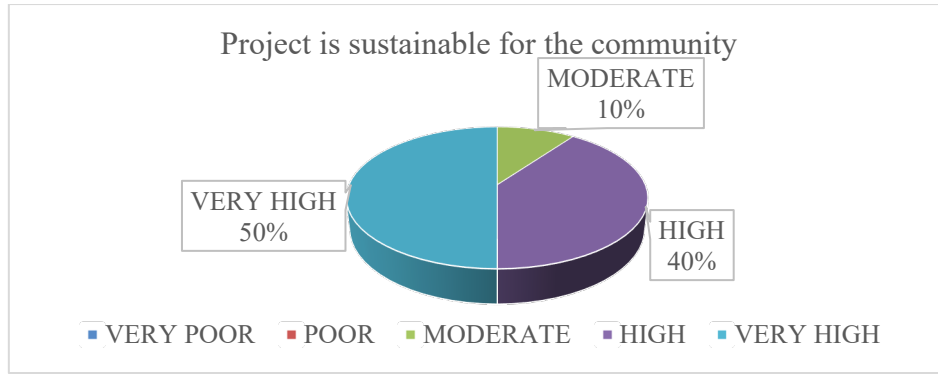


Figure 7

Figure 8. This shows that 18 out of 30 or 62% of the respondents were very willing to participate in the implementation of the LGU projects. Meanwhile there are 10 out of 30 or 35% of the respondents will most likely to participate in the conduct of the implementation. While there is 1 out of 30 or 3% answered “moderate” on the willingness to participate in the implementation of the project.

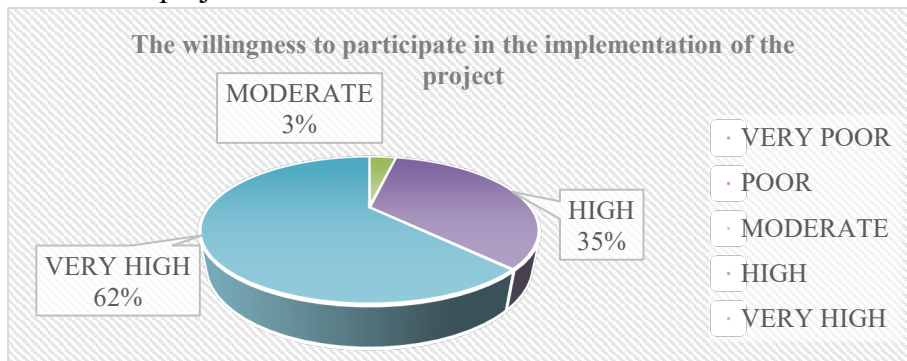


Figure 8

Figure 9. It shows that majority of the respondents or 63% answered “very high” on the willingness to commit for the sustainability of the project, 30% answered “high” and 7% answered “moderate” on the willingness to commit for the sustainability of the project in the municipality.

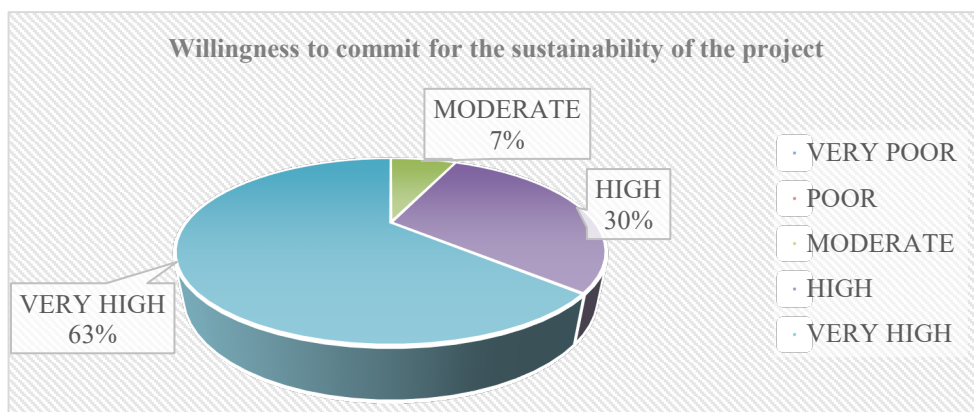


Figure 9

Figure 10. It shows that majority of the respondents or 63% answered ‘very high’, 30% answered “high” and 7% answered “moderate” in observing that the project addressed the need of the people in the municipality.

