

Impact of a new linkage strategy to improve the quality of life of the Jujan community



Impacto de una nueva estrategia de vinculación para mejorar la calidad de vida de la comunidad de Jujan

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Abstract: The linkage projects represent an advantage in the development processes of communities in a state of poverty or vulnerability, since they work systematically to achieve objectives that serve as a solution to the problems that afflict the people who live in these places. On the other hand, linkage projects are also recognized as a useful tool for educational institutions to have real approaches with the communities, and that these experiences can contribute to the integral formation of their students. For this reason, the main objective of this study is to propose, through the Instituto Superior Tecnológico EuroAmericano, a linkage strategy focused on the case of the Jujan canton. In order to determine which is the ideal strategy for the case studied, the method of bibliographic review was used to study similar cases where strategies that allow the economic development of this type of communities have been applied. Based on the information found, it was determined that the best option in the case of Jujan is to focus the linkage strategies on animal husbandry projects in the homes of the families in the community.

Keywords: linkage with society, animal husbandry, entrepreneurship, quality of life, vulnerable communities.

Resumen: Los proyectos de vinculación representan una ventaja en los procesos de desarrollo de comunidades en estado de pobreza o vulnerabilidad, ya que trabajan de forma sistemática para alcanzar objetivos que sirvan como solución a los problemas que aquejan a las personas que habitan en estos lugares. Por otro lado, también se reconoce a los proyectos de vinculación como una herramienta útil para que las instituciones educativas tengan acercamientos reales con las comunidades, y que estas experiencias puedan contribuir a la formación integral de sus estudiantes. Por esta razón, el objetivo principal de este estudio es proponer a través del Instituto Superior Tecnológico EuroAmericano una estrategia de vinculación enfocada al caso del cantón Jujan. Para determinar cuál es la estrategia idónea para el caso estudiado se usó el método de revisión bibliográfica para estudiar casos parecidos en donde se hayan aplicado estrategias que permitan el desarrollo económico de este tipo de comunidades. A partir de la información encontrada se determinó que la mejor opción en el caso de Jujan es enfocar las estrategias de vinculación en proyectos de crianza de animales en los hogares de las familias de la comunidad.

Palabras clave: vinculación con la sociedad, crianza de animales, emprendimiento, calidad de vida, comunidades vulnerables.

Introduction

The linkage projects that are developed in educational institutions are of great importance for the improvement of many communities, some of these belonging to the productive sector. The linkage work that is done through union and cooperation makes it possible to improve the living conditions of the people involved (Novillo, 2019). For this reason, this can increase the income of producers and rural workers, and as a consequence, improve the quality of life of these communities.

These projects are also vital for students in their professional and academic development. Thus, the actions of students in terms of linkage projects are intended to make them useful individuals for society, with competencies that allow them to share their knowledge and their results to be disseminated to the community through skills and experiences that are of benefit to those who contribute and intervene in that process (Polaino and Romillo, 2017).

The Instituto Superior Tecnológico EuroAmericano aims to be recognized thanks to its good academic quality, its attention to current needs and contribution to the improvement of the living conditions of the communities in the region. In this sense, the overall quality of the institution and its processes is built from the intertwined linkage with the continuous improvement, mission and vision of the institute (Pérez et al., 2020).

This will be possible through constant activities that involve innovation, research and community outreach, through student support of all the careers present in the institute. For this reason, the Instituto Superior Tecnológico EuroAmericano has developed an agreement with the Fundación Amigos Salesianos (FAMS), in order to meet the objectives of linkage proposed in its academic programs and obtain new knowledge for the entire university community.

We proceed to propose a linkage strategy to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of the community of Jujan, the community where one of the FAMS headquarters is located. In addition to this, it is taken into account that Jujan has 36% of poverty by consumption (Molina et al., 2015); therefore, it is beneficial to work in terms of finding solutions to the economic problems that arise there. In this way, it is expected that the development of this strategy will guide the students in their linkage process and provide effective solutions for the people of the community and for its productive sector.

The proposal of a linkage project is resorted to, since they allow the creation of an interaction between the academic body and the communities, being of benefit to both parties. According to Granados (2020) "The linkage with society is a substantive function and key process that generates capabilities and knowledge exchange according to the academic domains established by the institution" (p. 91). In this way, these processes generate necessary skills for students and generate new knowledge for the entire academic community.

The linkage work will be carried out in four localities of Jujan: 4 Caminos, Pajonal Sur, La Porfía and La Otilia, where the communities present will be instructed through training given by students of the Instituto Superior Tecnológico EuroAmericano. The main objective of this study is to propose a suitable strategy to improve the productive processes in the community of Jujan and thus help in its socioeconomic development.

It should be noted that Jujan's economy is based mainly on agriculture and livestock. Thus, Jujan is defined as a mainly agricultural canton, in which its population has been dedicated to agriculture. In Jujan, rice, sugar cane, cocoa, corn and bananas are grown. In addition, activities such as artisanal fishing are also recognized, which is also part of the work that represents the daily livelihood of each of the inhabitants. However, it is considered a fragile system due to the scarcity of opportunities presented or poor management, either because public or private entities in the area have worked individually and for a short time, leaving the inhabitants dissatisfied. For this reason we seek to propose a different strategy to support the socioeconomic development of Jujan, which will benefit the selected families and the community in general.

