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The Capacity of Barangays in Participatory Rural-Urban Planning and Localizing the SDGs: Evidence from Kolambugan, Lanao del Norte, Philippines

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Abstract

Abstract: Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) play a vital role in localizing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the grassroots level. This study looks into the capacity of selected barangays in the Municipality of Kolambugan, Lanao del Norte namely Baybay, Libertad and Poblacion, in the realms of participatory rural-urban planning and SDG awareness. Using a mixed-methods research design, data were gathered through surveys, focus-group discussions, and document review and focused on local planning practices, the participation of the stakeholders and SDG awareness. Results show that the level of community involvement is strong as Libertad (4.23) possesses a high sense of involvement, Poblacion (3.90) expresses a significant involvement, and Baybay (3.30) exhibits an adequate level of involvement. However, there are limited levels of awareness of SDGs, with Barangay Poblacion reporting moderate awareness (2.79) while Libertad (2.48) and Baybay (2.45) exhibiting low levels of awareness. The findings highlight the need to implement policy interventions aimed at capacity-building efforts, institutional support or reinforcement, and quality improvement in technical assistance with simultaneous promotion of non-discriminatory involvement of marginalized sectors towards the more effective integration of Sustainable Development Goals into the development planning at barangay levels.

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are officially established by 193 United Nations Member States in 2015 within the context of Agenda 2030, are a list of a hundred and sixty-nine goals and seventeen objectives (Wadhwani & Malpani, 2023). They have been established to face major issues affecting the world, such as alleviating poverty, enhancing social integrality, stimulating economic development, protecting the environment, and developing competent governance frameworks (Weiland et al., 2021). The interdependence of the objectives makes the results of one area often trigger developments in other areas. However, effective implementation of the SDGs requires adaptation at the contextual levels, strong partnership networks between the governments, civil society players and the business sector and between individual players.

Although the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) present a universal framework of sustainable development, the possibility of its successful implementation depends on the translation and localization. The end product of all global development goals is the successful local action and effective governance (Nur Ullah et al., 2022; Reinar & Lundberg, 2024; Sever et al., 2025). Even with concerted efforts on the part of the nation-state authorities and international agencies, the process of organizing, cultivating, and sustaining community participation, in particular, at the grassroots level of the community remains a perennial challenge.

Literature on the SDGs follows a national and regional policy-focused approach, and there is a lack of empirical research on how the goals on a global scale are translated into local practices and operationalization at the grassroots (Mortimer et al., 2023). The limited number of research specifically on the localization of SDGs in the Philippine context highlights the significance of more localized studies to explore the capacity, participation and institutional mechanisms of the barangay governments in integrating and localizing the SDGs in community-based development planning and implementation.

In response to this gap, this study looks into the ability of specific Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) to align their development initiatives with participatory rural-urban planning concepts and the level of awareness of the Barangay Development Council - Technical Working Group (BDC-TWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The theoretical foundations of this approach rest on the theory of participatory planning which anticipates the proactive participation of various stakeholders in the decision-making process.

This will ensure that the community involvement is fully considered during the planning process thus giving outcome that analyzes the local needs in addition to increasing accountability and sustainable and inclusive development. Empirical studies illustrate that participatory planning is an effective tool in maximizing the use of available resources, strengthening the sense of local ownership of the developmental projects, and the progress towards the SDGs, especially the ones related to sustainable communities (SDG 11), reduced inequalities (SDG 10) and inclusive governance (SDG 16) (Davis et al., 2025; Sebunya & Gichuki, 2024).

Research Method

A mixed-methods research design was used in this study to examine practices of the sampled Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) in participatory rural-urban planning and localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In purposive sampling, the participants were chosen in terms of population size, land area, rural-urban characteristics and availability of the existing governance initiatives that led to the selection of 74 participants who were members of the Barangay Development Council-Technical Working Group (BDC-TWG) and Barangay Council members (Campbell et al., 2020). The research used a case study method to conduct a study on the three component barangays in the Municipalities of Kolambugan with the highest share of National Tax Allotment (NTA) in 2024: Baybay, Libertad and Poblacion. This structure enabled the comprehensive study of the local governance practices, community involvement and inclusion of SDGs in the barangay-level development planning process (Zabala, 2024).