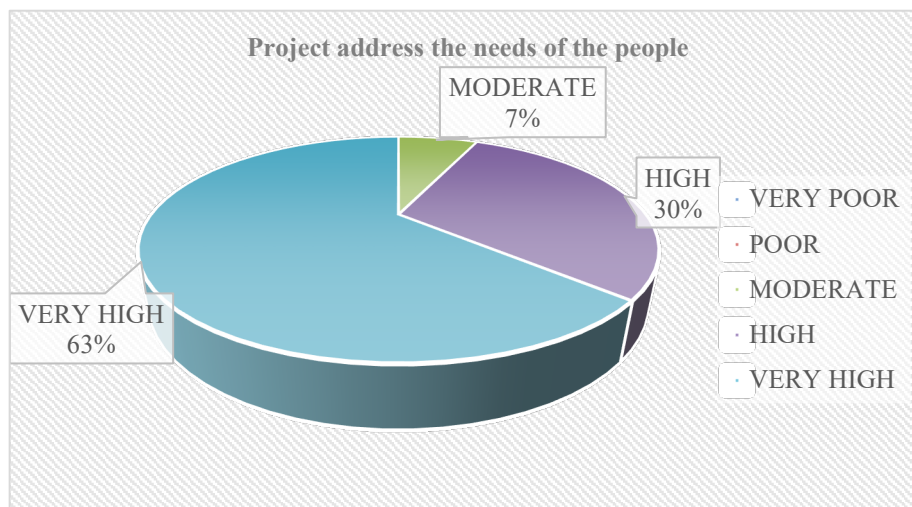


Figure 10

DISCUSSION

Based on the data gathered and after proper analysis, it was observed that the citizens of South Upi were aware on the projects that the LGU have. It is also evident that majority of the respondents were very attentive in the participation of information dissemination, consultations through the conduct of assemblies by the local government unit. Majority of its constituents were involved in the planning process and project implementations, although some have not really appreciated the process as they answered poor in the involvement in project planning and implementation.

Moreover, it has shown that the people were very much willing and committed to support for the sustainability of the project as it help addressed their needs. In order to minimize possible negative impacts, participation of the immediate and affected stakeholders in preparing projects designs were highly recommended for consideration. Accordingly, such strategy may nevertheless gain strong support from the people themselves.

CONCLUSIONS

It is important that leaders and decision-makers must have sufficient knowledge not only on the project to be implemented but as well as the needs of the people. Decisions are more implementable and long-lasting if they took into account the general interests of all stakeholders, particularly those vulnerable and disadvantaged people. As such, choices based on public engagement are perceived to be more authentic and less susceptible to charade.

It is evident in this study that the public has a high level of awareness and are very much willing to participate in the project planning and implementation as well as the sustainability of the project. However, there are still residences who were not aware of the projects being implemented. As recommendation, the Local Government Unit of South Upi may improve and strengthen more the public participation in project planning and implementation. Moreover, the local government unit may also provide trainings, seminars, assemblies, fora, community programs and other information, dissemination campaign in project planning preparation and implementation to enhance awareness and community participations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researchers would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to the Municipal Mayor of South Upi for allowing the researchers to conduct their research study. Also to the municipal engineer for sharing his invaluable ideas in project planning and implementation and the employees and some residents of the said municipality for answering the survey questions with honesty and sincerity.

Lastly, the researchers would like to thank Dr. Joel S. Pardillo, their professor in their subject, Participatory Environmental Development Planning for the guidance and support in making this research as well as the University of Mindanao Professional School.

REFERENCES

- Al-Kodmary, Kheir, (1999). Combining Artistry and technology in Participatory Community Planning.eScholarship, Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.5070/BP313113029>.
- Olejniczak, Dorota -Bednarska.(2018).Public Participation of Polish Millenials-Problems of Public Communication and Involvement in Municipal Affairs. Masarykova univerzita, Brno, Retrieved from econ.muni.cz/dol/econ/soubory/katedry/kres/4884317/proceedings2018.articles/2018.059.pdf
- Czarina Medina-Guce and Ana Martha Galindes, “ A Review of Citizen participation Issues, Responses and Prospects for Reform in Local Development Councils” Philippine Journal of Public Administration. 61 no. 1 and 2 (Jan. – Dec. 2017), pp. 51-56.
- Banzuela, S.1996. A rapid assessment of the NGO participation in agrarian reform communities in A rapid assessment: the role of NGOs in rural development, 5(1996). (Anonymous,N.D.)<http://www.oas.org/dsd/Water/Public%20Participation%20in%20basin%20projectsPagweb.pdf>
- (Anonymous,N.D.)United States Environment Protection Agency.epa.gov/[international.cooperation/ public.participation-guide-introduction-public-participation](http://international.cooperation/public.participation-guide-introduction-public-participation).