Impact Assessment of RIS Technical Training: A Community Extension Project

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Abstract – *Rural Impact Sourcing (RIS) Technical Training is a community-based technology education extended by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) in cooperation with the Local Government of Buenavista, Guimaras and Guimaras State College- Community Extension Services. Rural Impact Sourcing Technical Training aimed to bridge digital gap by providing digital access and informal skills training to the "unserved" and "underserved" communities and to increase access to digital markets and business process outsourcing (BPO) in far-flung communities with high unemployment rate and to bring jobs to the countryside. The study determined the effect of the RIS Technical Training and the beneficiaries' skills they acquired from the training. Mixed-method of research was utilized in the study. Survey questionnaire and interview were used in gathering data. Results show that out of 24 beneficiaries, 62.50% (15) were into the business process outsourcing sector with clients abroad, 3 or 12.50% were employed by the LGU while the remainder, 6 persons (25%) were still finding jobs. The average income of beneficiaries with jobs was about forty-one thousand pesos (₱41,000.00). With the positive results of the project, it is recommended to replicate this project to other municipalities in the province to bridge digital gap to the communities. It is also suggested to conduct more ICT trainings to be used by the beneficiaries to earn additional income even though they are at home.*

Keywords – *Guimaras State College, impact assessment, RIS, community extension, Buenavista*.

INTRODUCTION

The Guimaras State College (GSC) is a state-funded institution tasked to provide quality professional and technological training in the Western Visayas area. Its vision is to provide its clients with quality and excellent education and green technology generation. Through this vision, it will also support agri-eco tourism development program of Guimaras province. To attain this noble mission, Community Extension programs were formulated to carry out and answer the educational and technological needs within its service area [1], which is aimed to help the community to be progressive [2]. This area is mandated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) [3].

As a State College, GSC is committed to the transformation of the social well-being of the people, thus, it faces many challenges. The primary challenge is how it can effectively respond to the pressing needs of the province and the region, particularly in poverty alleviation and sustainability of socio-economic development efforts through its vision and mission. Through its four-fold function of instruction, research, extension and production, it develops programs that could bring development in the region. However, its effort to provide knowledge and technology must not be limited only to those who are capable of going to school, but it should reach the people even up to the region's borders and beyond.

Local economic development is among the government's effort to build up economic growth. It includes poverty alleviation of the rural communities by capacitating their people technically in order for them to be financially capable [4]. The government is not alone in the economic improvement quest. The United Nations included poverty alleviation among its sustainable development agenda. Thus, encourages private firms to include in their social responsibility pro-poor initiatives aimed at alleviating the service communities' economic well-being [5].

The Rural Impact Sourcing Technical Training aimed to bridge digital gap by providing digital access and informal skills training to the "unserved" and "underserved" communities and to increase access to digital markets and business process outsourcing (BPO) in far- flung communities with high unemployment rate and to bring jobs to the countryside. The training covers Web Research and Data Entry, Transcription, Email and Calendar Scheduling, Chat Support / Help Desk / Technical Support [6].

The project was implemented on June 2018 -

September 2018. Impact assessment was done 6 months after the end of the project to determine if the project had a positive impact in their respective lives as virtual assistants and to the Buenavistahanons as well, hence this study was conducted.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper hopes to determine the effect of the extension project (RIS Technical Training) and the application of the beneficiaries' skills acquired from the training. Specifically, this study sought to find out: (1) who among the respondents landed a job after the training; (2) what is the total income generated by the respondents; and (3) how RIS Technical Training as Extension Program impact the lives of the beneficiaries.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

A mixed-method research design was used in the study. Data gathering was done through survey and interview with the project beneficiaries, and document report from the DICT-Guimaras.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Municipality of Buenavista, Province of Guimaras, Philippines wherethe beneficiaries of Rural Impact Sourcing Technical Training community extension project resides.

Sampling Procedure

The respondents of the study were all the 24 Buenavistahanons as beneficiaries of the Rural Impact Sourcing Technical Training.

Data Collection

A researcher-made questionnaire was used to gather data and information. The questionnaire is composed of three parts, the profile of the respondents, location of clients and the open-ended questions about the impact of the project to the lives of the beneficiaries.

The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach Alpha [7]. Validity test of the instrument yielded 0.91, which is above 0.7 [8]. Thus, the questionnaire was considered reliable.

Data Analysis

Processing of the data gathered in this study was done through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) making use of the following statistical tools: frequencies, mean, percentage and the paired t-test. Prior to conducting a t-test the interview and responses to open-ended questions were categorized into four parts corresponding to a 4-point Likert scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

The variables included in the profile of the respondents are Sex, Civil Status, Age, Course and Job / Work.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

	f	%
Sex		
Male	13	54.17
Female	11	45.83
Total	24	100.00
Civil Status		
Single	15	62.50
Married	9	37.50
Total	24	100.00
Age		
1-10	0	0.00
11-20	1	4.17
21-30	15	62.50
31-40	6	25.00
41-50	2	8.33
Total	24	100.00
Course		
BS Social Work	1	4.17
BSN	1	4.17
BS Com Sci	1	4.17
BS Math	1	4.17
BS Elec. Eng'g	1	4.17
BEED	2	8.33
BSBA	5	20.83
BSIT	8	33.33
BSAT	1	4.17
Tec Voc / Associate	1	4.17
Degree	1	4.17
BIT	1	4.17
DIT		
Total	24	100.00
Job / Work		
Unemployed	6	25.00
LGU	9	37.50
Private Sector	9	37.50
Total	24	100.00