This study used a series of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to collect data to have in-depth information on local planning processes, resource allocation, and participatory governance practices at the chosen barangays (Adhikari, 2025). In order to evaluate the performance of the Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) of participatory governance, a tailor-made assessment tool has been formulated which is based on the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLGB) framework adjusted to the Barangay setting. The instrument was well structured to encompass the main areas of governance such as social equity, economic development, and environmental management so that alignment with the local administrative practices is guaranteed as well as the goals of SDG localization. The tool was also tested by the content validation by the experts in the field of local governance and development planning so that it could be relevant, clear and reliable in terms of measuring the barangay level of participatory governance (Del Pilar et al., 2024).

Moreover, a structured survey was conducted to determine the level of knowledge and awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among the members of the Barangay Development Council-Technical working group (BDC-TWG). The quantitative data obtained out of the survey and the assessment tool were analyzed using the Jeffrey Amazing Statistics Program (JASP) which yields descriptive and inferential statistics whereas the qualitative data obtained out of the focus group discussions (FGDs) were thematically analyzed and produced a subtle comprehension upon local governance practices, challenges and opportunities (Maeda et al., 2025). This mixed-methodology also helped to conduct extensive assessment of the technical capacity and the participatory relationships within the barangays, thus making the instruments used in the study to be valid and reliable.

Results and Discussion

Stakeholder Participation and Inclusivity in Rural-Urban Planning

Table 1 presents the level of stakeholder participation and inclusivity in rural–urban planning across the three selected barangays. The findings reveal variations in the implementation of participatory governance among the study areas. Barangay Libertad

obtained the highest overall mean score (M = 4.23, SD = 0.64), indicating a Very High level of stakeholder participation, followed by Barangay Poblacion (M = 3.90, SD = 0.75) with a High level of participation. In contrast, Barangay Baybay recorded the lowest overall mean (M = 3.30, SD = 0.60), which falls within the Moderate category. These findings indicate that participatory planning practices are more consistently implemented in Libertad and Poblacion than in Baybay.

Table 1. Mean Score for the Participation in Decision-Making and Planning Processes

No.	Statement	Baybay	Libertad	Poblacion
1	I am regularly informed about the different barangay activities.	3.36	4.17	3.80
2	The barangay leaders actively seek the opinions and suggestions of residents before making decisions.	3.14	4.25	3.80
3	There are sufficient opportunities for residents to participate in barangay meetings and assemblies.	3.29	4.50	4.13
4	I feel that my voice and opinions are considered in barangay decisions.	3.21	3.75	3.67
5	Barangay meetings and assemblies are held regularly to discuss local issues.	3.36	4.50	3.80
6	The barangay actively involves marginalized groups (e.g., women, youth, elderly) in decision-making and planning processes.	3.50	4.42	4.00
7	I feel that the barangay leadership is responsive to the needs and concerns of the community.	3.29	4.33	3.87
8	The financial expenditures of the barangay are regularly disclosed to the public.	3.14	4.08	4.07
9	The barangay fosters a spirit of cooperation and collaboration among residents in local development planning and addressing local issues.	3.36	4.17	3.80
10	The barangay promotes equal opportunities for participation in local planning procedures.	3.36	4.08	4.00
Overall Average		**3.30**	**4.23**	**3.90**
Standard Deviation		**0.60**	**0.64**	**0.75**
Interpretation		**Moderate**	**Very High**	**High**

Scale: 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low; 1.81 – 2.60 Low; 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate; 3.42 – 4.20 High; 4.21 – 5.00 Very High

At the indicator level, respondents from Barangay Libertad reported the highest levels of agreement across almost all dimensions of stakeholder participation. The highest-rated

indicators were the regular conduct of barangay assemblies and the opportunity for residents to participate in these meetings, both receiving a mean score of 4.50. Other highly rated indicators included the inclusion of marginalized sectors in planning and decision-making (M = 4.42), responsiveness of barangay officials to community concerns (M = 4.33), consultation before decision-making (M = 4.25), and equal opportunities for all community members to participate in local planning activities (M = 4.25). These consistently high ratings suggest that participatory activities are routinely implemented and widely recognized by respondents.

Barangay Poblacion likewise demonstrated a relatively high level of stakeholder participation, with favorable ratings across most indicators. The highest mean score was observed for opportunities to participate in barangay meetings (M = 4.13), followed by transparency in financial disclosure (M = 4.07) and equal participation opportunities, as well as the inclusion of marginalized groups, both scoring 4.00. Most remaining indicators were rated between 3.73 and 3.93, indicating that participatory practices are generally well established. However, the comparatively lower score regarding the extent to which residents' opinions are considered during decision-making (M = 3.67) suggests that there remains room for improving community influence in local planning processes.

