

49TH SUSTAINABLE SHARED GROWTH SEMINAR

FEB
2026

THE MANY FACES OF ALITAPTAP: A KAIZEN APPROACH TO COMMUNITY CURRENCY



A seminar by
Sekiguchi Global Research Association of the Atsumi
International Foundation (SGRA)
in collaboration with
Faculty of Management and Development Studies (FMDS)
of the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU)





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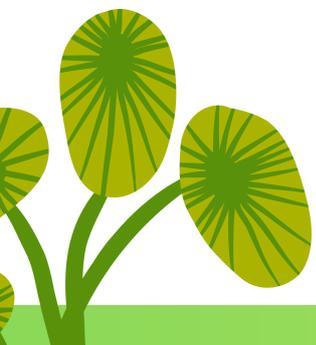
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49th Sustainable Shared Growth Seminar



The Many Faces of Alitaptap: A Kaizen Approach to Community Currency at UPOU



In preparation for the panel session to be presented at the 8th Asia Future Conference (August 2026 @ Sendai, Japan)

Now accepting registration!
<https://url.upou.edu.ph/KKK49-Reg>

9 AM to 12 NN (PH time)
February 20, 2026 (Friday)

Online via ZOOM and
On site @ UPOU HQ (AVR)

Open to the public
Limited slots available



ID	Title	Author(s)
343	A Voluntary Alitaptap Full Paper (5-10 pages) · English	Dayson, Reinald; Cruz, Larry; Ordanes, Jurell; Cometa, Jezreel Ann; Unlayao, Naomi Jean; Capio, Zia Bernadette Dayson, Reinald
346	A Sociable Alitaptap for Community Building Full Paper (5-10 pages) · English	Taylan, Finaflor; Maquito, Ferdinand; Autor, Vanessa; Catbagan, Tiffany Taylan, Dr. Finaflor
348	A Playful Alitaptap Full Paper (5-10 pages) · English	Serrano, Joane Vermudo; Maquito, Ferdinand Serrano, Prof. Joane Vermudo
349	A Learning Alitaptap Full Paper (5-10 pages) · English	Serrano, Joane Vermudo Serrano, Prof. Joane Vermudo
394	A Resilient Alitaptap for Micro Enterprises: What OUgnayan Wednesdays Merchants Need to Successfully Adopt Community Currency Full Paper (5-10 pages) · English	Ascan, Tricia; Climaco, Emilio Ascan, Prof. Tricia

INTRODUCTION

February 20, 2026

49th Sustainable Shared Growth Seminar

KKK Seminar #49

Topic: The Many Faces of Alitaptap--A Kaizen Approach to Community Currency at UPOU

Description:

The 49th Sustainable Shared Growth (KKK) Seminar on The Many Faces of Alitaptap: A Kaizen Approach to Community Currency at UPOU, organized by the Faculty of Management and Development Studies and Sekiguchi Global Research Association (SGRA) of the Atsumi International Foundation (AISF).

This seminar serves two purposes. One is to come up with further improvements (kaizen) of the Alitaptap Community Currency (CC) pilot study being conducted by the Faculty of Management and Development Studies at the University of the Philippines Open University, and another is to prepare for the panel session on the same topic to be held at the 8th Asia Future Conference (AFC8) in August 2026 at Sendai, Japan.

The seminar will present initial drafts of the five papers to be presented at the AFC8, touching on five aspects of the Alitaptap or Ali (pronounced as Eli). A learning Ali, which gives an overview of Ali in the context of UPOU; a playful Ali, which gamifies Ali; a social Ali, which looks at the community building; a resilient Ali, which reflects on the use of Ali at the OUnayan Wednesdays Market, and a voluntary Ali, which examines the use of Ali at UPOU Ugnayan ng Pahinungod.

OPENING REMARKS: JUNKO IMANISHI

Chief Representative, SGRA/AISF

Konnichi wa

Good day

I am Junko Imanishi, Chief Representative of Sekigichi Global Research Association (or SGRA for short) and Executive Director of Atsumi International Foundation.

I would like to welcome you to the 49th Sustainable Shared Growth (or KKK) Seminar jointly organized with the Faculty of Management and Development Studies (FMDS) of the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU).

This seminar is the fourth and last one for this Japanese fiscal year which ends on March 31st. We would like to thank again Dean Fina Taylan and Chancellor Joane Serrano for their kind collaboration during this fiscal year. It is our wish to continue collaborating with FMDA/UPOU for the next four seminars of the next fiscal year should the KKK seminars still align with UPOU's priorities.



"We would like to thank again Dean Fina Taylan and Chancellor Joane Serrano for their kind collaboration during this fiscal year."

OPENING REMARKS: JUNKO IMANISHI

Chief Representative, SGRA/AISF

The KKK seminars are focused on the research and advocacy of mechanisms that theoretically and in real life could be shown to help in achieving sustainable shared growth, or the socio-economic goals of efficiency, equity, and eco-friendliness. In today's seminar we focus on one such mechanism: community currency. More specifically, we focus on the Alitaptap community currency being piloted by FMDS/UPOU. While we in Japan have hundreds of community currencies, I understand Alitaptap is the first one in the Philippines.

The presentations today are actually a preparation for the 8th Asia Future Conference to be held in August at Sendai, Japan. It is an interdisciplinary, international, and intersectoral conference. This year's theme is "Space and Sistance". We are still accepting papers to be presented so if you're interested just get in touch with Dr Max Maquito or any of the presenters today.

In the meantime, I do hope that the Alitaptap (蛩) of today's seminar will light the way to building more vibrant communities in the Philippines.



"While we in Japan have hundreds of community currencies, I understand Alitaptap is the first one in the Philippines."

OPENING REMARKS: JUNKO IMANISHI

Chief Representative, SGRA/AISF

どうもありがとうございます
Many Thanks!



The Sekiguchi Global Research Association (SGRA), under the Atsumi International Scholarship Foundation, promotes global citizenship and harmony through international research and collaboration.

PRESENTATION I

A Learning Alitaptap

Dr. Joane Serrano

Introduction and Context

- The presentation discussed ongoing research on strengthening ALI (Alitap-Tap Community Currency) as a university-level community-building framework within UPOU. Initially initiated under the Faculty of Management and Development Studies (FMDS), the initiative aims to expand into a broader university engagement platform that includes partners and, eventually, students.
- Using the metaphor of the Alitaptap (firefly), the study frames the community currency not only as an alternative economic tool but also as a learning infrastructure within an Open and Distance e-Learning (ODeL) environment. While ODeL increases access across distance and time zones, it can thin relational ties. ALI addresses this by recreating repeatable opportunities for engagement beyond course portals.



Conceptual Framework

The study is grounded in three major ideas:

1. **Community Building as a Design Challenge in ODeL**

Unlike residential universities where community forms through proximity, ODeL communities must be intentionally designed through structured participation.

2. **Experiential Learning as Participation in Shared Systems**

Learning occurs through contribution, exchange, negotiation, and reflection—not only through fieldwork but through active engagement in shared value systems.

3. **Participation as an Ecology**

Participation develops in phases—beginning with faculty and staff, expanding to partners, and eventually opening structured pathways for student involvement.

PRESENTATION I

A Learning Alitaptap

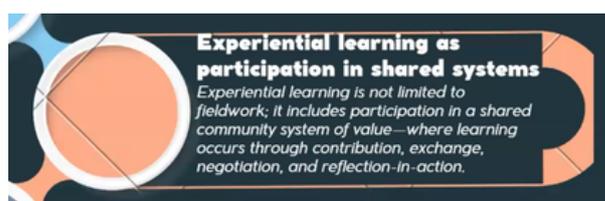
Dr. Joane Serrano

Methodology

The study employed a qualitative, exploratory design combining a case study and thematic meta-synthesis to examine ALI as a developing community-building system within an ODeL environment.

- **A single-site case study** analyzed the ongoing Kaizen-based implementation of ALI at UPOU. Data sources included internal documents, participation records, stakeholder reflections, and observations of exchange practices. The focus was on understanding how participation routines, trust mechanisms, and system improvements evolve over time.
- **A thematic meta-synthesis of four related abstracts** was conducted to identify recurring themes such as community currency systems, trust-building, governance, and sustainability. This helped extract transferable insights for future student participation.
- The analysis was guided by three lenses: **participation ecology**, **relational infrastructure**, and **learning integration**, emphasizing patterns and system development rather than quantitative measurement.

As an early-stage initiative, findings reflect a pilot phase with participation primarily among faculty and staff.



Ali functions as a learning space because it converts “community” from an abstract value into a repeatable practice. In this pilot phase, faculty and staff participation is not incidental; it is formative. They are the ones creating the initial routines that make participation legible—what counts as contribution, how exchanges happen, what is expected, and what happens after participation.

PRESENTATION I

A Learning Alitaptap

At the same time, Ali reveals a distinct kind of experiential learning: learning embedded in everyday micro-actions rather than in formal “activities.” A participant who participates in an exchange learns about value, needs, reciprocity, and the practical conditions that enable or hinder collaboration.