Source: DICT – Guimaras

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents, which shows that majority of the respondent - beneficiaries are male, most of them are single and belonged to 21 – 40 years old age range. Most of the respondents, about 46% have IT background having studied either BSIT (33.33%), BS Com Sci (4.17%), BIT (4.17%) or DIT (4.17%) while about 21% of them have business background (BSBA) and the rest, about 33%, were a mix of BS Electrical Engineering, Nursing, Social Work, Education, and Vocational degrees.

Table 2**. Employment Status**

Job/Work		
Private Sector (BPOs)	15	62.50
LGU	3	12.50
Unemployed	6	25.00
Total	24	100.00

Source: DICT – Guimaras

Table 2 shows the employment status of the respondents-beneficiaries where 75% landed a job already, 62.50% of them are into the business process outsourcing (BPOs) and 12.50% are employed in the local government unit (LGU); while the remaining 25% are still yet to land a job. It is good to note that those who are into the BPOs have international clients such as GTARRealStar – Royal Canadian Realty Brokerage, Ozlon Digital Marketing, Guru.com to name some.

Table 3. **Income Range of the Beneficiaries with Jobs**

Salary (PhP)	f
<10,000	
10,000-20,000	3
20,000-30,000	0
30,000-40,000	4
40,000-50,000	6
50,000-60,000	5
>60,0000	
Total	18
Average Income	≈41,000

Table 3 shows the salary range of the respondent-beneficiaries who landed a job. Their average income almost equal to PhP41,000.00. This implies that the income of the beneficiaries with jobs could really augment their family expenses.

Besides the financial benefits, the respondents were also asked on the other aspects of their lives that the training had affected them. These aspects are their personality, social and intellectual, and professional opportunities. The following data discusses these aspects. Paired t-test was used to analyze the data obtained.

Table 4. **Personality/Intellectual Impact**

	A	B
Mean	2.917	2.260
Variance	0.286	0.193
Observations	24	24
df	23	23
t-value	7.092	
p-value	0.000 ($3.18x10^{-7}$)	
t-value (crit.)	2.069	

A = after the training; B = before the training

Table 4 shows that there was a significant difference in the personality before the training (μ = 2.260, σ = 0.193) and after the training (μ = 2.917, σ =0.286); with $t_{(23)}$= 7.092 and p = 0.000($3.18x10^{-7}$). These results suggest that the training has positive effect on the respondent's personality. These differences may be attributed to the respondents' perception that they have gained the ability to have a better grip on life with the acquired knowledge after the training [9]. They may have gained the strength, and somehow a new autonomy to pursue their dreams and ambitions [10].

Table 5. **Social Consciousness Impact**

	A	B
Mean	2.757	2.194
Variance	0.249	0.163
Observations	24	24
df	23	23
t-value	6.199	
p-value	0.000 (2.52×10^{-6})	
t-value (crit.)	2.069	

A = after the training
B = before the training

Table 5 also shows the significant difference in the social attitude of the respondents before the training (μ = 2.194, σ = 0.163) and after the training (μ = 2.757, σ = 0.249); with $t_{(23)}$ = 6.199 and p = 0.000 ($2.52x10^{-6}$). The difference suggests that the training has positively affected the respondents' social point of view. It can be inferred that the respondents are more aware now of their impact in the society and the responsibilities along with it as they perform their job [11].

Table 6. **Opportunity Outlook**

	A	B
Mean	2.979	2.219
Variance	0.244	0.263
Observations	24	24
df	23	23
t-value	6.975	
p-value	0.000 ($4.14\ x\ 10^{-7}$)	
t-value (crit.)	2.069	

A = after the training; B = before the training

Table 6 suggests a significant difference in the means of the respondents' opportunity outlook before (μ = 2.219, σ = 0.263) and after (μ = 2.979, σ = 0.244) the training; with $t_{(23)} = 6.975$, $p = 0.000$ ($4.14x10^{-7}$). The results put forward that the training significantly affected the respondents' outlook on future opportunities that may come upon them. It can be inferred that the respondents found the training helped them decide on the career they wish to pursue [12].

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based from the results of the study, the RIS Technical Training project brought positive impact on the life of the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries applied the skills they learned from the project in Web Research and Data Entry, Transcription, Email and Calendar Scheduling, Chat Support / Help Desk / Technical Support in seeking a job. The average monthly income of the respondents is very substantial which can be a big help to augment families' needs. The impact of the training on the lives of the respondents is, as well, not limited to the financial aspect. The training has affected the respondents in their emotional, intellectual, and social well-being. They have gained the desire to achieve and be better members of the society [13].

With the positive results of the project, it is recommended to replicate this project to other municipalities in the province to bridge digital gap to the communities. It is also suggested to conduct more ICT trainings to be used by the beneficiaries to earn additional income even though they are at home.

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