Compared with the other barangays, Baybay exhibited the lowest level of stakeholder participation, with an overall mean score of 3.30. Among the assessed indicators, the inclusion of marginalized groups received the highest rating (M = 3.50), followed by information dissemination, cooperation among community members, and equal participation opportunities (each M = 3.36). Conversely, the lowest ratings were recorded for public consultation before decision-making and financial disclosure (both M = 3.14), while respondents also assigned relatively modest ratings to the consideration of community opinions (M = 3.21). These findings indicate that although participatory mechanisms are present in Baybay, their implementation appears less comprehensive than in Libertad and Poblacion.

Overall, the results demonstrate that stakeholder participation differs across the three barangays. Libertad consistently recorded the highest ratings across most participation indicators, followed by Poblacion, while Baybay generally obtained moderate ratings. The observed differences suggest varying levels of implementation of participatory planning practices among the selected barangays, particularly in relation to community consultation, transparency, and citizen involvement in local decision-making.

Participatory Governance and Social Equity Outcomes

Table 2 presents the respondents' assessment of participatory governance and social equity outcomes across the three selected barangays. Overall, Barangay Libertad obtained the highest mean score (M = 4.26, SD = 0.47), indicating a Very High level of governance performance in promoting inclusive institutions and equitable public services. Barangay Poblacion followed with an overall mean score of 4.10 (SD = 0.72), which falls within the High category, while Barangay Baybay recorded the lowest mean score (M = 3.30, SD = 0.49),

indicating a Moderate level of performance. These findings suggest that the availability and functionality of governance institutions and public service mechanisms vary considerably among the three barangays.

Table 2. Mean Score for the Social Equity Indicators

No.	Statement	Baybay	Libertad	Poblacion
1	Our barangay has an organized Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (BADAC).	3.29	4.08	4.07
2	Our barangay has an organized Barangay Peace and Order Committee (BPOC).	3.14	4.17	4.13
3	Our barangay has an organized Barangay Peacekeeping Action Team (BPAT).	3.21	4.17	4.27
4	The Lupong-Tagapamayapa in our barangay is functional.	3.21	4.42	4.13
5	Our barangay has an organized Barangay Health and Emergency Response Team (BHERT).	3.23	4.25	4.07
6	I have received or seen posters or any IEC materials containing active telephone and/or cell phone numbers of the Barangay emergency hotline.	3.00	4.00	3.73
7	Our barangay has an established VAW Desk and designated Barangay VAW Desk Officer.	3.36	4.42	4.27
8	Our barangay has an approved Gender and Development Plan.	3.21	4.08	3.80
9	Our Barangay Health Station/ Center is functional and accessible.	3.56	4.50	4.13
10	Our Barangay has an Early Childhood Care and Development Center (ECCDC).	3.93	4.33	3.93
11	Our barangay has an organized Barangay Development Council (BDC).	3.21	4.33	4.33
12	Our barangay has an organized Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC).	3.21	4.42	4.33
Overall Average		**3.30**	**4.26**	**4.10**
Standard Deviation		**0.49**	**0.47**	**0.72**
Interpretation		**Moderate**	**Very High**	**High**

Scale: 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low; 1.81 – 2.60 Low; 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate; 3.42 – 4.20 High; 4.21 – 5.00 Very High

A detailed examination of the indicators shows that Barangay Libertad consistently achieved the highest ratings across most governance and social equity measures. Respondents highly rated the functionality of the Barangay Health Station (M = 4.50), the existence of an organized Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) (M = 4.42),

the establishment of a Violence Against Women (VAW) Desk (M = 4.42), and the organization of the Barangay Development Council (BDC) (M = 4.33). Similarly, the availability of an Early Childhood Care and Development Center (ECCDC) and other mandated governance structures also received high evaluations, indicating that essential institutional mechanisms are well established and accessible within the barangay.

Barangay Poblacion likewise demonstrated a high level of institutional performance, with an overall mean score of 4.10. The highest ratings were observed for the organized Barangay Development Council (M = 4.33), the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (M = 4.33), the functional Barangay Health Station (M = 4.13), and the establishment of a VAW Desk (M = 4.27). Most governance indicators were rated between 3.80 and 4.33, suggesting that the barangay has generally developed functional governance structures that support equitable service delivery and community welfare.