Dr. Joane Serrano

Key Findings: Emerging Themes

1. Participation as Pedagogy

ALI demonstrates that participation itself can function as a learning process. Engagement in exchanges, contribution tracking, and shared activities transforms abstract concepts such as collaboration and community into lived practice. Rather than positioning learning solely within formal academic coursework, ALI embeds experiential learning within structured participation routines.

Theme 1: Participation as pedagogy (currently stewarded by faculty/staff)

Ali functions as a learning space because it converts “community” from an abstract value into a repeatable practice. In this pilot phase, faculty and staff participation is not incidental; it is formative. They are the ones creating the initial routines that make participation legible—what counts as contribution, how exchanges happen, what is expected, and what happens after participation.

At the same time, Ali reveals a distinct kind of experiential learning: learning embedded in everyday micro-actions rather than in formal “activities.” A participant who participates in an exchange learns about value, needs, reciprocity, and the practical conditions that enable or hinder collaboration.

Student implication: students are more likely to join when participation is already legible—what counts, how to start, what happens after participation.

2. Reciprocity as Social Glue

Reciprocity emerged as a foundational mechanism that sustains engagement. Exchanges within ALI generate mutual recognition and reinforce social ties. Over time, repeated acts of contribution cultivate relational trust and shared responsibility. The system thus strengthens not only transactional interaction but also a sense of belonging and interdependence.

Theme 2: Reciprocity as Social Glue

Reciprocity is what transforms a set of transactions into a community. In the pilot, ALI’s value lies not merely in the unit of exchange but in the shared expectation that value can be co-created—through goods, services, time, attention, and care. Reciprocity creates a rhythm: people return because they sense that participation matters and that contributions are acknowledged.

Reciprocity also has a community-building effect that is easy to overlook: it builds relational memory. Each exchange becomes a trace of connection—“I offered,” “someone responded,” “we coordinated,” “I received,” “I contributed again.” Over time, these traces accumulate into informal networks of trust and mutual recognition.

Student implication: student engagement will become realistic when reciprocity is experienced as real and useful—not symbolic—and when students can both contribute and benefit in meaningful ways.

3. Trust as Infrastructure

Trust operates as an enabling condition for participation. Clear guidelines, transparent processes, and consistent documentation provide predictability within the system. When members perceive fairness and reliability, they are more willing to contribute and engage. Trust, therefore, is not incidental but structurally embedded in governance and operational design.

Theme 3: Trust as Infrastructure

In many community initiatives, trust is treated as a feeling: “if people trust the system, they will participate.” The pilot points to a more practical truth: trust is often the outcome of reliable infrastructure—clear rules, predictable processes, transparent stewardship, and credible communication.

In this phase, trust is built through the work of faculty/staff/partners who ensure that the system behaves consistently: that participation is recorded or acknowledged, that exchange opportunities are not arbitrary, that expectations are communicated, and that disputes (if any) can be addressed fairly.

Student implication: students will participate when they trust the system will “work” for them—fairly, consistently, and without undue burden.

PRESENTATION I

A Learning Alitaptap

Dr. Joane Serrano

Key Findings: Emerging Themes

4. Inclusion and Entry Points

Effective participation requires accessible entry pathways. Members vary in time availability, digital access, and confidence levels. Providing multiple, low-barrier opportunities for contribution encourages gradual engagement. Structured onboarding and clear expectations are necessary to ensure broader inclusion, particularly in preparing for future student involvement.

5. Sustainability and Distributed Stewardship

Community-building involves ongoing coordination, facilitation, and improvement. Concentrating responsibility among a few individuals risks fatigue and limits scalability. Sustainable growth requires distributed stewardship, shared roles, and incremental refinement consistent with Kaizen principles.

6. Governance as Learning

Governance challenges—such as defining contribution standards and ensuring accountability—serve as opportunities for collective learning. Through participatory decision-making, members deepen their understanding of fairness, cooperation, and institutional design. Governance, therefore, becomes both a functional necessity and an educational process.

Theme 4: Entry Points and Inclusion Shape Who Participates

Participation systems fail when they assume that everyone has the same time, confidence, digital access, or motivation. The pilot underscores that community participation is shaped by entry points—the ways people are invited in and the roles they can take on. Inclusion is not only about who is welcome; it is about whether participation has “doors” that different people can realistically enter.

At this stage, faculty/staff/partners serve as the early adopters not just because they are motivated, but because they are closer to the system’s formation and can tolerate ambiguity. To grow the community responsibly, All needs multiple entry points: low-risk beginnings, repeatable participation routines, and meaningful pathways to deeper involvement.

Student participation implication (emerging pathway): Student entry points should be aligned with how students already live and learn in ODeL.

Theme 5: Community Work is Real Work

A crucial learning from the pilot is that community-building requires hard work. Someone onboards participants, explains rules, responds to questions, connects people, troubleshoots, and keeps momentum alive. In the current phase, this “community work” is largely carried by faculty/staff/partners. If this labor is not recognized and distributed, it can produce fatigue and can unintentionally centralize the system around a few people—reducing resilience.

This theme is important because it reframes community currency not as a tool that automatically creates community, but as a system that must be cared for. In sustainability work, “care” is not soft—it is operational. It includes workload management, role rotation, and the creation of routines that do not depend on heroic effort.

Student participation implication (emerging pathway): Student participation should not increase burden on stewards. Scaling must come with better supports: simplified procedures, clear documentation, automation where possible, and distributed roles.

Theme 6: Governance as Learning

Governance is often treated as administrative, but the pilot suggests it is deeply educational. Governance includes the rules and relationships that sustain participation: how decisions are made, how fairness is protected, how value is defined, how exceptions are handled, and how accountability is enacted. In the current phase, governance is primarily stewarded by faculty/staff/partners, and it is precisely through this stewardship that community norms and legitimacy begin to form.

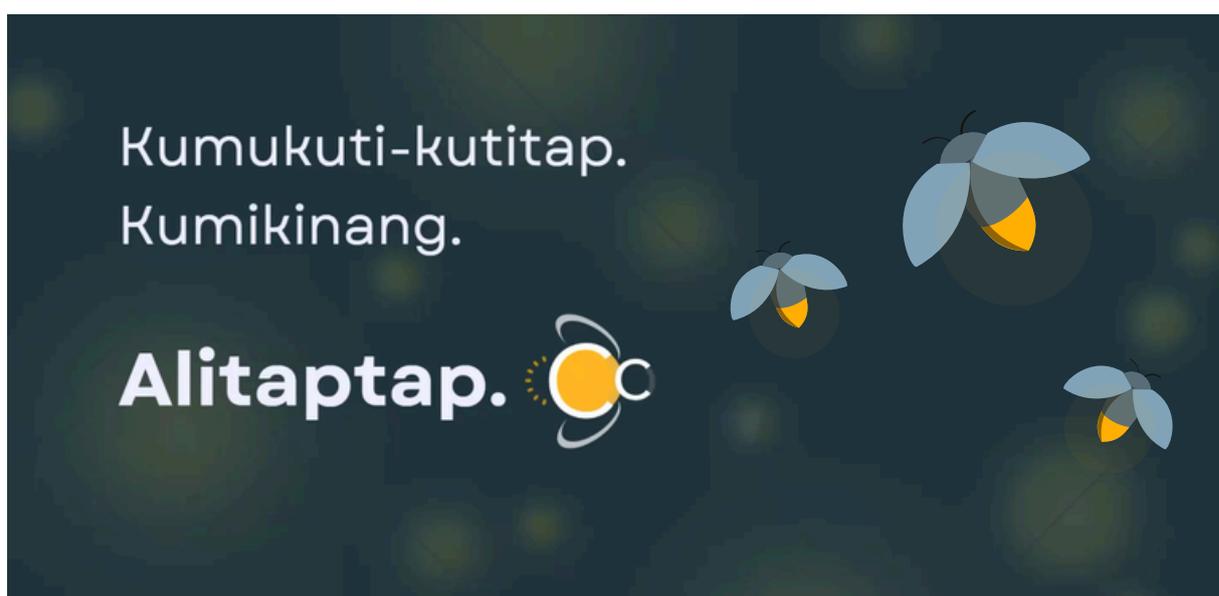
Governance becomes experiential learning because participants learn through real dilemmas: What counts as contribution? How do we prevent exclusion? What happens when someone feels disadvantaged? How do we keep the system transparent without becoming bureaucratic? These are not theoretical questions—they are the lived questions of sustaining community practice. In a sustainability-oriented university, this kind of learning is core: it teaches how to build systems that are both humane and functional.

Student participation implication (emerging pathway): Students can be included in governance gradually, once basic routines are stable.

