**Sustainability Initiative of Samal Island City College (SICC)**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper explores the challenges faced by Samal Island City College (SICC) in achieving sustainability as a local higher education institution. Sustainability in this context encompasses various dimensions, including environmental, financial, and social aspects. Through a comprehensive analysis of existing literature and empirical data, this study identifies key obstacles encountered by SICC on its path towards sustainability. These challenges include financial constraints, limited infrastructural capacity, regulatory compliance burdens, and community engagement difficulties. The findings underscore the complex interplay between institutional goals, resource availability, and external factors shaping SICC's sustainability initiatives. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of addressing these challenges to enhance SICC's long-term viability and contribution to local development. Recommendations are provided to inform strategic interventions aimed at overcoming these obstacles and fostering a more sustainable future for SICC and similar local universities and colleges.

***Keywords: Samal Island City College, Sustainability, Local Universities and Colleges***

**INTRODUCTION**

In the intricate fabric of educational governance in the Philippines, the Local Government Code (LGC) serves as a fundamental pillar, granting local authorities the authority to shape the higher education landscape within their respective areas. Within this legal framework lies a provision of profound importance the empowerment for local government units (LGUs) to establish and nurture Locally Funded Higher Institutions (LFHIs). This provision, enshrined in the Local Government Code of 1991, Article X, Section 16, Paragraph (c), signifies not merely a legal mandate but also a testament to the dedication of LGUs towards democratizing access to quality higher education and fostering local development. The establishment and operation of LFHIs within this context represent a transformative endeavor, bridging the gap between academic excellence and grassroots empowerment, thereby ushering in a new era of educational autonomy and community resilience.

The Philippine government has made significant strides in providing free education from elementary through tertiary levels, aligning with the K to 12 basic education program implemented by the Department of Education (DepEd) and Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2017-1 between the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). Given the prevailing trend of high school students discontinuing their education, there exists a pressing need to ensure seamless educational continuity from school to college, with a heightened emphasis on student achievement and program completion. Traditionally, the responsibility of establishing state colleges and universities rested with the government. However, a segment of high school graduates faces challenges in affording tuition fees at private institutions or meeting the requirements for nationally operated institutions, prompting LGUs to establish local higher education institutions through ordinances in accordance with Republic Act 7160, known as the Local Government Code of the Philippines. These locally funded institutions operate with minimal tuition fees and offer a range of courses, ensuring accessibility and affordability for students in their respective communities.

In a process akin to the establishment of state colleges and technical and vocational courses, LGUs enact ordinances through the Sanggunian Bayan to establish and operate higher learning institutions. This ensures full compliance with the requirements outlined by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Regional Office overseeing the jurisdiction. These requirements encompass various facets, including feasibility studies delineating the necessity for a local higher education institution, assessing human resource requirements to determine suitable program offerings, identifying target demographics, and evaluating the availability of qualified personnel, both administrative and academic. Additionally, the financial capacity of the LGU to initiate and sustain the operation of a local college is scrutinized, with the treasurer of the LGU issuing a certificate of fund availability as mandated by pertinent provisions of the Local Government Code of 1991.

Further specifications include the presentation of a project development plan, demonstrating the allocation of a suitable school site in terms of size and location in accordance with applicable provisions. Moreover, a comprehensive five-year development plan, duly endorsed by the Sanggunian, is required. This plan encompasses critical elements such as annual budgetary allocations, organizational structure, composition of the governing board, and the establishment of a plantilla of positions conforming to the guidelines set forth in the Association of Local Colleges and Universities (ALCU) Unified Merit System, which holds approval from the Civil Service Commission (CMO No. 32, series 2006, Article V Section 2).

Various challenges confront local governments in sustaining their established higher education institutions, with key hurdles revolving around securing funding for physical infrastructure, ensuring continuous upgrades, and maintaining quality control, particularly concerning human resources such as qualified faculty members. Additionally, adhering to the minimum standards outlined in policies, regulations, and guidelines set forth by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) poses a significant challenge, as it directly influences the delivery of quality education and the attainment of desired outcomes.