By practicing outreach, different important areas for the development of societies can be addressed. For this reason, linkage activities with society involve participatory processes, community building, actions focused on information networks, assistance and attention to new coexistence strategies, cultural, educational and integral development interventions (Alcívar, 2020). Thanks to this, we work in a versatile and dynamic process, which can be adapted to the needs of each community and can serve as a basis for future linkage actions.

Linkage is a recommended strategy in projects of a social nature where work is done with vulnerable communities, since they are necessary for empowerment to be generated in them and a change in knowledge and in the structuring of ideas of students (Gonzales et al., 2018). For this reason, linkage activities are an ideal strategy in many situations where change and development actions are needed. These types of projects will always be characterized by their horizontality, respect and listening in favor of the community (Estudillo, 2018).

The linkage projects are based on the progressive improvement of the quality of life of the intervened subjects and their surroundings. According to Paredes et al. (2020) "quality of life is the state of physical, social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual and occupational well-being that allows individuals to appropriately satisfy their individual and collective needs" (p. 7). Thus, it is understood that quality of life encompasses several dimensions of human life and that this is why it can be related to the breadth of actions of the linkage projects.

Apart from being composed of several dimensions, it can also vary depending on the stage of life of the subject in question and is influenced by other factors, such as socioeconomic factors, health conditions, the place where he/she lives, personal satisfaction and the social environment in which he/she lives (Hernández et al., 2020).

Quality of life is understood as a set of factors that influence the overall well-being of the person. Regarding this Razo et al. (2018) explain that "quality of life would be divided into physical, psychological, social and environmental aspects" (p. 63). For this reason, the improvement of quality of life will depend on efficiently addressing the different needs present in the mentioned variables.

This should be taken into account when defining and planning a linkage strategy so that it can be a useful solution and support for the communities involved.

Materials and Methods

For this study, a literature review was carried out in an attempt to associate and synthesize the results obtained through specific case studies of productive sectors in vulnerable communities and their characteristics in order to have an overview of the strategies to combat socioeconomic problems in situations such as those raised with respect to Jujan.

This analysis is based on current knowledge about Jujan and the factors that influence the development of productive activities. The total area of Jujan is distributed for agricultural, livestock and forestry use, and there are also rest lands, uncultivated areas and areas corresponding to housing. However, although many of these people are dedicated to the production and sale of rice, lately this has been a difficult task due to climatic changes and economic conditions in which local farmers are not brought to see good results after production (Goya, 2021).

First, the case of "Development of home gardens by older Guabeño adults in the province of El Oro, Ecuador", a research conducted by Estrada and Escobar in 2020, was studied. This research studied how home gardens have allowed people to have a tool for food sovereignty and security through healthy agricultural production, which can guarantee food for people and contribute to improving their living conditions. This project was carried out as a linkage strategy, as a teaching-learning resource that instructs people about food culture and processes, specifically in older adults. After applying surveys and observing the problem, the results showed that it is possible for older adults to develop family gardens in their homes and that these can contribute to their quality of life.

The second study taken into account was conducted by Lepe et al. in 2020, entitled "The raising of backyard domestic animals in the communities of Lake Atitlán, Guatemala". This research studies how backyard animal husbandry occurs, which serves as a livelihood support for the subsistence of vulnerable communities. The authors investigated the case of animal husbandry of a group of women of indigenous origins. These animals were housed in stables built with low-cost materials and treated against diseases by means of medicinal plants. On the other hand, the animals were fed with nixtamal water, a dough made from cooked corn and household waste. These authors also point out the importance of paying special attention to the prevention and treatment of diseases that could affect the animals.

On the other hand, Vázquez and Calderón (2017) explain in their research that "backyard domestic animal husbandry is part of the global strategy to produce food for families living in poverty in rural and peri-urban areas" (p. 16). This is mentioned in their research entitled "Diversity and practices for raising domestic animals in backyards of indigenous communities in Guerrero, Mexico", where they mention that in this type of situation they have a large number of resources for agroecological practices and bases for adaptation to the environment by the animals, strengthening sustainability and self-sufficient food production. This is of great importance for the integral development of small

communities where there are not enough resources to undertake certain types of projects and more simple and viable methods are required so that these people can improve their quality of life by working from their homes with resources that they can easily obtain.

Results

The research studies presented situations similar to the one seen in Jujan, where people have limited opportunities for their socioeconomic development and resort to strategies that can be easily implemented from their homes and with affordable materials. This allows us to have an idea of what proposals can be given as a solution to the problems faced by the community of Jujan, taking into account the characteristics that make up this community.

It can be seen how the linkage projects not only seek to support people through the material elements necessary to carry out the proposed production activities, but also through the necessary information so that these communities can carry out their production projects efficiently, making the most of the resources and executing all the processes in an adequate manner.

