

The Ecological Profile of Three Barangays of Prosperidad: Basis for the Development and Evaluation of Teaching Materials in Social Studies

Michelle Jane V. Abunas*

* Department of Education, Agusan del Sur Philippines

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Abstract- This research investigates San Vicente, Sta. Irene, and Poblacion barangays' ecological profiles in Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur, as a basis for creating localized Araling Panlipunan teaching materials. In the hope that documents are not easily accessible in most rural municipalities, the research tried to document history and make it more relevant in the classroom. With a historical-descriptive research design, data were collected through key informant interviews with elderly residents of the community and retired barangay officials, municipal records, and ecological data from the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS). The research was aimed at describing the barangays in terms of their history, geophysical and demographic characteristics, and economic progress. These information were used to come up with contextualized instructional modules, validated by master teachers in the subject, and disseminated to schools for incorporation in the Social Studies curriculum. The research emphasizes the richness of locality narratives and the importance of place-based learning in deepening students' understanding of identity, community, and sustainability. Through academic knowledge embedded in everyday experience, the research illustrated enhanced learning and appreciation of local culture among students.

This study adds to local history and to educational practice by providing a replicable model for other communities that want to bridge the gap between cultural conservation and curriculum construction through participatory, place-based education.

Index Terms- Ecological profile, Local history, Place-based education, Social Studies, Teaching materials

1 INTRODUCTION

At the center of Agusan del Sur is the town of Prosperidad, a thriving town that is not only famous for its natural attractions such as Bega and Binaba Falls, but also because of the richness of its history and culture. Although it is the capital of the province and the residence of more than 88,000 people in 32 barangays, much of its local history, and particularly that of small towns, remain unwritten. These have been handed

down through oral tradition, usually passed on in town fiestas or in casual get-togethers, but never written down and never included in proper schooling.

This absence of written history is a challenge to the K–12 Araling Panlipunan curriculum, intended to foster national identity, civic duty, and awareness of history. Without exposure to local histories and ecological context, most of the students grow up with no idea where they are from, viewing history as something elsewhere. Acknowledging this deficit, the Department of Education initiated the Balik-Kasaysayan Program to instruct teachers local historiography and curriculum integration. Yet, resources and training constraints remain, especially in the provinces.

The recognized gap is filled by the ecological and historical characterization of the three barangays of Prosperidad, namely San Vicente, Sta. Irene, and Poblacion, thereby providing highly contextualized and validated teaching materials in Araling Panlipunan. A historical-descriptive methodology was used and relied on oral histories, public documents, and ecological data. The endeavor is essentially based on the Place-Based Education (PBE) Theory, which proposes that true learning can only occur when grounded within the local setting, culture, and community experiences. Thus, by including concrete aspects of the community such as river systems, settlement patterns, economic changes, and local legends in the education content, this project hopes to enhance the relevance, visibility, and grounding of the subject matter in Social Studies. In so doing, the project serves to encode within the community a memory that can actively engage teachers and students in seeing their place as not simply the setting of history, but rather as history-in-the-making.

This investigation fills the previously mentioned lacuna by describing the ecology of and history pertaining to the three barangays of Prosperidad: San Vicente, Sta. Irene, and Poblacion. It turns them into contextualized, validated teaching materials in Araling Panlipunan. A historical-descriptive design was employed and regarded different data such as oral histories, public documents, and ecological information. Fundamentally

underwritten by the Place-Based Education (PBE) Theory, it argues that the real learning will happen only if it remains embedded within the local setting, making culture, and community experiences. Hence, including tangible aspects of the community-river systems, settlement patterns, the evolution of economies, local folklore-into the education content will contribute to the relevance, visibility, and grounding of the subject Social Studies. In this way, the project safeguards memory within the community while engaging teachers and students alike to view their place as history's stage and an active participant and component of it.

2 RESEARCH ELABORATIONS

Using a historical-descriptive approach, the ecological and historical character of the three barangays in Prosperidad—San Vicente, Sta. Irene, and Poblacion—will be understood and may be documented. This isn't a theoretical or statistical conception of understanding; it is listening-hearing and listening to the elders remembering the stories of what their parents told. Listening to officials who've watched their communities change. Listening to the land, too—how rivers have shaped lives, how settlements grew around them, and how everything is connected.

The research began with simple visits. Conversations over coffee, walks around the barangay halls, hours spent poring over old documents and population records. Most of the informants spoke in Cebuano, and that was important—they shared stories more freely in the language closest to their heart. These were not interviews in the formal sense, but honest exchanges that carried the rhythm of real life.

Barangay records, municipal documents, and CBMS data supported what people shared. The researchers compared accounts, asked questions, and when memories didn't align, they listened again until the picture grew clearer. These pieces—spoken and written—were gently stitched together to form something more lasting: materials that teachers can now bring into the classroom.