Higher education institutions have always contributed to the social and cultural development of the places in which they are located. Consequently, higher education institutions can become key assets and powerhouses for economic development.

**METHODS**

**Research Design**

This qualitative study utilized the exploratory research or exploration that refers to broad-ranging, intentional, systematic data collection designed to maximize discovery of generalizations based on description and direct understanding of an area. This study aims to explicate and explore and assess the sustainability of higher education institution regarding the phenomenon. Using this type of method would help the researchers have the intended results they want to acquire. Further, it identifies the meaning of the existence.

This study utilized the exploratory narrative research design. (Stebbins, 2010) exploratory research or exploration refers to broad-ranging, intentional, systematic data collection designed to maximize discovery of generalizations based on description and direct understanding of an area. It is the descriptive research, as its name suggests, seeks to provide an accurate description of observations of a phenomena. The objective of much descriptive research is to map the terrain of a specific phenomenon. The exploration of new phenomena in this way may help the researcher’s need for better understanding, may test the feasibility of a more extensive study, or determine the best methods to be used in a subsequent study. Thus, this is a type of phenomenological research used to discover new phenomenon or formulate problems for more clear investigations characterized by its flexibility or unstructured process in understanding the happenings or to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomenon in a new light (Yin, 1994). It has the goal of formulating problems more precisely, clarifying concepts, gathering explanations, gaining insight, eliminating impractical ideas and forming hypotheses, however, does not require hypothesis testing (Yin, 1994).

This study is mainly anchored on the theory of (Riggan, 2005) who developed what he termed a ‘complex program theory’ to guide the evaluation of community schools, a complex intervention involving a range of partnerships of organizations working together to achieve improved student learning and stronger families through services, supports and opportunities. Sullivan et al. (2003) stressed that the use of models such as these for evaluation assumes ‘a stable environment in which any indication of either theory or implementation failure would be capable of adjustment in line with available evidence’.

As acknowledged in the study by (Carandang, Rubin, Labsan, & Tun), it cannot be denied that it is a noble undertaking for an LGU to establish an institution of higher learning with programs designed to nurture and enhance their constituents’ socio-economic status, it does raise the delicate question how this institution can be made possible or by what means can the LGU pay for it. According to (Newman, 2013) the participation of the state in higher education was necessary to promote access of needy students who have demonstrated capacities for advanced learning. (Littman, 2022) said budgetary allocations are integral components to an annual financial plan, or budget, of all organizations. They indicate the level of resources an organization is committing to a department or program.

(Montemar, Recio, & Hecita) The income classification of Provinces, Cities and Municipalities serves, among other purposes, as basis for the determination of the financial capability of Local Government Units (LGUs) to provide in full or in part the funding requirements of developmental projects and other priority needs in their locality. Thus, in the preparation of project studies and proposals, the income class of LGUs is used as a factor in the allocation of national or other financial grants (Department of Finance, Department Order No. 2308, 2008) (Martinez-Vazquez & Liu, 2011). The income classification of the municipalities or provinces funding higher education institutions refers to the average annual income actually realized during the last four (4) calendar years. (Sherraden, 2010) said that financial capability includes both the ability to act (knowledge, skills, confidence, and motivation) and the opportunity to act (through access to quality financial products and services).

Creating a sustainable institution poses significant challenges as it necessitates active engagement and collaboration among various stakeholders, particularly the campus community itself. Previous research underscores the importance of addressing the three pillars of sustainable development environmental preservation, economic growth, and social sustainability in campus sustainability initiatives. Effective governance and adherence to best practices are crucial for attaining sustainability goals. This requires coordinated efforts among management, administrative, operational, academic departments, and the local community. Continuous support for sustainability endeavours contributes to the overall quality of teaching, learning, and campus activities.