In contrast, Barangay Baybay obtained an overall mean score of 3.30, reflecting a moderate level of governance and social equity outcomes. Among the assessed indicators, the Early Childhood Care and Development Center (ECCDC) received the highest rating (M = 3.93), followed by the functionality of the Barangay Health Station (M = 3.56) and the allocation of a VAW Desk (M = 3.36). However, relatively lower ratings were recorded for the existence of an approved Gender and Development (GAD) Plan (M = 3.21), the organization of the Barangay Development Council (M = 3.21), and the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (M = 3.21). These findings indicate that although key governance institutions are available, several organizational and service-related mechanisms require further strengthening to improve equitable access to public services.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that participatory governance and social equity outcomes are strongest in Barangay Libertad, followed by Barangay Poblacion, whereas Barangay Baybay exhibited comparatively lower levels of institutional functionality and service accessibility. The differences observed across the three barangays suggest varying capacities in establishing governance structures that support inclusive participation and equitable public service delivery.

Influence of Participation on Local Economic Development

Table 3 presents the respondents' assessment of the influence of participatory governance on local economic development across the three selected barangays. Overall, Barangay Libertad obtained the highest mean score (M = 3.99, SD = 0.89), followed by Barangay Poblacion (M = 3.82, SD = 0.69), with both barangays classified as having a High level of performance. In comparison, Barangay Baybay recorded an overall mean score of 3.05 (SD = 0.48), indicating a Moderate level. These findings suggest that budgeting practices, financial transparency, and resource allocation are perceived to be more effectively implemented in Libertad and Poblacion than in Baybay.

Table 3. Mean Score for the Economic Development Indicators

No.	Statement	Baybay	Libertad	Poblacion
1	The Barangay Full Disclosure Board is installed in 3 conspicuous places.	2.64	3.92	3.80
2	The Barangay Citizens' Charter is posted in 3 conspicuous places.	2.57	3.92	3.80
3	The barangay has allocated funds for Senior Citizens.	3.50	4.17	3.87
4	The barangay has allocated funds for Persons with Disability (PWD)	3.43	3.92	3.93
5	The barangay has allocated funds for 20% Barangay Development Fund	3.07	4.08	4.13
6	The barangay has allocated funds for 1% BCPC Fund	3.14	4.08	3.67
7	The barangay has allocated funds for 5% GAD Fund	3.07	3.67	3.67
8	The barangay has allocated funds for 5% DRRM Fund	3.07	4.08	3.73
9	We have an approved Annual Barangay Youth Investment Plan (ABYIP) CY 2024	2.93	4.17	4.00
10	We have an approved Annual Budget CY 2024	3.14	4.08	4.00
11	We have an approved Annual Investment Plan CY 2024	3.14	4.08	3.60
12	We have an existing Livelihood Program in the barangay	2.93	3.75	3.67
Overall Average		**3.05**	**3.99**	**3.82**
Standard Deviation		**0.48**	**0.89**	**0.69**
Interpretation		**Moderate**	**High**	**High**

Scale: 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low; 1.81 – 2.60 Low; 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate; 3.42 – 4.20 High; 4.21 – 5.00 Very High

A closer examination of the indicators reveals that Barangay Libertad consistently achieved high ratings across most economic development measures. The highest-rated indicators included the availability of an approved Annual Barangay Youth Investment Plan (ABYIP) (M = 4.17), allocation of funds for senior citizens (M = 4.17), and the approved Annual Budget and Annual Investment Plan (both M = 4.08). Respondents also gave favorable ratings to the installation of the Barangay Full Disclosure Board and the Barangay Citizens' Charter (both M = 3.92), reflecting positive perceptions of financial transparency and planning practices. Although the existence of livelihood programs received a relatively lower score (M = 3.75), it remained within the high category, indicating that economic development initiatives are generally well supported in the barangay.

Barangay Poblacion likewise demonstrated a high level of performance, with an overall mean score of 3.82. The highest ratings were observed for the allocation of the 20%

Barangay Development Fund (M = 4.13), the approved Annual Budget (M = 4.00), and the approved Annual Barangay Youth Investment Plan (M = 4.00). Other indicators, including fund allocation for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, disaster risk reduction, and the Barangay Citizens' Charter, were consistently rated between 3.67 and 3.93. These findings indicate that respondents generally perceived financial planning and resource allocation mechanisms to be functioning effectively, although livelihood development initiatives received relatively lower evaluations (M = 3.67).

In contrast, Barangay Baybay recorded the lowest overall mean score (M = 3.05), reflecting a moderate level of perceived economic governance. Among the assessed indicators, the allocation of funds for senior citizens obtained the highest rating (M = 3.50), followed by fund allocation for persons with disabilities (M = 3.43) and the approval of the Annual Budget and Annual Investment Plan (both M = 3.14). However, relatively lower ratings were observed for the Barangay Citizens' Charter (M = 2.57), the Barangay Full Disclosure Board (M = 2.64), livelihood programs (M = 2.93), and the approved Annual Barangay Youth Investment Plan (M = 2.93). These results suggest that while essential budgeting mechanisms are present, improvements in financial transparency, public access to governance information, and community-based economic programs remain necessary.