PRESENTATION I

A Learning Alitaptap

Dr. Joane Serrano



Conclusion

- ALI shows that a community currency can serve as a relational infrastructure within an Open and Distance e-Learning environment, not just an alternative economic tool. In the absence of physical proximity, structured exchange systems help sustain connection, visibility, and shared responsibility.
- The pilot phase indicates that reciprocity, transparency, and continuous improvement gradually build trust and cohesion. Small, consistent contributions accumulate into stronger relationships, demonstrating that community is formed through deliberate and repeatable practice.
- Currently grounded among faculty, staff, and partners, ALI provides a stable base for phased student inclusion supported by clear governance and accessible entry points.
- Overall, ALI highlights the need to intentionally design participatory systems that foster resilient, interdependent, and learning-centered academic communities.

PRESENTATION I

A Learning Alitaptap

Dr. Joane V. Serrano (Chancellor, UPOU)

Dr. Joane V. Serrano (UPOU)

PRESENTER



Joane V. Serrano, PhD, is a professor of the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU). She serves as the Chancellor of UPOU. She obtained her Bachelor of Science in Development Communication, Master of Management Major in Development Management, and Doctor of Philosophy Major in Development Management, and Doctor of Philosophy Major in Development Communication from the University of the Philippines Los Baños. She teaches Environmental Advocacy, Communication of Scientific and Technical Information, and Socio-Cultural Perspectives on the Environment. She has a wide array of research interests including sustainability, socio-cultural perspectives on the environment, development and environmental communication, health promotion, gender and indigenous knowledge, and open and distance eLearning (ODEL). She is currently the editor in chief of the UPOU-managed Journal of Management and Development Studies.

She has published more than 30 publications, presented in 90 conferences, and more than 60 public service engagements. Her recent international engagements are Won by Walking Network initiated by University of Gothenburg, University of Plymouth, Abo Akademi, University of Oulu funded by Riksbanken Jubileumsfond; Digital Trust and Intuition with focus on Sustainability with Ostfalia University, and Satoyama Initiatives with International Partnership for Satoyama Initiatives and Satoyama Development Mechanism. As part of her commitment to lifelong learning and sustainability, Dr. Serrano continues to find ways of discovering innovations that will help improve education and research practices in the Philippines.

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disclaimer

The opinions expressed in the presentations are solely those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the views or opinions of the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

PRESENTATION 2

A Playful Alitaptap

Dr. Max Maquito

Introduction

The gamification of ALI (Alitaptap Community Currency) was implemented through a three-way partnership formalized on August 6, 2025, between University of the Philippines Open University, Japan Foundation Manila, and the Kaminori Foundation.

This collaboration supported the Japanese Speakers Forum in the Philippines 2025, held from October 26–29, 2025. The shared theme—“Think Global, Act Local: Let’s Make a Sustainable Community through Bayanihan”—aligned closely with ALI’s objectives as a community-based sustainability mechanism.

The initiative positioned ALI within UPOU’s Sustainability in Action Learning framework, while exploring how gamification could increase student participation and system adoption.



Objectives

The presentation aimed to:

1. Introduce a gamified structure to ALI.
2. Encourage student participation alongside faculty and staff early adopters.
3. Examine the balance between cooperation and competition.
4. Identify operational challenges and propose Kaizen (continuous improvement) recommendations.

PRESENTATION 2

A Playful Alitaptap

Dr. Max Maquito

Game Design and Mechanics

Team Formation

- Six teams were formed.
- Each team consisted of:
- At least one Japanese participant
- Two Filipino students
- One facilitating instructor
- Teams were intentionally mixed to encourage intercultural collaboration.

Ways to Earn Points

Participants earned points through:

- Recruiting UPOU community members to ALI or its Facebook page (5 points per member).
- Conducting transactions (buying or selling via "Give Me" and "Give You" functions).
- Maintaining a net positive credit balance, incentivizing contribution rather than mere consumption.
- To address concerns about free-riding, additional points were awarded to teams with positive balances, reinforcing reciprocity and shared responsibility.

achievement	points
adding member to e-Ali or Ali FB Page	5 points per person added
buying (give me) using Ali	5 points per purchase
selling (give you) using Ali	5 points per purchase
having a net positive credit balance	points based on ranking

A leaderboard was displayed at the Ali FB at the end of every day to inform the teams their standings

TEAM	MEMBERS	joined FB	joined e-Ali	Day 1 Points		Day 2 Points		Day 3 Points	
				Individual	Team	Cum. Individual	Cum. Team	Individual	Cum. Individual
A		26	Y	10		5	15		15
A		26	Y	5		5	5		5
A		26	Y	10	30		10	45	10
B		26	Y	10			10		10
B		26	Y	10			10	15	25
B		26	Y	10			10		10
B		26	Y	10	40	5	15	45	15
C		26	Y	10		5	15		15
C		26	Y	10		5	15		15
C		26	Y	10		5	15	5	20
C		26	Y	10	40	15	25	70	25
D			Y	5			5		5
D			Y	5			5		5
D			Y	5			5		5
D			Y	5	20	5	10	25	10
E		27	Y	5		5	10		10
E		26	Y	10		5	15		20
E		27	Y	5		5	10	5	10
E		26	Y	10	30	5	10	45	10
F		26	Y	15			15		10
F		26	Y	15			15		20

Leaderboard System

Daily leaderboard updates displayed:

- Recruitment numbers
- Transaction counts
- Net balances

This digital transparency increased motivation and sustained engagement.

This booklet is a comprehensive guide on the Forum that is to be held from October 26 to 29, 2025, as well as resources and reading materials that you may find handy later. Enjoy!

PRESENTATION 2

A Playful Alitaptap

The Nihongo-jin Forum is a joint project organized by the Kamenori Foundation and the Japan Foundation since 2011. We provide opportunities for high school students and teachers from Southeast Asia and Japan to learn and interact with one another using



Implementation Observations

1. Rapid Membership Growth

- Within four days, ALI membership nearly doubled—an achievement that previously took over a year of onboarding efforts.

2. Active Supervision

- Facilitating instructors played a crucial role, both in guiding students and actively transacting ALI to reward volunteer activities.

3. Rich Transaction Narratives

- The digital description box allowed users to include gratitude messages and reflections, reinforcing relational exchange beyond economic transactions.

4. Limited Peer-to-Peer Transactions

- Most transactions involved supervisors rather than student-to-student exchanges.

5. Operational Challenges

- Some confusion regarding rules and system use.
- Jam-packed schedules limited time for reflection and deeper engagement.
- Minor digital interface concerns (e.g., design appeal for younger users).



Due to different nationalities in each team, it was difficult to reject invitations to volunteer.

PRESENTATION 2

A Playful Alitaptap

Dr. Max Maquito

Felt the energy of Filipinos. Group members were very aggressive in volunteering. Felt the group mentality/pressure of Japanese. I felt I also had to act

Survey Findings

A brief online survey (with consent) gathered feedback on:

1. Team Cooperation

Responses indicated high levels of teamwork. Participants emphasized:

- Shared volunteering
- No member left behind
- Collective decision-making

Gamification strengthened cooperative behavior within teams.

2. Inter-Team Competition

Competition levels were generally rated high.

Participants reported:

- Increased motivation to volunteer
- Active searching for tasks to earn points
- Occasional collaboration across teams despite competition

The system successfully balanced competition and cooperation.

Explain Above Rating

Because we asked each other to join the voluntary works and cooperated to finish the task. For example, my team washed the dishes together.
 We were able to give out a performance with flying colors. We were always together, waiting for each other, and isn't afraid of giving ideas
 2) Everyone was willing to adjust for the greater good of the team. we tried to cooperate together, but it's a little hard to get up early.
 Our cooperation was average, because it's a little bit hard for us to communicate because of the language barrier.
 I helped serve food and it was fun
 everybody helped in pitching ideas in accomplishing tasks and did their own work
 We did hard work and we could start talking by have a conversation about Alitaptap
 Our group did well in the All Game. Even though we have different sleep and waking-up schedule, we still did good in helping seito-tachi.
 Students are very cooperative. They are willing and presented themselves to do tasks.
 My team is very eager to help and when we see something that needs to be done, we ask if we can help. We always talk with each other about what each of us will do. We divide our tasks evenly.
 they easily finish the task because they know each other's strength and they make use of it
 My team Bayankhoro's cooperation is very good because we always talk with each other and discusses what were the things we did!
 we were motivated to work together as a group to gain points. For example, whenever i was not able to come in at the early time, I would come in for later shifts, which created conversation.
 Our team agrees to wake up early every day to gain all points.
 2 out of 3 students were actively in collecting points. The other student also help but not that much
 Each member of the group made sure that they are contributing something to the group in whatever way possible the could. Alitaptap was a great help
 My groupmates were really cooperative and they were easy to talk with. They are also very accommodating because when i need help for something they are really helpful.
 *1. Sweeping the floor at a planned time
 2. Washing the dishes together
 3. One's assigned to one work and another one for another work
 I chose 5 because the 3 of us worked together to help and volunteer in the kitchen. We always made sure that no one is left behind. If one volunteers, all of us volunteers. We would talk about the ways on how we can volunteer.
 We dont see each other sometimes(e.g. leaving the cafeteria early), so there are times that we are only 2 or someone is doing a task alone. 28

3. Cultural Factors

The presentation raised a broader research question:

Why has community currency adoption been more challenging in the Philippine context compared to Japan?