A wide range of stakeholders is required to address challenges related to sustainable development (Jeronen, 2022) Regional initiatives and transition paths are crucial for global progress towards sustainable development (Radinger-Peer & Pflitsch, 2017). The importance of the involvement of universities within their local and regional communities in terms of SD has been highlighted in national and international policy frameworks (Zilahy & Huisingh, 2009). Universities have been encouraged by the Copernicus Charter signed by about 300 higher education institutions based in Europe, to actively develop community engagement work towards sustainable development (Wright, 2004).

**Data Gathering Instrument**

Interview-Guide (questionnaire) will be used for an In-Depth Interview (IDI) as strategy to gather the data (Creswell & Poth, 2016) that will undergo series of validation from experts of the CDM. This tool is an exploratory form translated to local language in order to saturate in the thinking levels of the informants, to determine its effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness of the informants on the topic. Further, supporting guided questions derived from the objectives were set in to saturate the purpose of the study.

**Operational Definition of Terms**

***Island Garden City of Samal***

A component City of Davao del Norte Province created by virtue of Republic Act no. 8471 on January 30, 1998 and was ratified by a plebiscite on March 7, 1998.

***LGU- Local Government Unit***

Role of local government is to protect local interests concerning the livelihood of the community. Essentially, local governance is a means for every citizen to express his or her will. Not the government, but citizens themselves can make decisions locally about the livelihood of their community. Certainly, the decision- making process is compliant with the state laws.(Chao, 2012)

***SICC- Samal Island City College***

This Higher Education Institution marks as the first locally funded institution by the virtue of the City Ordinance 2018 - 296, entitled "An Ordinance Establishing a Local College Institution in the Island Garden City of Samal, Province of Davao Del Norte to be Known as Samal Island City College (SICC).

***Administrators and Management***

Key decision makers within the college administration who can provide insights into strategic planning, resource allocation, and policy development.

***Faculty and Staff and Students***

Academic staff can offer perspectives on curriculum development, teaching methodologies, and research priorities relevant to sustainability education. Current students and recent alumni can provide feedback on their experiences, aspirations, and expectations regarding sustainability initiatives within the college.

***Community Representatives***

Engage with members of the local community, including residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations, to understand their needs, concerns, and potential collaborations in promoting sustainable development on the island.

***Industry Partners***

Collaborate with industry stakeholders, such as businesses, government agencies, and NGOs, to explore opportunities for internships, research partnerships, and funding support for sustainable projects.

***Government Officials***

Consult with local government officials and policymakers to align college initiatives with broader regional development plans and regulatory frameworks. By involving diverse stakeholders, you can gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Samal Island City College in its journey towardssustainable development over the next decade.

**FINDINGS**

Globally, the landscape of education is undergoing rapid and extensive transformations. These changes encompass a multitude of reforms, innovations, and discoveries aimed at ensuring that students remain wellinformed and adaptable within an increasingly uncertain environment. However, amidst the constant and rapid evolution occurring worldwide, educational systems find themselves confronted not only with the task of ensuring global relevance but also with the imperative of fostering sustainability across their various structures, reforms, policies, and initiatives to support ongoing development.

The crucial role of educational systems in facilitating, envisioning, and spearheading change towards sustainability has garnered renewed attention in recent years (Ryan et al., 2010). International leaders have underscored the pivotal role of education as a catalyst for societal transformation, as evidenced by the United Nations General Assembly's implementation of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development from 2005 to 2014 (UNESCO, 2011). Moreover, educators themselves are recognized as essential agents in propelling education forward as the primary means for individuals to stay current and adept amidst continual change, while also ensuring that educational institutions meet the demands of the times.

