

From Veteran Welfare to Sustainable Community Enterprise: Participant Readiness and Role Alignment in the Veterans Multi-Crop Project

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Abstract

This study examines participant readiness, capability profiles and role preferences in the Sustainable Multi-Crop Community Project organised by the Royal Malaysian Air Force Veterans Association (PVTUDM) of Kelantan. The project seeks to transform veteran community participation from welfare-oriented support into a sustainable community enterprise model through multi-crop agriculture, value-chain participation and collective economic action. Using data from the Participant Profile Study, this study analyses 18 participant profiles from the two project sites. A descriptive profile analysis was conducted on demographic background, employment status, agricultural experience, available resources, time commitment, training readiness, preferred project roles, teamwork values and perceived implementation challenges. Open-ended responses were also thematically reviewed to identify participant expectations and perceived success factors. The findings show that the project is supported by a mature and experienced participant group, aged between 45 and 69 years, with most respondents being Royal Malaysian Air Force veterans and retirees. Participants reported diverse experience in crop cultivation, livestock, fruit crops, cash crops, logistics, project management and sales networks. All participants expressed willingness to join technical training, indicating a strong foundation for capacity-building. The most preferred project areas were vegetable crops, fruit crops, herbs, site management, marketing and administration, while the dominant preferred role was cropping entrepreneur, followed by strategic partner, marketing unit and operations manager. However, the study also identifies important constraints, including limited financial capital, insufficient resources, pest threats, unpredictable weather, ageing, time constraints and weak external networks. The study contributes to social economics by demonstrating how community-based agricultural projects can mobilise veteran human capital, shared values and local resources for inclusive economic participation. The findings suggest that the PVTUDM project should prioritise structured training, role matching, resource pooling, marketing partnerships and climate-resilient farm management to strengthen long-term sustainability and participant commitment.

Keywords: sustainable community enterprise, veteran entrepreneurship, multi-crop agriculture, social economics, community development

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