Participants suggested that cultural attitudes toward collective responsibility and reciprocity may influence system effectiveness.

4. Suggestions for Improvement

Participants recommended:

- Differentiated rewards for various volunteer tasks
- More real-time leaderboard visibility
- More opportunities to earn points
- Enhanced platform aesthetics
- Expanded volunteer time windows

Dr. Joane Serrano and Dr. Max Maquito
Feb. 20, 2026 (Fri)

PRESENTATION 2

A Playful Alitaptap



Dr. Max Maquito

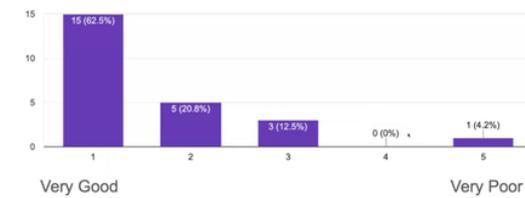


Some other observations

1. The enrolment into the e-Ali and Ali FB almost doubled in the span of 4 days
2. The supervising adults were very active in paying Ali to those who volunteered
3. Only a few inter-student transactions were observed
4. There were still some confusion on how to use the e-Ali and on some rules of the game
5. The daily schedule was jam packed with activities

Survey Questions

Please rate the level of cooperation within your team. チーム内の協力の度合いを評価してください。
24 responses



Tentative Kaizen Recommendations

1. Mandatory Enrollment, Voluntary Use
 - Require all UPOU community members to register in ALI, while keeping transactions voluntary.
2. Hands-On Workshops
 - Conduct sector-based workshops to clarify rules and ensure proper system use.
3. Link Rewards to Institutional Incentives
 - Consider recognition systems such as:
 - Community contribution credits
 - Promotion-related acknowledgment
 - Skill acquisition incentives
4. Establish a Broader Governing Committee
 - Expand representation in administering gamified ALI to include major university sectors.
5. Continuous Modification
 - Regularly refine game rules to align with community needs and cultural context.

Analysis

The gamified model demonstrated that:

- Structured incentives significantly increase participation.
- Competition can reinforce, rather than undermine, cooperation.
- Positive balance requirements address concerns about system exploitation.
- Cultural and institutional context affects long-term sustainability.

The four-day intervention proved that behavioral design mechanisms can accelerate adoption more effectively than passive promotion strategies.

PRESENTATION 2

A Playful Alitaptap

Dr. Max Maquito

Thank you, Nihongo Speakers Forum 2025 Organizers and Participants!

いとしのエリー
サザンオールスターズ

You were fun to work with,
especially when we sang bits of
[this song](#)

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Conclusion

The gamification of ALI demonstrated that playful design can significantly enhance engagement in community currency systems. Within a short period, participation increased, cooperation was strengthened, and healthy competition stimulated volunteerism. The digital infrastructure allowed transparency, accountability, and relational expression beyond mere transactions. However, sustainability will require institutional support, clearer governance structures, and continuous refinement of incentives.

The experiment confirms that community currency systems thrive when behavioral design, intercultural collaboration, and shared governance are intentionally integrated.

PRESENTATION 2

A Playful Alitaptap

Dr. Max Maquito (FMDS/UPOU)

Dr. Max Maquito (FMDS/UPOU, SGRA/AISF)

PRESENTER



In his "previous life", DR. FERDINAND C. MAQUITO (nickname: Max) was a mechanical engineer at a state-owned shipyard, after finishing his BS at the Engineering Department of the University of the Philippines, Diliman. A series of scholarships enabled him to shift specialization and earn his MS in Industrial Economics from the Center of Research of Communication (now within the University of Asia and the Pacific). Right after that, he was able to get into the Japanese Ministry of Education scholarship to get into the PhD in Economics program of the University of Tokyo. From then the Atsumi International Foundation enabled him to finish his doctorate in Economics. He was an Adjunct Professor in Temple University Japan campus, before coming back to the Philippines to join the College of Public Affairs and Development of UPLB. He is now a Senior Lecturer in FMDS/UPOU. His long stay in Japan, and work with the Sekiguchi Global Research Association of the Atsumi International Foundation have fueled his lifelong research and advocacy on sustainable shared growth.

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PRESENTATION 3

A Sociable Alitaptap for Community Building

Dr. Finaflor Taylan (Dean, FMDS/UPOU)

Introduction

This presentation examines ALI (Alitap-Tap Community Currency) through a social work and community organizing perspective within the broader sustainability framework. Beyond functioning as an alternative economic mechanism, ALI represents a potential platform for strengthening participation, relational exchange, and shared governance within the university community.

From a social work standpoint, community-based initiatives are evaluated not only in terms of economic outcomes but also through principles of empowerment, dignity, inclusion, and collective agency. Participation must be voluntary, meaningful, and supported by inclusive structures that enable members to contribute to decision-making processes that affect their community.

This study therefore explores ALI as both an exchange system and a participatory space. By examining lived experiences, governance dynamics, and patterns of engagement, the paper seeks to clarify how ALI may serve as a community-owned mechanism that integrates economic exchange with social solidarity and collective empowerment.

Context and Rationale

Despite ALI's sustainability-oriented goals, early observations from pilot implementation revealed:

- Uneven participation
- Limited circulation of the currency
- Transition challenges from manual passbook to digital platform
- Concerns regarding decision-making processes
- Questions about agency and voluntariness

These observations prompted deeper examination of ALI as a community-building system rather than merely an economic tool.



PRESENTATION 3

A Sociable Alitaptap for Community Building

Dr. Finaflor Taylan (Dean, FMDS/UPOU)

The Need for Community Currency

Community currency supports sustainability and community building by valuing time, effort, and relational contributions alongside money. ALI (Alitaptap Community Currency) allows participation, shared decision-making, and collective agency, aligning with empowerment theory. To be effective, it must be community-owned, participatory, and relational, not just transactional.

Problem Statement

Early implementation showed challenges: uneven participation, limited circulation, adaptation issues from manual to digital use, and unclear governance. Some participants saw involvement as obligatory rather than voluntary. Addressing these is critical for long-term effectiveness and inclusion.

Methodology

A qualitative case study examined lived experiences and governance through:

- Semi-structured interviews
- Focus group discussions
- Participant observation (users and managers)
- Document review
- Key informant interviews
- Data analysis highlighted patterns in participation, relational dynamics, and community impact.

The need for a community currency



1 For a sustainable future

A Community Currency (CC) is deemed to be a mechanism for achieving sustainable shared growth = efficiency (kahusayan) x equity (katarungan) x environmental friendliness (kalikasan)
(Maquito, n.d.)

2 For community building

These systems aim to foster solidarity, cooperation, and local economic resilience by circulating value within a defined group and encouraging participation beyond market-based transactions
(Negron-Muntaner, n.d.)

Objectives

- ▶ To interpret the implementation and effects of the Ali CC pilot using social work concepts such as human dignity, inclusion, and empowerment.
- ▶ To document participant experiences and community dynamics related to the use and engagement with Ali CC.
- ▶ To analyze community organizing elements that influence governance, participation, and collective decision-making.
- ▶ To offer recommendations for enhancing participatory governance, community ownership, and sustained engagement in community currency initiatives.

Exchange and Alternative Economy

Ali CC operates as a flexible barter-like system that values services, materials, and relational and all legitimate forms of exchange. By recognizing non-monetary contributions, it fosters inclusion, reduces economic barriers, and strengthens community bonds.

PRESENTATION 3

A Sociable Alitaptap for Community Building

2

Voluntarism, Reciprocity, and Collective Empowerment

Ali CC was experienced not just as exchange but as volunteerism rooted in care, reciprocity, and solidarity. By valuing contributions of time and effort, it became a platform for empowerment and community building, though sustaining participation required ongoing relational and structural support.

3

Reciprocity and Mutual Support

Ali CC fostered reciprocity by valuing mutual support and shared responsibility in exchanges. This emphasis on fairness and interdependence strengthened social cohesion, positioning the system as a community-driven alternative to competitive individualism.

Dr. Finaflor Taylan (Dean, FMDS/UPOU)

Results and Discussions: ALI CC for Community Building

- **Alternative Exchange & Value Recognition:** ALI allows access to goods/services without cash, validating volunteer labor and relational contributions.
- **Voluntarism & Collective Empowerment:** Participation motivated by altruism and mutual aid; supports agency but declines without sustained support.
- **Reciprocity & Shared Responsibility:** Exchange encourages fairness, interdependence, and collective efficacy.
- **Belonging & Social Connection:** Facilitates relationships, familiarity, and relational closeness across units.
- **Transformative Capacity:** Holds potential to foster community cohesion and inspire adoption in other contexts with structured governance.