Overall, the findings indicate that perceptions of local economic development are closely associated with the implementation of transparent budgeting, financial planning, and resource allocation mechanisms (Azhar et al., 2025). Libertad consistently achieved the highest ratings across most indicators, followed by Poblacion, whereas Baybay demonstrated comparatively lower levels of performance, particularly in financial transparency and livelihood-related initiatives.

Participatory Planning and Environmental Management Practices

A closer examination of the indicators shows that Barangay Poblacion consistently achieved high ratings across all environmental management measures. The highest-rated indicators were the existence of a functional Barangay Ecological Solid Waste Management Committee (BESWMC) (M = 4.33), the functionality of the Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee (BDRRMC) (M = 4.33), and the regular conduct of community clean-up drives (M = 4.33). High ratings were also observed for the implementation of waste segregation ordinances (M = 4.13), the dissemination of information, education, and communication (IEC) materials on environmental protection (M = 4.13), and the availability of Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) (M = 4.07). These findings indicate that environmental governance initiatives have been broadly institutionalized within the barangay.

Table 4. Mean Score for the Environmental Management Indicators

No.	Statement	Baybay	Libertad	Poblacion
1	Our barangay has a functional Barangay Ecological Solid Waste Management Committee (BESWMC)	3.64	4.25	4.33
2	Our barangay has conducted input session/ capacity development on RA 9003 and other environmental policies	3.42	4.25	4.20
3	Our barangay has Material Recovery Facility/ Facilities (MRF)	3.64	3.83	4.07
4	Our barangay has enacted a Barangay Ordinance or similar issuance on the segregation of wastes at-source	3.14	4.08	4.13
5	Our barangay has a functional Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee (BDRRMC**)**	3.50	4.25	4.33
6	Our barangay is regularly conducting clean-up drives	3.79	4.33	4.33
7	I have received or seen posters or any IEC materials containing the promotion of environmental protection.	2.50	4.08	4.13
Overall Average		**3.38**	**4.16**	**4.20**
Standard Deviation		**0.45**	**0.47**	**0.50**
Interpretation		**Moderate**	**High**	**High**

Scale: 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low; 1.81 – 2.60 Low; 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate; 3.42 – 4.20 High; 4.21 – 5.00 Very High

A closer examination of the indicators shows that Barangay Poblacion consistently achieved high ratings across all environmental management measures. The highest-rated indicators were the existence of a functional Barangay Ecological Solid Waste Management Committee (BESWMC) (M = 4.33), the functionality of the Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee (BDRRMC) (M = 4.33), and the regular conduct of community clean-up drives (M = 4.33). High ratings were also observed for the implementation of waste segregation ordinances (M = 4.13), the dissemination of information, education, and communication (IEC) materials on environmental protection (M = 4.13), and the availability of Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) (M = 4.07). These findings indicate that environmental governance initiatives have been broadly institutionalized within the barangay.

Barangay Libertad likewise demonstrated a high level of environmental management, with an overall mean score of 4.16. Respondents highly rated the regular implementation of community clean-up drives (M = 4.33), the functionality of both the BESWMC and BDRRMC (each M = 4.25), and capacity-building activities related to Republic Act No. 9003 and other environmental policies (M = 4.25). Other indicators, including waste segregation ordinances and the dissemination of IEC materials, also received favorable evaluations (M = 4.08), while

the availability of Material Recovery Facilities obtained a slightly lower, yet still high, mean score (M = 3.83). Overall, the results indicate that environmental management programs are actively implemented and supported by institutional mechanisms within the barangay.

Compared with the other two barangays, Baybay recorded the lowest overall mean score (M = 3.38), reflecting a moderate level of environmental management performance. The highest ratings were observed for regular community clean-up drives (M = 3.79) and the availability of functional BESWMCs and Material Recovery Facilities (both M = 3.64). Moderate ratings were also reported for the functionality of the BDRRMC (M = 3.50) and environmental capacity-building activities (M = 3.42). However, the dissemination of environmental IEC materials received the lowest rating (M = 2.50), while the implementation of waste segregation ordinances was also relatively modest (M = 3.14). These findings suggest that although basic environmental management structures have been established, greater emphasis is needed on environmental awareness, public information dissemination, and community engagement in environmental initiatives (Masongsong, 2024).

