



## COUNTRYSIDE ROAD: A JOURNEY TO DEVELOPMENT

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### Abstract

Road infrastructure, economic opportunities, healthcare access, and peace and order in Sitio Paculab and Sitio Pulahon, Impasug-ong, Bukidnon, Mindanao, Philippines, were studied and revisited. The gathering of data within eighteen months using phenomenological, ethnographic, and anecdotal methods, with all necessary permissions obtained to ensure accuracy, was methodically observed. Findings revealed that roads and infrastructure help safety and security machinery work and are accessible to farms and markets for goods and services, boosting post-harvest facilities and ultimately improving living conditions. Prioritizing construction of roads, bridges, and community-engaged legislative efforts enhances safety and security for all forms of government services.

Keywords: Countryside Road

### Introduction

Countryside roads are roads that connect inhabitants from the satellite road to the main road of the place of abode or residents and from farms to markets roads. It is the inhabitants route to their daily activities. And, especial mentioned to this countryside road is from farmer's landmark route to market their goods and services. Since, this farmer is the backbone of the country, elsewhere they will be provided this landmark. Countryside roads are the living witness of development and it tell story on the living conditions of the locales. From the center to the remote area of the geographic landscape, the countryside road is a challenge to everyone. In Sitio, Paculab and Sitio Pulahon, Municipality of Impasug-ong, Bukidnon, Mindanao Philippines, economic growth, limit access to essential services, and increase transportation costs. Inadequate or no roads hinder community growth, exacerbate existing inequalities, and development becomes a mind blowing and a dream reality which is illusive to the locales.

Inequalities in access to roads, education, healthcare, and employment opportunities become more pronounced, trapping vulnerable locales in a cycle of poverty due to its goods and services were not delivered to the market. Though the environment favorably gives an opportunity to agricultural investment but the support services are inadequate, so development becomes illusive. Therefore, investing in a robust road and bridges infrastructure is not merely a matter of

convenience but fostering equitable development and improving the quality of life of the locales in the countryside were safety and security becomes a reality.

Improving the countryside road infrastructure facilitate better access to essential services, enabling communities to break free from the cycle of poverty. It's not on the lip service nor a dream toward a dream. The products, goods and services from the interior area of the agricultural locales can be transported in a comfortable manner where economic investor find easy to brings the product to the center of the business locales. Ensuring the locales have reliable transportation options, we can promote economic growth, enhance social mobility, and ultimately create a more inclusive society where we can live life to the fullest.

Free the countryside vulnerable to the hands of the opportunist (capitalist/feudalist/) may this become the road map journey to Utopian society. Where there will be no "ghost project" everybody truly be equal of the quality of life. Locales of this place lead by someone who is truly be a chosen one that brings them to the OTOG (One Team One Goal). A leader that will bring them in one common goal and direction. A leader that will inspire and can push to the limit of the member because of the charisma that no amount of "time and space" hinders to meet the needs of the constituents. Likewise, they were free and independent locales living their homeland in the countryside free from the social cell. Despite darkness covered their farmland and trail to travel from home to their destination allowing them to live in a sub-Saharan life. They have the feeling of being trick not by the "god fly" but to the hands of the haves. Yet, they don't surrender instead, continue to live life happily. Living the lights of the firefly, trail of the animals and music of the whispering and captivating nature feel life God-richness. Embracing the serendipity of the surrounding seeing the countryside road a journey to development.

Though this road affects the living condition of the locales in Sitio Paculab and Sitio Pulahon, Municipality of Impasug-ong, Bukidnon, Mindanao, Philippines the locales continue to live life without ceasing. Allowing the world to see the village in a global perspective and letting them know that they are still waiting connected these trail of the animals a blueprint towards development. For the locales, they have the feeling being betrayed of their public trust. Ghost project such that of the roads, bridges, flood controls and etc. were becomes the spiritual coo of the free citizens.

As the water buffalo taken from the quicksand enjoying their moment to bath after their work. Farmers understand that their life in the countryside without roads they live like the water buffalo, cows and horses who always saddles heavy loads without stumbling down because the moment when that happen no one would help them. Their sweat, tears and their sigh over "time and space" becomes a culture of "*incomunicado*" and the coo of their heart wanted to be part of the so-called development.