Challenges in the Implementation

of ALI

- **Agency & Self-Determination:** Voluntary participation needs reinforcement.
- **Digital Inclusion Barriers:** Connectivity and platform issues limit access; hybrid options suggested.
- **Limited Circulation: Usage** irregular, not yet embedded in daily routines.
- **Governance Gaps:** Need for formal council to ensure representation and participatory decision-making.

ALI CC as a Participatory

Community

- ALI functions as a platform for shared agency, relational exchange, and participatory governance. Beyond economic exchange, it strengthens solidarity, affirms contributions, and creates a community-centered system within the university.

1 Strengthen Participatory Governance

PRESENTATION 3

A Sociable Alitaptap for Community Building

2 Embed Meaningful Participation and Agency

4 Ensure Inclusive and Hybrid Access

Dr. Finaflor Taylan (Dean, FMDS/UPOU)

Recommendations

1. Strengthen participatory governance via an inclusive ALI Council.
2. Embed meaningful participation with regular consultations and evaluations.
3. Expand circulation and engagement through gamification.
4. Ensure hybrid and inclusive access to address digital barriers.
5. Institutionalize continuous evaluation and empowerment-focused operational structures.



Conclusion

ALI demonstrates significant potential as a community currency that goes beyond economic exchange, fostering social solidarity and relational participation among its members. By valuing non-monetary contributions, volunteer work, and mutual support, it affirms individual dignity while strengthening collective agency. Its success, however, depends on inclusive governance structures, sustained engagement, and regular opportunities for meaningful participation. Addressing digital and circulation challenges will further ensure that ALI becomes a consistent part of the community's routines and decision-making processes. With intentional strategies and institutional support, ALI can evolve into a decentralized, community-owned system capable of reinforcing cohesion within the university and inspiring adoption in other contexts.

PRESENTATION 3

A Sociable Alitaptap for Community Building

Dr. Finaflor Taylan (Dean, FMDS/UPOU)

Dr. Finaflor F. Taylan (Dean, FMDS/UPOU)



Finaflor F. Taylan, DProfSt, is a distinguished academic and social work professional who brings extensive experience in teaching, research, and leadership to the role.

Dr. Taylan has been a faculty member at UPOU since 2012, serving as the Program Chair for the Diploma in/Master of Social Work program and Director of the Office of Gender Concerns. Her leadership in national and international organizations, such as the National Association for Social Work Education, Inc. (NASWEI) and the Asian Association of Women's Studies (AAWS), highlights her commitment to academic excellence and social advocacy.

With a strong background in research and public service, Dr. Taylan has led various projects focusing on gender, sustainability, and social work education. Currently, she serves as the Dean of the Faculty of Management and Development Studies at UPOU.

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PRESENTATION 4

A Resilient Alitaptap for Micro Enterprises

Prof. Tricia Ascan and Emilio Climaco (FMDS/UPOU)



Introduction

This paper examines the adoption of ALI (Alitap-Tap Community Currency) among micro-enterprises participating in OUgnayan Wednesdays at the University of the Philippines Open University (UPOU). As one of the early testing groups, OUgnayan merchants serve as pilot adopters of the community currency system. Their experiences provide valuable insights into the practical realities of integrating a local digital currency into everyday market transactions.

Community currencies are designed to strengthen local economies by keeping value circulating within the community, building resilience, and reducing dependence on conventional financial systems. However, adoption is neither automatic nor linear. This study explores the conditions necessary for successful implementation among small-scale entrepreneurs.

Research Questions

The study addresses the following questions:

1. What challenges do micro-enterprises, particularly OUgnayan Wednesday merchants, face in adopting and using ALI?
2. How can these challenges be addressed to ensure sustainable and resilient implementation?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective is to identify and address barriers affecting the successful adoption of ALI from the perspective of OUgnayan merchants.

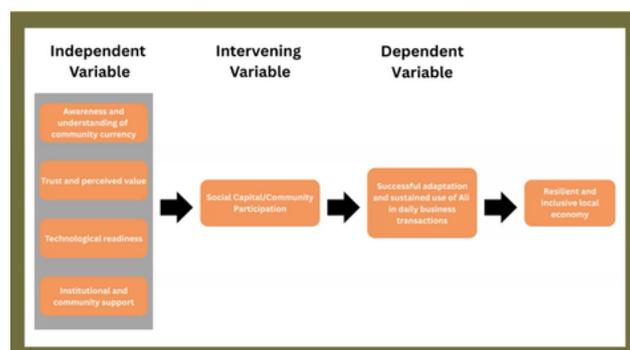
Specifically, the study aims to:

- Determine merchants' awareness and attitudes toward community currency.
- Assess technological challenges encountered during implementation.
- Examine trust and perceived value among merchants and customers.
- Identify strategies and interventions that strengthen participation and adoption.
- Contribute to building a resilient and inclusive community-based economy.

PRESENTATION 4

A Resilient Alitaptap for Micro Enterprises

Prof. Tricia Ascan and Emilio Climaco (FMDS/UPOU)



Methodology

The study employed a qualitative descriptive research design.

Data collection methods included:

- Surveys among merchants
- Merchants' meetings and focus group discussions
- Direct observation of market transactions and early ALI usage

Observations were conducted during Ougnayan Wednesdays to understand real-time practices, including payment recording, buyer interactions, and technological challenges. This approach allowed the researchers to capture both perceptions and lived experiences in using ALI within the UPOU setting.

Conceptual Framework

The framework integrates three theoretical perspectives:

- Diffusion of Innovations Theory
- Social Capital Theory
- Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

Key influencing factors identified include:

- Awareness and understanding of ALI
- Trust and perceived value
- Technological readiness
- Institutional and community support

Social capital and community participation function as mediating factors between these conditions and the dependent variable: successful adoption and sustained use of ALI. The expected outcome is a resilient and inclusive local economy characterized by circular value exchange within the UPOU community.

PRESENTATION 4

A Resilient Alltaptap for Micro Enterprises

Prof. Tricia Ascan and Emilio Climaco (FMDS/UPOU)

Results and Discussion

1. Awareness and Perception

Merchant and employee awareness initially varied. Early misconceptions included fears that payments would be made exclusively in community currency, creating anxiety about capital recovery. Continuous explanations, repeated orientations, and weekly exposure gradually improved understanding. Adoption required sustained communication. Merchants discovered that repeated explanations and visible practice helped normalize ALI as an alternative –not replacement–mode of payment.

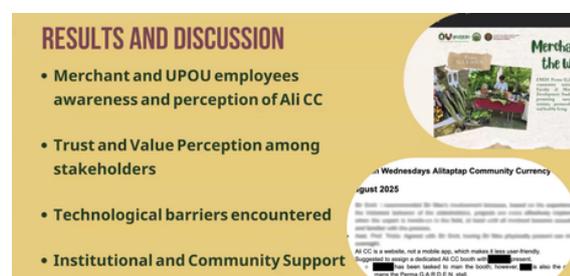
2. Trust and Value Perception

Trust emerged as a central factor. Both merchants and customers questioned the practical value of ALI, often asking implicitly, “What’s in it for me?”

To address this:

- Merchants offered small incentives such as a 2% discount for payments made in ALI.
- Manual recording systems were temporarily used when customers lacked mobile access.
- Clear guidelines were established to standardize acceptance procedures.

Over time, regular weekly interaction built trust among merchants and customers. The consistent presence of OUgnayan Wednesdays strengthened confidence in the system.



PRESENTATION 4

A Resilient Alitap for Micro Enterprises

Prof. Tricia Ascan and Mr. Emilio Climaco (FMDS/UPOU)

Results and Discussion

3. Technological Barriers

Internet connectivity posed the most significant challenge during early implementation, particularly when stalls were located in areas with weak signal access. This limited real-time transactions through the web application.

Other challenges included:

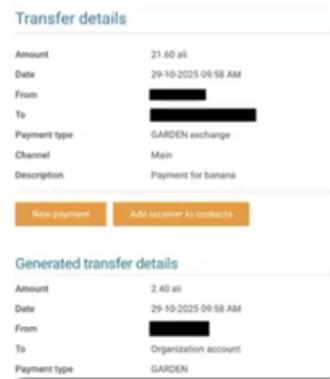
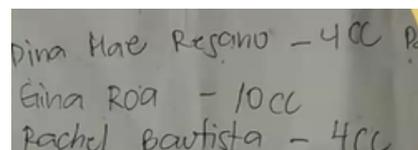
- Customers unfamiliar with digital input procedures
- Reliance on manual recording when phones were unavailable
- Delayed payments due to onboarding gaps

Relocation to areas with better connectivity improved usage rates. Gradually, customers began initiating ALI payments independently, indicating growing familiarity.

4. Institutional and Community Support

Strong institutional backing played a crucial role in sustaining the initiative. Support from university leadership and faculty administrators legitimized the experiment and encouraged participation.

Community impact extended beyond the university. Some regular customers from outside UPOU began engaging with the merchants and downloading the platform. The initiative also strengthened social ties among vendors and buyers, creating informal interactions beyond office settings.