In response to these imperatives, numerous universities and colleges worldwide are taking proactive measures to meet the challenges posed by this rapidly evolving educational landscape. They are actively working to surpass these challenges by implementing innovative strategies, fostering interdisciplinary approaches, and embedding sustainability principles into their curricula and institutional practices. By doing so, these educational institutions are not only preparing students to navigate a dynamic and complex world but are also laying the groundwork for a more sustainable and resilient future for generations to come.

Samal Island City College (SICC), situated on an island, faces unique challenges in achieving environmental sustainability due to its geographical location and the inherent complexities associated with island ecosystems. By delving into these issues, it can provide insights into the implications and results of SICC's efforts to mitigate environmental degradation and foster sustainable practices.

**1. Environmental Aspect**

**A. Challenges in Environmental Sustainability:**

***Geographic Constraints***

The geographic features of Philippines as an archipelago naturally result to the fragmentation of the land transportation network and territorial discontinuities, resulting to limited access and movement for people, goods and resources which result to imbalanced economic growths between islands. Due to absence of links such as bridges and/or tunnels between islands in the country, these are connected by complex system of water transportation modes or by air transportation Boquet (2012).

Being located on an island presents inherent challenges of the community within for a reason that development and progression has no avenue. Because of the geographical constraints of Samal Island in Davao del Norte waste management, resource utilization, and ecosystem preservation is on its peak. In this the development of higher education institution like Samal Island City College is limited, making it challenging to implement sustainable infrastructure and waste disposal systems effectively.

***Waste Management***

According to Uy (2017) during their first Executive and Barangay Consultative Meeting and Feedbacking organized by the Island Garden City of Samal. To enhance one of Samal’s best practices, a recycling plant for the plastic and a waste water treatment facility will be added to the existing sanitary landfill. A dislodge truck will also be procured to suck the waste from the septic tank going to the landfill. The disposal of solid and liquid waste poses significant challenges for Samal Island City College, especially considering the limited options for waste treatment facilities on the island. Inadequate waste management practices can lead to pollution of surrounding water bodies and degradation of terrestrial ecosystems.

According to Ebrahimi and North (2017) it is crucial to establish clear timeframes with defined objectives and assigned responsibilities for both direct and indirect stakeholders. These timeframes should encompass various stages, including planning for readiness initiatives and infrastructural requirements, as well as conducting thorough studies to characterize waste comprehensively. As the waste management program advances, it becomes necessary to develop comprehensive policies for integrated waste management, delineating specific roles and duties for all stakeholders and departments involved.

***Energy Consumption***

As per stated by Khoshbakht, Gou, and Dupre (2018) significant variations were noted in the intensity of energy usage across different types of buildings within the academic setting, particularly evident in research buildings compared to teaching facilities, academic offices, administration offices, and libraries. Additionally, there were subtle differences observed in energy intensity among various academic disciplines. Moreover, energy consumption values tended to decrease as building size increased, while the intensity of energy usage showed a regression trend, particularly in buildings with laboratory spaces.

Samal Island on its current situation, it is currently experiencing power outages that cause so much in terms of economic, environment and even education sector. Samal Island City College is one of the vulnerable of this crisis wherein SICC relies heavily on conventional energy source. As the news published by One Mindanao (2023) there is an ongoing power crisis in the Island Garden City of Samal (IGACOS). This crisis has escalated to such a dire extent that it has necessitated the local government unit (LGU) of IGACOS to declare the city under a state of calamity due to a power crisis.

With the lack of consistent electricity, our citizens in Samal have been forced to survive in intolerable conditions with households, business establishments, schools, and government offices are unable to function normally. This is a clear dereliction of duty on the part of NORDECO, as the company has failed to deliver the fundamental service it pledged to provide Esteban (2023) added.

**B. Implications of Environmental Sustainability Efforts:**

***Long-Term Resilience***

By implementing sustainable practices, SICC can enhance its resilience to environmental risks and uncertainties, such as climate change impacts and natural disasters. Investing in eco-friendly infrastructure and renewable energy technologies can help mitigate potential disruptions to academic operations and campus facilities.