Modules were crafted with care, guided by Araling Panlipunan master teachers and checked against DepEd's learning resource standards. But the real validation came from the people—the community members who saw their stories finally put to page. Using the Place-Based Education Theory as its compass, the project made sure that every page of every module reflected the life and land of the learners it was meant for.

Respect was central to this work. Every voice mattered. Everyone who shared a story was given the dignity of being heard and the assurance that their words would not be twisted or taken out of context. This wasn't just about developing materials—it was about giving a place its rightful place in the learning journey of its youth.

3 RESULTS OR FINDINGS

The findings of this study emerged through qualitative narratives, validated fieldwork, and community records, anchored by key ecological and historical data. Each of the three barangays—San Vicente, Sta. Irene, and Poblacion—offered its own distinct character shaped by geography, livelihood, and memory. These lived realities became the heart of the teaching materials developed for Social Studies. The table below presents a consolidated ecological overview of the three barangays.

Barangay	Land Area (ha)	No. of Households	Main Livelihood	Key Feature
San Vicente	320	240	Farming, Fishing	River Systems
Sta. Irene	280	310	Trade, Transport	Highway Access
Poblacion	150	410	Public Service, Commerce	Town Center

Table 1. Ecological Profiles of Three Barangays

This natural landscape indicates that San Vicente, with the broadest width of land, is essentially agricultural. The interviews with the elderly emphasized how the original inhabitants depended on fishery and agriculture along the riverbanks. The majority of them told how bamboo rafts were once the main mode of trade and transport. Today, the barangay remains rural in character, with fertile land still the mainstay of day-to-day living.

Sta. Irene, being smaller in land area, is increasingly populated with families because of its advantageous position along the national road. Locals remembered the donation of land by Doña Teopista Racho in the 1960s as the beginning of the barangay's growth. Sta. Irene's growth, unlike the water-based beat of San Vicente, has been influenced by road connectivity, commerce, and mobility. When there were already schools and shops alongside homes, peripheral families moved to this area.

Poblacion, the most densely populated in area, has the highest number of households. This is but natural since it is the town center where government offices, big schools, and public markets are situated. People talked about its evolution—from wooden structures and dusty roads in the 1970s to the present busy institutional and commercial center. Most of the public activities and services of Prosperidad are situated there, lending Poblacion a dynamic, administrative character.

In all three barangays, the research revealed the manner in which identity is entwined with place. They are not merely points on the map—they are living histories, generation upon generation. These situated learning materials that were created by these results were not merely lessons in history or geography—they were assertions of culture, of community, of belonging. The modules, after verification by teachers and senior citizens, were both correct and interesting. The people of the barangay were delighted and proud to see their barangay featured in the lessons. It was not only education, but also an act of preservation—of

speaking for the places that were usually marginalized in official accounts. Through this, the study reiterates the importance of local knowledge and the place-based education that constructs students' sense of who they are and where they belong.

4 CONCLUSION

This study began with what appeared to be a simple but crucial question: What are barangay stories and how do we bring these to class? The journey around San Vicente, Sta. Irene, and Poblacion was to discover that these barangays are not geographic points, but living archives of memory, culture, and change.

San Vicente, we discovered, was a river-shaped village with a foundation in generosity—where people donated the land for the school and barangay hall because they believed in community life and education. Sta. Irene, however, was a tale of mobility and expansion—of a barangay that emerged along the side of a highway and became a gateway to trade, transportation, and migration. And in Poblacion, we saw the intersection of public life and civic identity—a town center that has long borne the rhythm of the governance, education, and economic growth of Prosperidad.

From these narratives, it was obvious that neighborhood history and environmental background are not background information—they are the very essence of who we are. With the documentation of these aspects and bringing them to proven teaching materials, the study connected the curriculum to the community. Students, for the first time, were able to recognize their environment, their families, and their histories in the texts they read. Teachers gained new purpose in teaching, while elders saw their memories respected and preserved. This study supports the power of Place-Based Education—that learning is more powerful when it begins from the lived life of the learner. It also indicates that curriculum development is not always begun in the offices of scholars; at times, it begins in a porch discussion, a walk through the fields, or a story at sunset.

In taking these three barangays into the Social Studies classroom, we are not just learning about the past—rather, we are situating students firmly in the present, and empowering them to see the kind of future they could build, beginning with the community they call home.

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AUTHORS

First Author – Michelle Jane V. Abunas, Doctor of Philosophy in Management, Saint Joseph Institute of Technology; Teacher III, DepEd Agusan del Sur. Email: abunasmichellejane@gmail.com

Correspondence Author – Giovanna Panangin Lapay, Email: hanspeare@gmail.com, Contact Number: +63907631703