PRESENTATION 4

A Resilient Alitaptap for Micro Enterprises

Prof. Tricia Ascan and Mr. Emilio Climaco (FMDS/UPOU)

CONCLUSION

Adoption of Ali CC is shaped by an interplay of knowledge, trust, capacity, and support structures. Addressing these factors enhances merchants' readiness to integrate Ali CC and build a sustainable and resilient local economy.



Conclusion

The adoption of ALI among OUnayan Wednesday merchants demonstrates that community currency integration requires sustained knowledge-building, trust formation, and institutional support. Initial hesitation among merchants gradually shifted toward cautious optimism as practical benefits became visible. Technological and onboarding challenges slowed early implementation but were progressively addressed through collective problem-solving and repeated engagement. The experience highlights that adoption is shaped by social capital, continuous learning, and shared experimentation. With refinement and long-term commitment, ALI has the potential to evolve into a resilient mechanism supporting micro-enterprises and strengthening local economic circulation.

PRESENTATION 4

A Resilient Alitaptap for Micro Enterprises

Prof. Tricia Ascan and Mr. Emilio Climaco (FMDS/UPOU)

Professor Tricia Ascan (Program Chair, FMDS/UPOU)



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Mr. Emilio Clemaco, a graduate of BS Agriculture Engineering, agrometeorology and farm structures from the UPLB as well. He began his career as an applications engineer in a wastewater treatment company in Bonifacio, Global City, before shifting paths to pursue farming in Pagsanhan Laguna. In 2016, Mr. Clemaco completed a course in organic agriculture and founded Shepherd's Farm, inspired by the principles of care, Health, Ecology, and fairness. He specializes in organic soil amendments and stingless beekeeping, and has been a beekeeper since that year. He currently serves as chairman of Sipag Pagsanhan Agriculture Cooperative and core member of soil. In 2021, his farm was awarded Participatory Guarantee System, or PGS Organic Certification by the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards, or BAFSA for stingless beekeeping, making it the first PGS-certified organic stingless bee farm in Calabarzon and in the Philippines.

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PRESENTATION 5

A Voluntary Alitaptap

Reinald Dayson and Naomi Unlayao

Introduction

Volunteerism is conventionally defined as service rendered without expectation of material return. This principle underpins ALI (Alitaptap Community Currency), which seeks to promote participatory exchange, shared circulation, and mutual support within the university community.

Globally, community currencies have re-emerged as mechanisms to localize economic circulation, strengthen social cohesion, and counterbalance the extractive tendencies of mainstream financial systems. In contexts such as Japan, complementary currencies are often designed to enhance resilience, civic participation, and community interdependence.

However, existing scholarship primarily focuses on ideological design and structural frameworks. Limited attention has been given to micro-entrepreneurs—particularly small-scale merchants—who must decide whether participation is economically viable. Within OUnayan Wednesdays at UPOU, merchants operate under thin margins and daily liquidity cycles. For them, accepting ALI is not symbolic; it directly intersects with business survival.

This study addresses this gap by examining how merchants interpret ALI as both a civic initiative and an economic decision. It investigates how voluntary participation interacts with risk assessment, liquidity constraints, and trust in governance structures.

Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Examine how OUnayan Wednesday merchants understand and interpret ALI.
2. Analyze how merchants evaluate economic risk, liquidity concerns, and convertibility.
3. Assess the role of trust in leadership and institutional guidance.
4. Determine whether merchant participation reflects civic engagement, economic strategy, or a hybrid of both.



PRESENTATION 5

A Voluntary Alitaptap

Mr. Reinald Dayson and Ms. Naomi Unlayao



Methodology

A qualitative exploratory case study design was employed, with OUnayan Wednesdays serving as the bounded case.

Data Collection

- Semi-structured interviews with participating merchants
- Focus on economic positioning, awareness, acceptance decisions, liquidity concerns, governance trust, and voluntarism framing

Data Analysis

- Transcription of responses
- Thematic coding
- Pattern identification
- Theoretical integration

This approach enabled an in-depth understanding of how merchants negotiate participation within a hybrid civic-economic system.



49th Sustainable Growth Seminar

Problem/Gaps

- 01 Merchant participation varies despite the social goals of Ali CC
- 02 These are influenced not only by awareness or goodwill but by:
 - Perceived economic risk
 - Liquidity constraints
 - Trust in governance
 - Compatibility with supply chains
- 03 While studies examine the structural viability of complementary currencies, **fewer studies** analyze how micro-entrepreneurs evaluate risk within these systems. Even fewer examine how civic framing (e.g., voluntary community involvement) interacts with economic rationality..

This study addresses these gaps by examining how merchants interpret Ali CC not merely as a currency, but as a **civic-economic hybrid**.



01 **ALI as Shared Circulation**

PRESENTATION 5

A Voluntary Alitaptap



04 **Trust Anchored in Leadership**

Mr. Reinald Dayson and Ms. Naomi Unlayao

05 **Convertibility as Structural Reassurance**

03 **Thin Margins and Daily Survival**

06 **Potentials of Community Currency**

Results and Discussions

Six key findings emerged from the analysis.

1. ALI as Shared Circulation

Merchants widely understood ALI as a mechanism for collective benefit rather than individual accumulation. They emphasized that its value lies in circulation within the community.

However, usefulness depends on network density. Several merchants expressed that accepting ALI only makes sense if it can also be used with others. Limited participants restrict movement, weakening perceived value. Questions such as whether ALI could be used outside OUnayan Wednesdays revealed structural limitations in purchasing scope.

2. Convertibility as Structural Reassurance

Convertibility to national currency emerged as a psychological and economic safety net. Merchants expressed greater confidence when there is a possibility—real or periodic—of conversion to cash.

Operating under tight liquidity cycles, merchants view convertibility as an exit mechanism that lowers perceived risk. Without clear systems, hesitation increases.

3. Thin Margins and Daily Survival

Many merchants operate with narrow profit margins, with a large portion of revenue allocated to operational expenses. Under such conditions, accepting ALI introduces potential delays in capital recovery.

Statements reflecting daily cash obligations illustrate that business survival logic strongly influences decisions. Capital lock-in is perceived as risky when liquidity is essential for daily operations.

4. Trust Anchored in Leadership

Trust in ALI is highly relational and personality-based. Merchants expressed greater confidence when trusted leaders explain and guide implementation.

However, trust alone does not eliminate structural concerns. When guidance appears insufficient or unclear, uncertainty resurfaces. This highlights the need for institutionalized systems beyond reliance on individual champions.

Rather as a personal initiative, volunteerism gradually shifts towards a sense of duty.

Engagement is cautious and limited by business capacity and sustainability concerns.

Supporting community initiatives depends on the social context and economic survival priorities.

PRESENTATION 5

A Voluntary Alitaptap

"Yun ay boluntaryo."

"Sige tatanggap kami, pero limitado lang,"

"Depende kung kaya"

Reinald Dayson and Naomi Unlayao *"akatulong, pero negosyo pa rin"*

Results and Discussions

5. Conditional Volunteerism

Although participation is framed as voluntary, merchant engagement is conditional. Acceptance is often partial and capacity-based.

Merchants expressed willingness to support community initiatives, but only within limits that protect business stability. Participation is negotiated rather than unconditional, reflecting a balance between civic aspiration and economic rationality.

6. Transformative Potential of ALI

Despite concerns, merchants recognize ALI's transformative potential. They see its capacity to:

- Expand access to goods and services for those with limited cash
- Encourage shared exchange within a producer-service network
- Strengthen community relationships beyond purely monetary transactions

However, they advocate gradual expansion, beginning with a stable core group to demonstrate reliability before scaling outward.

Synthesis of Findings

The findings reveal strong conceptual support for ALI's philosophy of shared circulation. However, sustained participation depends on:

- Network density and exchange web expansion
- Clear convertibility mechanisms
- Recognition of thin profit margins
- Institutional clarity and leadership guidance
- Alignment with daily economic realities

Voluntarism becomes secondary when business security is threatened. Thus, civic aspirations must be structurally compatible with economic survival logic.

01 Economic Rationality Within Civic Systems

Merchants are being practical.
They make decisions based on what will help their business survive.

02 Trust as Social Capital Buffer

Trust helps.
If merchants trust the system or the people involved, they feel more comfortable joining.

03 Circulation Density as Structural Requirement

For Ali CC to survive, many people must accept and use it.
If suppliers (where merchants buy their products) do not accept Ali CC, then merchants cannot reuse it.

04 Conditional Volunteerism

Merchants are willing to participate — but only under certain conditions.



20 February 2026

Mr. Reinald Dayson and Ms. Naomi Unlayao
49th Sustainable Growth Seminar

Recommendations

Conduct Further Research

Expand empirical studies on community currency systems to support evidence-based improvements to ALI.

Undertake Systematic User Analysis

Examine merchant and user motivations, needs, and usage patterns to inform system refinement.