According to Ralph and Stubbs (2014) that universities and colleges play and important role in addressing environmental challenges as the education, research and community involvement can produce a long lasting environmental affects and societal change. Likewise, Samal Island City College as a community college cross every aspect of institutional operation to experience long-term resilience. By education and building the awareness of institution employees of the importance of environmental sustainability will be the best key strategy in acquiring resiliency.

***Community Engagement***

The landscape of higher education has changed as a result of campus responses to calls for greater engagement with communities Nicotera, Cutforth, Fretz, and Thompson (2011). The main purpose of establishment of a community higher education institution is to strengthen community engagement as this is part of the movement in higher education.

Promoting environmental sustainability at SICC can foster community engagement and empower students, faculty, staff, and local residents to become environmental stewards. Collaborative initiatives, such as recycling programs, beach clean-ups, and conservation projects, can strengthen bonds within the community and cultivate a sense of environmental responsibility.

Samal Island City College continue to strengthen partnership in collaboration of barangay by establishing community extension that will be the baseline in providing banner programs that are responsive to the needs of the adopted community Villarin (2023). SICC's commitment to environmental sustainability can enhance its reputation as a socially responsible institution and attract environmentally conscious students, faculty, and partners. Demonstrating leadership in sustainability initiatives can differentiate SICC from other educational institutions and position it as a role model for sustainable development.

Through concerted efforts to reduce waste generation, conserve resources, and minimize ecological footprint, SICC can achieve measurable improvements in its environmental performance. Key indicators, such as waste diversion rates, energy efficiency, and water conservation metrics, can serve as benchmarks to track progress over time.

 By adopting sustainable practices, SICC can contribute to the preservation and restoration of natural habitats and biodiversity on the island. Restoring degraded ecosystems, implementing habitat restoration projects, and promoting sustainable land use practices can result in tangible ecological benefits for future generations.

Samal Island City College faces significant challenges in promoting environmental sustainability due to its island location and associated constraints. However, by addressing these challenges proactively and embracing sustainable practices, SICC can mitigate environmental degradation, enhance resilience, and contribute to the long-term well-being of its campus community and the surrounding ecosystem. Collaborative efforts, community engagement, and strategic partnerships will be essential in achieving meaningful progress towards environmental sustainability goals.

**2. FINANCIAL CAPABILITIES**

**A. Challenges in Financial Capabilities:**

Samal Island City College (SICC), situated in a 4th Class City, faces significant financial challenges that impact its operations and sustainability. Insights into the implications and results of SICC's financial constraints on its academic programs, infrastructure development, and overall institutional performance.

***Limited Funding Sources and Budget Constraints***

As a 4th Class City, SICC operates within a constrained budgetary environment, with limited resources allocated for education and institutional development. Tight budgetary constraints make it challenging for SICC to address emerging priorities and respond to evolving educational trends effectively. Samal Island City College relies primarily on government allocations and local revenues, which may be insufficient to meet the institution's

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*Figure 1.1*

*IGACOS*

*Statement of Receipts and Expenditure CY 2024*

The figure shows that due to the limited financial capabilities of the Local Government Unit where Samal

Island City College located therefore the allocation in education sector will compromised as the budget will be divided into respective sectors. This is a clear manifestation that financial constraints is part of the challenges of the LGU who established community college like Samal Island City College.

According to Manasan, Cuenca, and Celestino (2011) LGUs are mandated to impose and collect by virtue of Republic Act 7160 otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991. In this light, the study examines the management of the SEF in terms of collection, allocation, and utilization in order to maximize LGUs' support for the Education for All (EFA) initiative and to promote a more equitable allocation of resources for basic education.