Overall, the findings demonstrate that participatory planning and environmental management practices are more effectively implemented in Poblacion and Libertad than in Baybay. While all three barangays have established essential environmental management mechanisms, differences remain in the implementation of environmental education, community participation, and institutional support for environmental governance.

Knowledge and Awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Table 5 presents the level of knowledge and awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among Barangay Development Council–Technical Working Group (BDC–TWG) members across the three selected barangays. Overall, Barangay Libertad obtained the highest mean score (M = 4.42, SD = 0.43), indicating a Very High level of SDG knowledge and awareness. Barangay Poblacion followed with an overall mean score of 4.14 (SD = 0.59), while Barangay Baybay recorded the lowest overall mean (M = 3.77, SD = 0.48), with both barangays falling within the High category. These findings indicate that BDC–TWG members generally possess a high level of familiarity with the SDGs, although the extent of their knowledge varies across the three barangays.

Table 5. Mean Score for the Knowledge and Awareness on SDGs of the BDC-TWG

No.	Statement	Baybay	Libertad	Poblacion
1	I have heard of the term "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)"	2.00	2.17	1.93
2	I am aware that the SDGs are part of a global agenda for sustainable development.	1.79	1.83	1.87
3	I am aware that the SDGs were adopted by the United Nations in 2015.	1.71	1.83	2.00
4	I am aware that there are 17 SDGs.	2.07	2.25	2.00

5	I understand the connection between SDGs and my community's development.	1.71	1.83	1.93
6	I know how the SDGs relate to the local development plans in my community.	1.71	1.67	2.20
7	I understand how community actions contribute to achieving the SDGs.	2.50	2.75	2.13
8	I am knowledgeable about how the SDGs are integrated into local government policies.	1.86	1.83	1.93
9	I know that achieving the SDGs is important for the future of the world.	2.43	2.67	3.20
10	I have shared information on SDGs to my neighbours and friends.	1.86	1.83	2.13
11	I feel motivated to participate in activities related to the SDGs in my community.	2.29	2.17	2.80
12	I believe that community members have a role to play in achieving the SDGs.	4.00	4.00	4.33
13	I have attended any community meetings or engagements that discussed the SDGs.	2.57	2.67	2.80
14	I believe that local leaders and policymakers are effectively communicating the SDGs to the community.	1.57	1.33	2.07
15	I have facilitated a symposium on mainstreaming SDGs.	1.64	1.58	1.80
16	I feel that there is sufficient information available to the public about the SDGs.	1.71	1.67	1.87
17	I believe that more training or workshops on the SDGs would be beneficial for the community.	4.64	4.67	4.20
18	I think that learning more about the SDGs would help me take more action in my community.	4.57	4.50	4.73
19	I would like to know more about how the SDGs can be achieved at the local level.	4.36	4.42	4.13
20	I would like to integrate SDGs in our local development plans.	4.21	3.83	3.73
Overall Average		**2.56**	**2.58**	**2.69**
Standard Deviation		**0.55**	**0.38**	**0.28**
Interpretation		**Low Awareness**	**Low Awareness**	**Moderate Awareness**

Scale: 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low; 1.81 – 2.60 Low; 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate; 3.42 – 4.20 High; 4.21 – 5.00 Very High

The findings presented in Table 5 indicate that BDC–TWG members across the three barangays possess a generally high level of knowledge and awareness of the SDGs. Barangay Libertad obtained the highest overall mean score (M = 4.42, SD = 0.43), indicating a Very High level of awareness, followed by Barangay Poblacion (M = 4.14, SD = 0.59) with a High

level, while Barangay Baybay recorded the lowest overall mean (M = 3.77, SD = 0.48), which also falls within the High category. Across the assessed indicators, respondents from Libertad consistently reported the highest levels of familiarity with the SDGs, their relevance to local development planning, and the role of barangay institutions in supporting SDG implementation. Meanwhile, respondents from Poblacion also demonstrated favorable levels of awareness across most indicators. Although Baybay exhibited relatively lower mean scores, the findings indicate that BDC–TWG members generally recognize the importance of integrating the SDGs into barangay planning and governance processes.