Develop a Contextualized ALI Framework

Establish clear operational guidelines that encourage voluntary participation while addressing merchant realities.

Strengthen Institutional Structures

Move beyond personality-based trust by formalizing governance, communication systems, and guidance mechanisms.

Bridge Knowledge Gaps

Improve communication between ALI proponents, technical implementers, and end-users to enhance understanding and system internalization.

Conclusion

ALI possesses strong symbolic and relational foundations within OUgnayan Wednesdays. Merchants conceptually support its community-oriented purpose, yet sustained participation depends on structural viability and liquidity safeguards. Economic survival logic remains central to decision-making, especially among small-scale vendors operating on thin margins. Trust, convertibility mechanisms, and network expansion are necessary to reinforce long-term engagement. Aligning civic aspirations with practical business realities will determine whether ALI evolves into a resilient and sustainable community currency system.

PRESENTATION 5

A Voluntary Alitaptap

Mr. Reinald Dayson and Ms. Naomi Unlayao

Reinald Dayson (FMDS/UPOU)



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and the official volunteer arm of UP. His professional research interests center on volunteerism, community engagement, and inclusive education development. He remains actively involved in volunteer work and envisions a society where equitable access to services renders volunteerism no longer necessary.

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OPEN FORUM

Dr. Joane, Dr. Max, Dr. Finaflor, Prof. Tricia,
Prof. Emilio, Reynald, Naomi

Are participating merchants considered innovators or early adopters?

- The innovation being referred to is Ali CC itself, not the merchants. The merchants are considered early adopters because they are testing and using the system. However, as the system evolves and community members begin tweaking and co-developing it, they may also take on innovator roles in refining and expanding Ali CC.

Is Ali CC mainly an economic tool for merchants?

- No. Ali CC is primarily a community-building tool, not an economic profit mechanism. It aims to strengthen relationships and engagement within the UPOU community (faculty, staff, partners, and eventually students and alumni). Increased transactions indicate stronger community interaction— not just financial exchange.

Is Ali CC centered only around Ugnayan?

- No. Ugnayan is just one participating group. Ali CC was not created solely for Ugnayan; it evolved alongside it. The broader goal is integration across the entire UPOU community.

Why was adoption difficult at first?

- Merchants initially had zero knowledge of the system and struggled to understand its mechanics. Acceptance improved over time through onboarding and gradual explanation. Continuous education and clear communication are still needed.

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OPEN FORUM

Dr. Joane, Dr. Max, Dr. Finaflor, Prof. Tricia,
Prof. Emilio, Reynald, Naomi

What improvements are suggested moving forward?

- Conduct regular meetings with merchants
- Provide continuous education on Ali CC mechanics
- Share recorded lectures and materials
- Form a representative council/core group
- Implement community mapping to identify needs, resources, and services
- Clarify system mechanics and misconceptions
- Continue research and publication efforts

How can Ali CC expand in the future?

- Through gamification to increase engagement
- By encouraging students and alumni participation
- Through interconnected value chains among merchants (prosumer model)
- By creating synergy between:
 - The market economy (peso-based)
 - The volunteer/community economy (Ali CC-based)

The goal is not to replace the peso economy, but to create synergy where both systems support each other.

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OPEN FORUM

Dr. Joane, Dr. Max, Dr. Finaflor, Prof. Tricia,
Prof. Emilio, Reinald, Naomi

How can merchants deepen engagement?

Merchants can act as both producers and consumers (prosumers) within the network. By purchasing from one another using Ali CC, they can:

- Reduce costs
- Offer deeper discounts
- Strengthen interconnectedness
- Build a resilient local value network

This transforms the system from a simple chain into a community web/network.

What format works best to show practical utility?

- 30–60 second TikTok-style videos
- Short animated explainers
- Simple, scenario-based examples (e.g., how using Ali CC frees up peso for other purchases)
- Audience-specific materials (different messaging for academics vs. merchants)

The focus should be on clearly answering practical concerns such as: “Will my money get stuck?”

How secure is the web-based system?

- Ali CC uses the Cyclos platform, which follows international security standards (ISO 27002), uses encrypted connections, secure password hashing, and complies with data protection regulations. Transparency of transactions is intentional to support community trust and engagement.

disclaimer

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OPEN FORUM

Dr. Joane, Dr. Max, Dr. Finaflor, Prof. Tricia,
Prof. Emilio, Reynald, Naomi

Why is transparency important?

- Transparency allows members to see interactions and relationships forming within the community. While this differs from traditional financial privacy expectations, it supports trust-building and social cohesion.

What future academic directions were mentioned?

- Further research on adoption phases
- Publishing findings in academic journals
- Developing guiding principles (e.g., a declaration based on identified themes)
- Continuing pilot innovations as Ali CC evolves

Core Takeaway

- Ali CC is a research-driven, community-owned innovation aimed at strengthening community ties within UPOU. While early adoption required adjustment and clarification, the system continues to evolve through collaboration, education, and shared governance.

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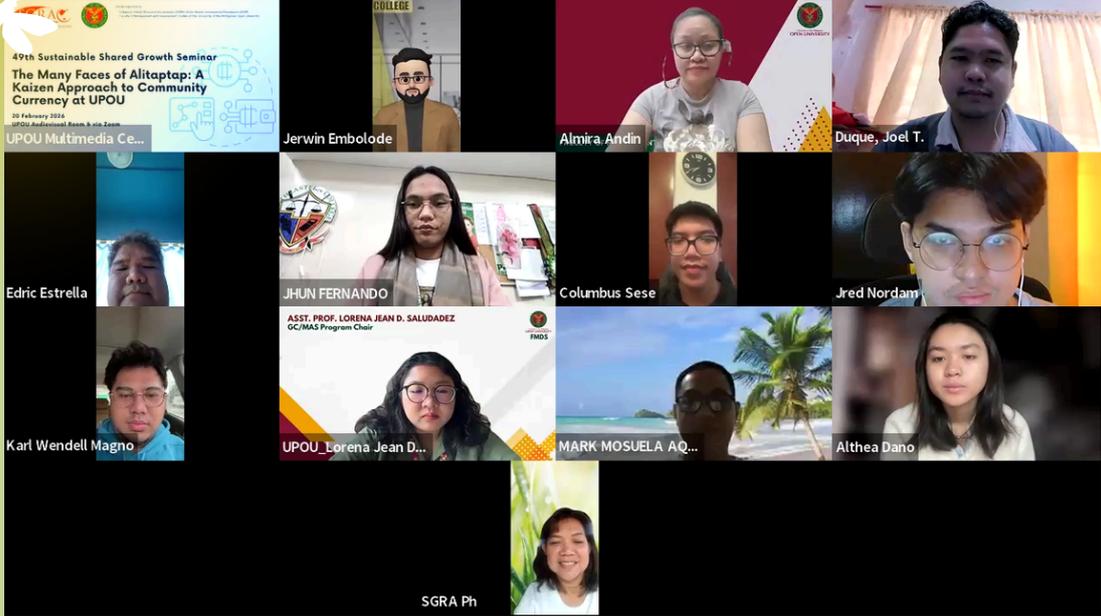
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ALITAPTAP

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CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Finaflor F. Taylan (Dean, UPOU)



On behalf of the Faculty of Management and Development Studies (FMDS) and the Sekiguchi Global Research Association (SGRA) of the Atsumi International Foundation (AISF), I extend our sincere gratitude to all of you for your active participation in the 49th Sustainable Shared Growth Seminar on The Many Faces of Alitaptap: A Kaizen Approach to Community Currency. Your engagement, thoughtful questions, and critical reflections have greatly enriched today's dialogue.

Today's seminar provided an insightful preview of the five papers that will be presented at the 8th Asia Future Conference (AFC8). Each paper offered a unique perspective on Alitaptap – as a learning framework, a playful and gamified mechanism, a social tool for community building, a resilient practice exemplified through OUnayan Wednesdays, and a voluntary service implemented at the UPOU Office of Ugnayan ng Pahinungod. These diverse dimensions highlight the potential of Alitaptap not only as an academic construct but also as a practical approach to fostering sustainable, inclusive, and community-driven growth.

As we reflect on today's presentations and discussions, let us also embrace a posture of continuous learning about Alitaptap* – exploring its theoretical foundations, practical applications, and lived experiences. The concept of Ali as a community currency invites us to understand not only its mechanics but also its potentials as a tool for collective growth. By engaging with Ali with curiosity, creativity, and reflection, we can better appreciate its benefits – from enhancing social connectedness and shared learning to reinforcing resilience and participatory governance within our communities.

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CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Finaflor F. Taylan (Dean, UPOU)



I encourage you to explore the evolving literature on Ali, to experiment with its implementation in different contexts, and to share your insights with colleagues and communities. In doing so, we not only deepen our academic understanding but also enrich the lived experience of all stakeholders who stand to benefit from this innovative approach. Let us leverage the insights gained to strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration, deepen empirical research, and inform policy and practice that enhance community well-being.