***Dependency on External Funding:***

Samal Island City College as a first locally funded higher education institution in the island may rely on external grants, donations, and partnerships to supplement its budgetary shortfall. As a beneficiary of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) subsidy, SICC receives financial assistance from the government to support its operations and academic programs, in accordance with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) per Section 3 of Republic Act No. 7722 is mandated to administer and supervise both public and private higher education institutions as well as degree granting programs in all post-secondary educational institutions.

Although Article 3 of Sections 447, 458 and 468 of Republic Act No. 7160 provides that municipalities, cities and provinces may establish and provide for the operation of post-secondary institutions, Republic Act No. 7722 provides that CHED covers degree-granting programs in all HEls and hence, should an LUG offers or intends to offer degree programs, the LUC concerned should comply with the COPC requirement.. However, securing external funding sources beyond government subsidies is competitive and often requires significant time and effort in proposal writing, fundraising, and grant management.

Financial constraints may compromise SICC's ability to maintain high academic standards and deliver quality education. Insufficient funding for faculty recruitment, professional development, and research activities may hinder SICC's capacity to attract and retain qualified faculty members and enhance teaching and learning outcomes.

Inadequate funding for infrastructure development may result in deteriorating campus facilities, outdated equipment, and inadequate learning resources. The lack of investment in infrastructure upgrades may impede SICC's ability to provide a conducive learning environment and support innovative teaching methodologies.

Limited financial resources may limit SICC's ability to provide comprehensive student support services, such as counselling, career guidance, and extracurricular activities. Inadequate funding for student welfare programs may affect student retention rates and overall satisfaction with the college experience.

**B. Results of Financial Challenges:**

***Strategic Partnerships:***

SICC may face recurrent budgetary deficits, resulting in austerity measures, program cutbacks, and staff layoffs. Budgetary constraints may force SICC to prioritize essential expenditures, such as salaries and utilities, at the expense of investments in academic programs and student services. Addressing financial challenges is essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability of SICC. Strategic financial planning, revenue diversification, and cost-saving measures may help SICC mitigate financial risks and build financial resilience in the face of economic uncertainties Carroll and Stater (2009).

According to Frølund, Murray, and Riedel (2018) collaborating with government agencies, private sector organizations, and philanthropic foundations can help the institution leverage additional resources and expand its funding base. Strategic partnerships can provide access to funding opportunities, expertise, and innovative solutions to address financial challenges effectively.

Samal Island City College faces significant financial challenges that impact its ability to fulfil its educational mission and institutional goals. Addressing these challenges requires proactive measures to diversify funding sources, prioritize investments, and foster strategic partnerships. By overcoming financial constraints, SICC can enhance its financial sustainability, academic quality, and institutional effectiveness, ultimately benefiting its students, faculty, and the broader community.

**3. SOCIAL ASPECTS**

Higher education institutions (HEIs) around the world have been incorporating sustainable development

(SD) into their systems, curricula, and local communities for more than thirty years Leal Filho et al. (2019)

Higher Education Institutions have the societal responsibility of providing guidance to students, faculty, staff, and administration (Viebahn, 2002; Bantanur et al., 2015), and their decisions affect the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the communities and regions around them Katiliūtė, Daunorienė, and Katkutė (2014). Universities have been considered significant contributors to the promotion of sustainability and the pursuit of regional sustainability (Karatzoglou, 2013).

Samal Island City College (SICC) plays a crucial role in the social development of its community, particularly in generating job opportunities and fostering economic growth. By analysing the intersection of education, employment, and local development, the study aims to provide insights into the broader societal implications of SICC's initiatives.

The community surrounding SICC may face challenges in accessing diverse and sustainable employment opportunities, particularly in sectors aligned with the skills and qualifications offered by the college. Limited job prospects can contribute to unemployment and underemployment among local residents, especially recent graduates seeking employment.

**A. Implications of Job Opportunities**

***Socioeconomic Mobility and Community Development***

The contribution of universities to society is due to the effects generated both in the supply and in the demand side, the latter being associated with the injection of demand as a result of the activities these institutions carry out Pastor, Pérez, and Fernández de Guevara (2013).