Table 6. Mean Score for the Knowledge and Awareness on SDGs of the Barangay Council Members

No.	Statement	Baybay	Libertad	Poblacion
1	I have heard of the term "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)"	2.00	1.82	1.82
2	I am aware that the SDGs are part of a global agenda for sustainable development.	1.64	1.64	2.10
3	I am aware that the SDGs were adopted by the United Nations in 2015.	1.73	1.64	1.73
4	I am aware that there are 17 SDGs.	1.82	1.73	1.91
5	I understand the connection between SDGs and my community's development.	1.55	1.55	2.27
6	I know how the SDGs relate to the local development plans in my community.	1.82	1.91	2.36
7	I understand how community actions contribute to achieving the SDGs.	2.64	2.64	2.00
8	I am knowledgeable about how the SDGs are integrated into local government policies.	1.91	1.55	1.91
9	I know that achieving the SDGs is important for the future of the world.	2.64	1.82	3.09
10	I have shared information on SDGs to my neighbours and friends.	1.55	1.82	2.18
11	I feel motivated to participate in activities related to the SDGs in my community.	1.64	2.18	2.82
12	I believe that community members have a role to play in achieving the SDGs.	3.91	3.82	4.36
13	I have attended any community meetings or engagements that discussed the SDGs.	2.73	2.55	2.91
14	I believe that local leaders and policymakers are effectively communicating the SDGs to the community.	1.73	1.91	2.27
15	I have facilitated a symposium on mainstreaming SDGs.	1.36	1.64	2.09

16	I feel that there is sufficient information available to the public about the SDGs.	1.64	1.91	2.46
17	I believe that more training or workshops on the SDGs would be beneficial for the community.	4.27	4.46	4.55
18	I think that learning more about the SDGs would help me take more action in my community.	4.18	4.73	4.73
19	I would like to know more about how the SDGs can be achieved at the local level.	4.18	4.18	4.55
20	I would like to integrate SDGs in our local development plans.	4.00	4.18	3.73
Overall Average		**2.45**	**2.48**	**2.79**
Standard Deviation		**0.14**	**0.25**	**0.19**
Interpretation		**Low Awareness**	**Low Awareness**	**Moderate Awareness**

Scale: 1.00 – 1.80 Very Low; 1.81 – 2.60 Low; 2.61 – 3.40 Moderate; 3.42 – 4.20 High; 4.21 – 5.00 Very High

Table 6 presents the level of SDG knowledge and awareness among Barangay Council members. Similar to the findings for the BDC–TWG, Barangay Libertad obtained the highest overall mean score, followed by Barangay Poblacion and Barangay Baybay. Nevertheless, the overall mean scores reported by Barangay Council members were generally lower than those of the BDC–TWG members across the three barangays. Respondents expressed awareness of the SDGs and acknowledged their relevance to local governance; however, relatively lower ratings on several indicators suggest that their understanding of SDG integration into local planning and policy implementation is less comprehensive than that of respondents directly involved in development planning activities. Overall, the comparison between the two respondent groups demonstrates that BDC–TWG members consistently possess higher levels of SDG knowledge and awareness than Barangay Council members. This pattern indicates that individuals directly involved in the preparation, coordination, and monitoring of barangay development plans tend to have greater familiarity with the SDG framework and its application in local governance. Despite these differences, both groups generally exhibited positive levels of awareness, suggesting that the SDGs have been introduced and recognized within the governance structures of the three selected barangays.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that stakeholder participation serves as a fundamental element in strengthening rural–urban planning and promoting inclusive local governance. Barangays that exhibited higher levels of stakeholder engagement also demonstrated stronger performance in social equity, local economic development, environmental management, and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) awareness (Valdecañas & Cuyegkeng, 2023). This finding suggests that meaningful community participation extends beyond consultation processes, contributing to more transparent, accountable, and responsive governance. Active involvement of local stakeholders enables development

priorities to better reflect community needs, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of local planning and facilitating the localization of the SDGs. These findings are consistent with participatory governance theory, which argues that collaborative decision-making strengthens policy legitimacy, institutional accountability, and development effectiveness (Ariawan et al., 2025). Likewise, previous studies have emphasized that meaningful stakeholder participation enhances governance quality by improving transparency, responsiveness, and institutional collaboration, ultimately supporting sustainable local development (Nuraini et al., 2025; Taufiqurokhman & Almuqsith, 2025).