Attracting tourist, and economic investors, the sceneries of the countryside resembles the quality of life. The panoramic and verdant geographic landscape of the countryside need a road route to the view deck of reality. Although, the countryside road cannot compete on the civilized communities but still, life must go on, as the swollen heart and body covered by scars of unfatigable struggle of life. Where is the countryside road? It's on the heart, mind and the well-power of the public servant. It's not a real fantasy and it is not even an illusion. It is a walkway of life challenges and struggles. Thus, living the area one will find and tell story of life.

So, let the world know that the countryside road is the gate-guard towards the dreamt development, let this study open the verdant plains of the countryside particularly in Sitio Paculab

and Sitio Pulahon, Municipality of Impasug-ong, Bukidnon, Mindanao, Philippines to understand and see the angelic beauty of nature. Likewise, when one invests for development let one know that deities, goddesses and god fly rejoined the cosmic living in the locales. Their culture has a unique role in the making on such development and it may help their supra-life engaging to the mainstream of globalization without sacrificing their tradition, beliefs, practices and customs. That is the reason, why this study was born to the mind of the participant observer within two (2) years.

## Methods

The researchers employed a phenomenological, ethnographic and anecdotal methods (Gomez, 2025). Audio-visual recording, photo capturing, filming, and video-graphic approach was made during the participant observation. The conditions of life at Sitio Paculab and Pulahon, Impasug-ong, Bukidnon, Mindanao Philippines were studied. The interview, conversation and observation made were recorded, read and reread by the participants to fully authenticate the statement made. This approach helped the participant researcher to identify the themes from participant responses, including main themes, sub-themes, and significant statements were handle to the utmost care. Throughout the field study, the researchers adhered the Data Privacy Act and other relevant laws to ensure proper handling of information.

## Results and Discussions

The participant researcher noted that it took three to four decades for their work to gain national attention regarding development. Key events, such as the surrender of local insurgents, an airplane crash, and the bombardment of a rebel hideout, highlighted the potential for tourism in these regions. The identified themes were organized thematically, phenomenologically, ethnographically, and anecdotally, reflecting the participants' perspectives. Here are the themes:

**Countryside road.** All of this began with the footpaths used by both humans and animals. Countryside roads are typically built in accordance with the flow of rivers as they travel from the mountains to the sea. It is generally understood that when traveling down these roads, one will eventually reach human settlements. Consequently, the main roads, as well as connecting roads, are usually located in the lowland areas. In contrast, in the mountains, hills, valleys, plateaus, and even along ridges, countryside roads are quite scarce. Similarly, in delta regions or plains, travel can occur via both water and land. These countryside roads are often accessed by foot or through animal transportation, with an average travel time from the starting point to the destination of about three to four hours. Researchers typically experience the need to exert energy through hiking or walking. Locally, “habal-habal” and “skylab” (motorcycles adapted for transport) are commonly used forms of transportation that help locales navigate longer distances along these countryside roads. The general characteristics of these roads include being narrow, muddy, and sticky, at times resembling quicksand. In this context, the participants noted:

*... aron mas ma tabangan ang kabaw, baka o kabayo sa pag bira sa gi balsa ang dalan nga agihanan sa hayop amo kini daruhun aron gini mas humuk ug danlug birahun.*

*[... in order that we can help the water buffalo or Carabao, cow or horse to pull the sled the road/trail that we pass-by the animal we plow this in order that it can be easy and slippery to pull]*

Listening to the sentiments of the participants, it is interesting to note that animals often create paths or trails that are then plowed to facilitate their movement. The characteristics and strength of these animals, particularly in their feet and knees, make them well-suited for navigating

such routes while carrying heavy loads. During rainy days, the locales transport goods from the farm along these narrow paths. The slippery conditions make it easier for the sleds to be pulled by the animals, allowing for a smoother journey. There is no doubt that the road from the farm to the market can be narrow, muddy, and sticky, sometimes resembling quicksand stirred up by the sled or the wooden wheels.