SICC's role in providing education and training can enhance the socioeconomic mobility of individuals within the community by equipping them with the skills and credentials needed to access better-paying jobs and career advancement opportunities. Improved job prospects can contribute to poverty reduction and social inclusion among disadvantaged populations.

A wide range of stakeholders is required to address challenges related to sustainable development (WCED, 1987; United Nations, 2016). Regional initiatives and transition paths are crucial for global progress towards sustainable development Radinger-Peer and Pflitsch (2017). The importance of the involvement of universities within their local and regional communities in terms of SD has been highlighted in national and international policy frameworks Zilahy and Huisingh (2009).

By facilitating access to education and employment, SICC contributes to the overall development of the community, fostering human capital formation, economic productivity, and social cohesion. Increased employment opportunities can stimulate local economic growth, attract investment, and enhance the quality of life for residents.

**B. Results of Job Opportunity Initiatives**

***Local Economic Impact and Community Engagement***

Colleges and universities often claim they create jobs, boost tax revenue and stimulate the local economy (Siegfried, Sanderson, & McHenry, 2007). Although colleges produce consumption services, such as entertainment, status and culture, their basic purpose is to enhance human capital to create and foster graduates’ skills, talents, curiosity, imagination and creativity. Everything else the same (e.g., new expenditures attracted to the area), one would expect a college that produces human capital to have a larger impact than a sports venue or a manufacturing facility. The remaining question is the extent to which that effect is local Siegfried et al. (2007).

Samal Island City College efforts to promote job opportunities can have ripple effects on the local economy, creating multiplier effects through increased consumer spending, tax revenues, and business growth. The expansion of job opportunities in key sectors can stimulate demand for goods and services, support entrepreneurship, and catalyze economic development. SICC's collaboration with local employers, government agencies, and community organizations is essential for enhancing job opportunities in the community. Engaging stakeholders in dialogue and partnership can facilitate the alignment of educational programs with industry needs, promote workforce development initiatives, and foster a supportive ecosystem for job creation and retention.

Samal Island City College plays a pivotal role in shaping job opportunities and socioeconomic outcomes in its community. Despite challenges such as limited employment opportunities and skills mismatches, SICC's efforts contribute to socioeconomic mobility, community development, and economic resilience. By addressing these challenges proactively and leveraging its resources and partnerships, SICC can continue to make meaningful contributions to job creation, economic prosperity, and social well-being in the community.

**CONCLUSION**

The study of Tan (2012) emphasizes the pivotal role of higher education in national development, serving as the backbone of various sectors in the economy by producing skilled professionals and workers. As such, there is a pressing need for higher education institutions (HEIs) to focus not only on producing quality graduates but also on fostering global competitiveness among their professionals and workers.

In the Philippines, institutional sustainability has become a key component of quality assurance in HEIs, ensuring that institutions are adequately prepared to meet the future demands of the educational market and effectively manage their operations.

Furthermore, Bone and Agombar (2011) highlight the growing public expectation for universities to prioritize sustainability in their operations and curriculum delivery. This shift is driven by students' increasing emphasis on sustainability, with many considering it a significant factor in their choice of university. Students are now more concerned about the stability and agility of institutions, prioritizing long-term sustainability over popularity.

Samal Island City College (SICC) exemplifies the importance of HEIs in community development, serving as a catalyst for opportunity, economic empowerment, community engagement, and cultural enrichment. By providing accessible education, fostering economic growth, promoting civic engagement, and celebrating diversity, SICC contributes to the holistic development of its community.

Ruiz and Junio-Sabio (2012) emphasize the dynamic nature of tertiary education and the need for quality assurance processes to evolve accordingly. Continuous efforts and strategic planning are essential to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms in HEIs, enabling institutions to adapt to changing educational landscapes and meet the evolving needs of stakeholders.

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