The Asia Future Conference offers a platform to bring these ideas before a broader scholarly and practitioner audience, enabling us to contribute meaningfully to shared discourse on innovation, resilience, and sustainable futures. I also acknowledge the critical role of institutional support, cross-sector partnerships, and sustained scholarly engagement in advancing research that bridges theory and practice. I express our appreciation to the organizers, facilitators, and supporting teams whose dedication ensured the success of this seminar.

In closing, let us continue to engage rigorously, think creatively, and act collaboratively – sustaining the momentum of inquiry, learning, and impact that we have started today. Thank you, and we look forward to your continued contributions and participation in future academic endeavors.

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CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Finaflor F. Taylan (Dean, UPOU)



Dr. Finaflor F. Taylan (Dean, FMDS/UPOU)



Finaflor F. Taylan, DProfSt, is a distinguished academic and social work professional who brings extensive experience in teaching, research, and leadership to the role.

Dr. Taylan has been a faculty member at UPOU since 2012, serving as the Program Chair for the Diploma in/Master of Social Work program and Director of the Office of Gender Concerns. Her leadership in national and international organizations, such as the National Association for Social Work Education, Inc. (NASWEI) and the Asian Association of Women's Studies (AAWS), highlights her commitment to academic excellence and social advocacy.

With a strong background in research and public service, Dr. Taylan has led various projects focusing on gender, sustainability, and social work education. Currently, she serves as the Dean of the Faculty of Management and Development Studies at UPOU.

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NEXT STEPS



The 8th Asia Future Conference
第8回アジア未来会議

Space and Distance
空間と距離

- Crossing, Closing, Creating - ~こえる、縮める、つくる~

Date
August 25 (Tue) – August 29 (Sat), 2026
2026年8月25日(火)～29日(土)

Venue
Tohoku Gakuin University, Sendai, Japan
東北学院大学(日本、仙台市)



Host : Atsumi International Foundation
Sekiguchi Global Research Association
渥美国際交流財団関口グローバル研究会 (SGRA)



Co-host : Tohoku Gakuin University
東北学院大学

Call for Papers
<https://www.aisf.or.jp/AFC/2026>
(Open on May 1, 2025)

The Asia Future Conference aims to provide a platform for researchers and scholars who have studied in Japan or who are interested in Japan to meet and discuss the future of Asia. The AFC is interdisciplinary at its core and encourages diverse approaches to global issues. The AFC is not a conference for a specific field of study, so please try to make your presentation comprehensible to a general public.

NEXT STEPS

“Space and Distance – Crossing, Closing, Creating”

空間と距離 -こえる、縮める、つくる-

“Social distance” became a familiar phrase to all during COVID, and despite the distance it invokes, a phrase that crossed cultural and geographical divides to create a rare universal experience. In this way, distance can serve to divide as well as unite us. Space and distance can be physical or intangible, and in many cases, both. It can be examined in the physical and categorical barriers that serve to draw distinctions between groups of people, the geographical distance that leads to different concentrations of power as well as maintains different hierarchies (urban/rural, wealthy/poor), the creation and dissolution of categorical differences in the sciences, and literal discussions of space/distance in different fields. Through this theme, we encourage diverse perspectives and seek to explore how space and distance function in and across various fields – what relationships do they foster, how are they used to maintain or break down specific power dynamics, how may they be desirable, necessary, or even harmful?

コロナ禍により「ソーシャルディスタンス」は馴染み深いフレーズとなったが、ディスタンス（距離）を謳ったスローガンとは裏腹にこの言葉は文化的・地理的な隔たりを軽々と越えた。距離は物理的にも心理的にも存在し、私たちが分かっただけでなく“結びつける何か”を示す役割も果たす。社会の中で人々を区別しカテゴライズする境界線が生み出す距離感、都市と地方という地理的な条件がそのまま権力との距離となり様々な階層（都市と農村、富裕層と貧困層等）を社会に生む現象、科学技術における様々な創造や再編が織りなす異分野・多分野間の距離の伸縮など、あらゆる分野においてそこに存在する空間／距離を考察することができる。このテーマを通じ、私たちは多様な視点から空間と距離の分野横断的な役割や機能を見つめ直し、特定のパワー・ダイナミクスの維持や打破にどのように利用されているのか、どのように利用されることが望ましく必要なかを一緒に考えたい。

■ Screening Procedure

If your proposal (abstract) submitted by September 20, 2025 is accepted, you will be asked to submit a full paper and present it at the 8th Asia Future Conference to be held in Sendai in August 2026. You can also apply for AFC Scholarships. The Best Papers will be selected from the full papers submitted by March 31, 2026. We look forward to your active participation.

■ Schedule A: Eligible for AFC Scholarships and Best Paper Award

May 1, 2025	Call for abstracts, online user-registrations and submissions
October 31, 2025	Announcement of screening results of abstracts
February 1, 2026	Registration as participant (Early Bird 20% discount until April 10)
June 10, 2026	Announcement of screening results for Best Papers
June 20, 2026	Deadline for registration
July 31, 2026	Announcement of session schedule

■ Schedule B: General Participants (Not eligible for AFC Scholarships and Best Paper Award)

May 1, 2025	Call for abstracts, online user-registrations and submissions
February 28, 2026	Deadline for abstract submissions
May 31, 2026	Deadline for online submissions (PDF file upload) of full papers
June 20, 2026	Deadline for registration
July 31, 2026	Announcement of session schedule

Session Themes & Topics for Parallel sessions

Natural Sciences Innovation / Automation Robotics / Climate Change and Disaster Management / Environment and Energy / Bioengineering Food and Water / Health / and other topics related to the Natural Sciences

Social Sciences Globalization / Peace / Area Studies / Social Development and Human Security Management / Human Resource Development Income and/or Wealth Gap / Aging Society / and other topics related to the Social Sciences

Humanities Philosophy / Religion / History / Ethics / Literature / Linguistics / Language Education / Arts / Media / Culture / and other topics related to the Humanities

■ Languages of presentations/papers Japanese or English

■ Contact **Asia Future Conference Organization Committee**(Atsumi International Foundation Sekiguchi Global Research Association)
3-5-8 Sekiguchi Bunkyo Tokyo 112-0014 Japan TEL: +81-(0)3-3943-7612/FAX: +81-(0)3-3943-1512 Email: afc2026@aisf.or.jp

NEXT STEPS

ID ▲▼	Title	Author(s)
	Submission Type / Conference Track · Uploaded	Submitting Author
343	A Voluntary Alitaptap Full Paper (5-10 pages) · English	Dayson, Reinald ; Cruz, Larry ; Ordanes, Jurell ; Cometa, Jezreel Ann ; Unlayao, Naomi Jean ; Capiro, Zia Bernadette Dayson, Reinald ✉
346	A Sociable Alitaptap for Community Building ⓘ ⓘ Full Paper (5-10 pages) · English	Taylan, Finafloor ; Maquito, Ferdinand ; Autor, Vanessa ; Catbagan, Tiffany Taylan, Dr. Finafloor ✉
348	A Playful Alitaptap ⓘ Full Paper (5-10 pages) · English	Serrano, Joane Vermudo ; Maquito, Ferdinand Serrano, Prof. Joane Vermudo ✉
349	A Learning Alitaptap ⓘ Full Paper (5-10 pages) · English	Serrano, Joane Vermudo Serrano, Prof. Joane Vermudo ✉
394	A Resilient Alitaptap for Micro Enterprises: What OUnayan Wednesdays Merchants Need to Successfully Adopt Community Currency ⓘ Full Paper (5-10 pages) · English	Ascan, Tricia ; Climaco, Emilio Ascan, Prof. Tricia ✉

5 contributions submitted and 0 contributions withdrawn on this list.

Papers to be presented at a special panel session the AFC8 on the
Alitaptap Community Currency Pilot Study of UPOU

NEXT STEPS

Seminar Date (tentative)	Seminar	Venue	Topic	Notes
June 2026	50th	UPOU/ZOOM	Local to Local Accross Border Scheme	Towards a Community of Practice, getting RPs from CNNC
September 2026	51st	UPOU/ZOOM	Land Value Taxation or Other KKK Mechanisms	Now exploring pilot study potential at Muntinlupa; can also tap those joining the FMDS' KKK Research Group
November 2026	52nd	UPOU/ZOOM	Organic Agriculture/ Permaculture	FMDS' perma project can present
January 2027	53rd	UPOU/ZOOM	CC's potential in the Philippines	Update on Alitaptap Community Currency Pilot Study

Upcoming KKK Seminars jointly organized with FMDS UPOU.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

(The summaries were generated with the help of Turboscribe and Tactiq AI app., but was subjected to further editing by the team)

Behind-the-Scene Assistance

- Lenie M. Miro
 - SGRA PH



- Columbus C. Maquito
 - SGRA PH



We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to contribute to Sustainable Shared Growth.



- Isabella O. Gayoso
 - SGRA PH



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**Sustainable Shared
Growth Seminar
#49 Report**