Considering that agricultural projects are something that in some cases have not given good results for communities on the Ecuadorian coast, especially rice in the case of Jujan, the option of production through animal husbandry is considered. By proceeding with animal husbandry, the inhabitants of Jujan can benefit from the products by selling and consuming them.

In addition, this project can be carried out jointly, through pairs of families who are assigned the necessary materials to carry out the project and can thus support each other in its development. In this way, collaborative work and the search for better results is encouraged through organized teamwork.

This type of project allows for sustainable processes and the production of healthy foods that improve the eating habits of the inhabitants of the Jujan community. In this way, better products are also offered to the community through their enterprises and the consumption of locally produced food is encouraged, as well as the development of the family economy.

The study of the different cases mentioned above allows us to have a clearer idea of how to provide solutions to different problems presented by communities or people in vulnerable situations. In this way, it is also possible to identify the advantages and disadvantages of each option and adapt these solutions to the needs of the individuals to whom the linkage is applied. For this reason, in order to improve people's quality of life, it is necessary to recognize which factors should be taken as a priority.

In this case, approaches were studied where home-based production projects are developed to improve people's quality of life; however, there are other types of strategies that can be applied to support the socioeconomic development of vulnerable communities such as Jujan. These strategies can also be oriented to tourism activities, services or the reinforcement of the commercialization of handicrafts and cultivation, which are already existing activities in this community. In this way, the construction of new forms of entrepreneurship and the strengthening of Jujan's economic activities could be evaluated.

It would also be relevant to study in detail the care and maintenance techniques to be followed in each process by the families that have these enterprises based on animal husbandry, as well as the specific management strategies of the enterprise in the areas of accounting, advertising, service and other relevant aspects for the correct operation and growth of the business.

Conclusions

The current situation in Jujan demonstrates that it is beneficial for its inhabitants to propose to improve or implement new strategies that can enhance socioeconomic activities and develop new solutions to improve the quality of life of these people. Through new proposals it is possible to learn more efficient ways to obtain resources, to produce and to commercialize. In this way we can have a variety of options that adapt to the current needs of this community.

According to INEC data from the 2010 Census, the urban area of Jujan is inhabited by 32.33% of men, while in the rural area 67.67% of the same gender is concentrated, likewise 34% of women are in the urban area, while 66% reside in the rural area. These data reflect the importance of generating solutions for people in rural areas, where access to more types of jobs can be more complicated.

Considering the situation of the Jujan Community, the approaches of some of the authors mentioned above may be the ideal solution to improve the productive processes and show a new way of working to these people.

The first research study, proposed by Estrada and Escobar, advocates the ease of productive activities through projects developed from the participants' homes. This represents an advantage for the inhabitants of the Jujan community since it is much easier for them to have the sources of economic development from their homes, taking into account where most of the population resides. Estrada and Escobar's study also points out that these types of activities are adaptable and appropriate for the elderly, which is useful for promoting inclusion within families and the community in general.

Another of these authors, Vásquez and Calderón, suggest the use of an animal breeding system to propose it as an option for the main economic activity of people living in poverty or vulnerability, explaining that it is not very complicated to obtain the necessary resources to carry it out. This is very useful for the inhabitants of Jujan, since these people do not have many resources to sustain their enterprises.

The animal husbandry option proposed by Lepe et al. indicates that animal husbandry is a good option as a method of socioeconomic improvement in this type of community. These authors mention that the animals can be fed with food made from household waste and treated for illnesses with medicinal plants. These procedures represent an advantage in view of the scarce economic resources that can be allocated for the development and maintenance of the projects undertaken.

The implementation of new linkage strategies related to animal husbandry among families in vulnerable communities can bring great benefits to the people residing in Jujan. From these strategies, local trade of the products coming from them can be encouraged and the food security of the community is supported (Cedeño et al., 2017).

These practices represent an important contribution to the community, at the same time that they become learning tools (Ortiz, 2019). This is a way in which institutions can have a closer contact with the communities that are being intervened and allows a multidisciplinary group of students to lead and participate in outreach activities. On the other hand, it is also important to take into account the role of training aimed at these communities in relation to the social problems they face on a daily basis (Mendoza et al., 2020).

To carry out these outreach activities, the Instituto Superior Tecnológico EuroAmericano proposes to follow a process in which the institute donates the initial materials and resources so that the families of Jujan can begin their productive activities focused on raising animals in the homes of the residents of Jujan. On the other hand, the institute will also direct students who will participate in outreach activities through training to the families who will have the enterprises. These students will be in charge of explaining the basic procedures for raising animals and will also explain topics related to the careers they are pursuing at the institute that may be useful for the development of production and marketing activities.

The Instituto Superior Tecnológico EuroAmericano through this type of linkage strategies can provide a useful solution to the socioeconomic difficulties faced by the inhabitants of rural or vulnerable communities and also contributes to the academic and professional development of its students through a real approach to the problems that afflict today's society.

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