The results further indicate that participatory governance contributes to improved social equity by strengthening institutional mechanisms that support inclusive public service delivery. Barangays with higher levels of participation demonstrated better implementation of governance structures, including functional Barangay Development Councils, Barangay Health Stations, Violence Against Women (VAW) Desks, and Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children. These institutional arrangements provide opportunities for broader community representation while improving access to essential public services for vulnerable sectors (Kanyagui et al., 2024). Inclusive governance therefore promotes not only citizen participation but also equitable resource distribution and greater responsiveness to diverse community needs, supporting the achievement of SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

The study also highlights the important contribution of participatory governance to local economic development. Barangays with stronger participatory mechanisms generally reported more favorable perceptions regarding financial transparency, budgeting processes, and resource allocation. Transparent planning and budgeting enable communities to participate in identifying local priorities, ensuring that public resources are allocated according to community needs while supporting livelihood programs, social services, and infrastructure development (Ainurrohman & Mursyidah, 2024; Olusola et al., 2022). These findings reinforce previous research suggesting that participatory budgeting strengthens accountability and improves the effectiveness of local development initiatives by encouraging collective ownership and public oversight of government programs (Islam, 2025).

Similarly, participatory planning was found to support environmental management practices at the barangay level. Communities that actively participate in environmental planning demonstrated stronger implementation of waste management systems, disaster risk reduction initiatives, environmental education activities, and community clean-up programs (Rahmadani et al., 2023; Subri et al., 2025). The existence of functional Barangay Ecological Solid Waste Management Committees (BESWMCs), Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), and regular capacity-building activities reflects the importance of community participation in promoting environmental sustainability. These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that community-based environmental management improves environmental outcomes by integrating local knowledge into environmental decision-making while strengthening collective responsibility for natural resource management

(Benyei et al., 2022). Strengthening participatory environmental governance therefore contributes to the achievement of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 15 (Life on Land).

Another important finding concerns the level of knowledge and awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals among local governance actors. Although both Barangay Development Council–Technical Working Group (BDC–TWG) members and Barangay Council members demonstrated generally high levels of SDG awareness, respondents directly involved in local planning consistently exhibited greater familiarity with SDG principles and their integration into barangay development planning. This finding suggests that direct participation in planning processes enhances understanding of sustainable development concepts and strengthens institutional capacity for SDG localization (Zinkernagel & Neij, 2023). Previous studies have likewise emphasized that successful localization of the SDGs depends not only on institutional arrangements but also on the knowledge, competencies, and commitment of local stakeholders responsible for planning and implementation. Consequently, continuous capacity-building, governance education, and SDG orientation programs remain essential for strengthening local institutional capacity and improving the integration of sustainability principles into planning, budgeting, and project implementation (Djafar et al., 2025).

The findings demonstrate that participatory governance functions as a critical mechanism for promoting inclusive rural–urban planning and supporting the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals at the barangay level. Effective stakeholder participation strengthens governance institutions, enhances equitable service delivery, improves local economic and environmental management, and increases institutional awareness of sustainable development (Anyanwu et al., 2025; Latupeirissa et al., 2025). These findings underscore the importance of strengthening participatory planning mechanisms, expanding capacity-building initiatives, and institutionalizing SDG-oriented governance practices to ensure that local development policies remain inclusive, transparent, and responsive to community needs.

Conclusion

This study examined stakeholder participation, participatory governance, local economic development, environmental management, and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) awareness across three selected barangays to assess the effectiveness of participatory rural–urban planning. The findings indicate that participatory governance has been successfully institutionalized across the selected barangays, although varying levels of implementation were observed. Barangay Libertad consistently demonstrated the strongest performance across most assessment dimensions, followed by Barangay Poblacion, while Barangay Baybay exhibited comparatively moderate levels of stakeholder participation, governance performance, and SDG awareness. These findings suggest that stronger participatory mechanisms contribute to more inclusive governance, improved public service

delivery, enhanced environmental management, and greater institutional readiness to support SDG localization.

The study further highlights that meaningful stakeholder participation extends beyond consultation by strengthening transparency, accountability, and collaborative decision-making in local governance. Communities with higher levels of participation demonstrated more effective planning practices, stronger governance institutions, and greater awareness of sustainable development principles. Nevertheless, the relatively lower performance observed in some governance and SDG awareness indicators suggests the need to strengthen community engagement, institutional capacity, and continuous capacity-building programs, particularly for local officials and community stakeholders who are directly involved in planning and implementation.

These findings provide practical implications for local governments seeking to strengthen participatory rural–urban planning and accelerate the localization of the SDGs. Institutionalizing participatory planning mechanisms, expanding governance and SDG capacity-building initiatives, and enhancing transparency in planning and budgeting processes can improve the effectiveness of local development policies while ensuring that development outcomes remain inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to community needs. Future studies may expand the scope of analysis by involving more municipalities and employing longitudinal approaches to examine the long-term impacts of participatory governance on sustainable local development.

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