And a group of 78 years old to 82 years old residents of Paculab and Pulahon said:

*... abi mo loy, nag tigulang na man mi dinhi mao gyud ni ang among namatanan nga kinabuhi, ang dalan dalan ra gyud sa mananap maayo nalang gani karon kay naa nay "habal-habal" o "motorsiklo." Sa bagay kaniadto kabayo ra gyud ang among sakyanan dinhi nga maoy mo dala sa among mga gamit padulong sa ubos. Kung imong na matyagan nga ang among dalan ni ubay sa agus sa tubig sa suba o sapa tungud kay usahay kong aduna kami bug-at nga mga sinako nga produktu amo nalang kini e pa agus or e padagusdus uban sa tubig paduong sa ubos.*

*(... for all you know son, I am already old and I spend my all life here and we only used the animal trail and good for now that we've already the motorcycle as called "habal-habal" (hold it tight and gripped) ... ah okey before we're using horse that would bring our loads or bagged and as you know that our road runs thru the flow of the river in order that if we've heavy loads we are going to slipped it thru the river down the stream)*

As phenomenologically, ethnographically and anecdotally recorded and observed the wisdom of the inhabitants really go thru their geographic make-up. The only thing that they sale their horses during the time when long drought and famine happened in the area that animals included their horses, water buffalo and bull will no longer survived. So, using the "habal-habal" is not really advisable because of the geographic issues of the area. However, they are happy for the first time having a motorcycle in their place but heavy loads/bagged demand, so they will have slipped it on the river.

**Animal Trail or Road.** The poor road conditions in Sitio Paculab and Pulahon are characterized by a hazardous 3.4 km dirt road that becomes narrow, muddy, and sticky with an upward slope and slippery surfaces during the rains. This makes travel difficult and dangerous. Residents mainly rely on motorcycles (habal-habal), as they are the only vehicles that can navigate the treacherous terrain. In Sitio Pulahon, the 3.4 km rocky roads and makeshift wooden bridges further hinder vehicle access, complicating the transportation of people and goods. In both sitios, inadequate road and bridges infrastructure deserves attention, as it hampers economic activities. Farmers struggle to transport their agricultural products to markets, incurring additional labor costs and facing potential losses due to delays and damage. Thus, the participants concluded to say:

*... mao gani and among dalan dili gayud matarong gumikan kay ang among pagasakyan hayop man ug ang ilang tiil mao man gyud ang maka yatak sa dalan ug mas sayon ug gaan nila ang pag sakwat ug alsa busa ang among dalan pita ug mahimong tunaan gyud kaayo kung ting ulan ug abug usab kung ting init apan padalan nga piut lang gihapon kay hayop raman ang mo agi."*

*(...that is why our road it will not be good because our means of transportation is animal and their feet will be the equivalent wheel that will touch the ground and during the rainy days it will stir the mud and becomes sticky, muddy and quicksand. And, during the sunny day it will becomes a dust and it will always the same the narrow and undefined road because only animal passed it)*

Despite on the condition having the habal-habal means of transportation on the area still the inhabitants are using animal as a means of transportation on the ground that there are areas that the geographic topography is inhospitable. Looking at this up-side-down of travel in a long distance it is really a challenge for a living.

**Poor road conditions limit access to healthcare services.** Residents of Sitio Paculab and Sitio Pulahon frequently encounter significant delays in accessing medical facilities during emergencies. These delays can be critical, especially when patients need to be physically transported due to impassable roads. This situation underscores the serious health risks associated with inadequate infrastructure and its impact on public health. Due, to this scenario that most of the time encountered by the locales in the area they tend to go to the quack doctor for medication. Although alternative medicine was also encouraged by the government but there is instance that the illness cannot be treated through the traditional method. And, during the observation participants says:

*... halos sa among mga katawhan dinhi mo dangup kyud dayon sa herbolarly para mag patambal...gamit ang mga nakat-unan niya sa panambal. Ug, kalooy sa Diyos maulian man pud. Naay higayon nga among gi dala sa Ospital namatay man hinuon apan kung among dad-on sa herbolarly tanan sila nanga-buhi. Isa ka higayon niana naay ni anhi dinihi nga doctor kuno apan igu lang siya ni "check-up" ug gi ignan mi sa among gi bati ug sakit apan walay tambal nga gi hatag....gi ignan gilayon kami nga mo adto sa Ospital.*

*(...almost our people here will go to the quack doctor for healing...using his knowledge in the alternative medicine. And, in God's mercy we are healed. There was an instance that the patient was brought to the Hospital was died and when brought to the quack everybody was alive. And, there was a time when the doctor visited to us for check-up and we're only told by our illness but we're not given by the medicine for the treatment for our illness instead we're told to go to the Hospital)*

Listening and reflecting their "life experiences" we cannot blame them that people will go to the quack doctor for a reason. Having this experiences alternative medical medication or treatment must be done also for a reason. The inhabitants of the area must be taught for alternative medicine to those plants that has a medical significance within their own geographic regions. Instead, of waiting for nothing from somewhere in the indigenous way of coping.

**Cargoes to travel and transfer of goods.** The phenomenological ethnographic and anecdotal account describes the cargo transported by locales in the area, which includes: 1) round timber (troso); 2) firewood; 3) bananas; 4) sweet potatoes and potatoes; 5) cassava; 6) corn; and 7) cabbage and legumes. In addition, to discussing the transportation of goods, this account also addresses the mobility of the population. Factors such as cash or chartering for work, as well as the required travel time and distance, present significant challenges in transportation.

The cargoes that are usually to travel and transfer from one point to another point are goods coming from the farm. There are instance that goods are transported into three (3) to (5) dropping points before reaching the satellite road and need to travel the cargoes to the main road. The travel and transfer of goods was made by man if not by the animals. One thing in common to their travel is “using by foot.” The effort that man exerted is double to the effort exerted by planting and growing goods. So, expect for the utility and services is high.

**Distance to travel from home to the school.** The distance to travel was happened due to the following geographical barriers: 1) mountains; 2) hills; 3) valleys; 4) plateaus; 5) ridges; 6) rivers; 7) forest; and 8) canyons. These becomes a natural barrier that somehow affects also the construction of roads to shorten the distance for easy travel and comfort in mobility. It is also understood that when the area is passable it shortens the “*time and space*” consume during the transport on the perishable goods, the patients and the respond on the peace and order officers. Although, when the locals and the area were studied the area is really fertile its environment was blessed by God-given richness. And therefore, the distance is really a challenge to those who live in the area however, when road infrastructure is being provided these natural and manmade hazard will always become the added beauty in the sceneries.

**Food and water security.** The food and water security is sustainable for its local consumption however, when this would be provided by the road this would become accessible and free for all.

*... dinhi sa amo wala gyuy problema ang pagkaon ug tubig apan gumikan kay wala man kami punduhanan sa among abut ug uban usab sa tubig dili gyuy ni mo sustiner sa dugay-dugay nga panahon. Busa naay panahon nga niabut nga ting-init o huwaw wala gyud mi pagkaun ug tubig nga ma pundo sa among balay.*

*(... in our place we don't have really the problem of food and water but because we don't have the storage area of foods and reservoir of water and as the drought and famine come we don't have the stock at home)*

So, the immediate response from the participant observer is the construction of road from farm to market plus the post-harvest facilities to keep them safe and secured from drought and famine and relative occurrences.

**Peace and order.** Connecting and accessible countryside road from farm to market road would increase the likelihood and pleasantness in the living condition of the locale. And listening to their life experiences they said:

*... Mga ka hadluk gani kami sa halas unsa na kaha ang butu-butu sa pusil. Halos kasagara dinhi sa amo mga hayup ang among problema. Adunay mga bitin nga gikan sa tubigan ug kakahuyan. Apan wala kami mahimo kay dinhi man kami namuyo ug nabuhi. Kami kami ra gyud dinhi ang nangita sa mga pamaagi kung unsaun nga mag puyo kami nga malinawon.*

*(... we're afraid even the snake how much more the burst of a gun. Most of the time our problem is our animal. We've the snake that is coming from the water and the forest but we cannot do otherwise this is where we are living and therefore, we are the one looking at the solution of the problem to make our place a better place for us to live peacefully.*

Pondering the themes mentioned above by the participants it was seen that the government is really far from the citizens. And, so we cannot blame the community to create their own government according to their own needs. This is one of the reflection that most of the places isolated in their geographic regions there were government created within the government. So, if the central government cannot reach their citizenry probably their bureaucracy through their local government can bring services to their general public.

### EXHAUSTIVE DISCUSSIONS

Countryside Road: A Journey to Development in Sitio Paculab and Sitio Pulahon, Impasug-ong, Bukidnon, Mindanao Philippines helps peoples “safety and security.” In a sense that accessibility to farms and markets road goods, services boosted post-harvest facilities, ultimately improving the living conditions of the citizenry. Prioritizing not in a ghost construction of roads, bridges and a community-based engaged legislative efforts made by the district representative enhances “safety and security” to all forms of government services and may bring the government effort closer to the people.

### Conclusions

The insufficient road infrastructure and bridges; peace and order to the residents in two sitios in Impasug-ong, Bukidnon, Mindanao Philippines highlighting challenges to travel difficulties, economic constraints, and limited healthcare access, emphasizing the urgent need for improvements.

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