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Research Article

Sustainable Entrepreneurship Development Program for Dumagats: A Community Participatory Research

ABSTRACT

This research was conceptualized to identify an appropriate sustainable entrepreneurial development program for the Dumagats community in Sitio Ipo Barangay San Mateo, Norzagaray Bulacan. The program is recommended to capacitate and harness the skills and resources of the community to empower them as partners in economic development. This research aimed to develop, introduce, and help the community to pursue sustainable entrepreneurial activities to uplift them and elevate their daily living and self-growth. In the review of related literature and studies, it was revealed that entrepreneurship is a feasible pathway in helping to achieve and promote sustainable development in communities, especially those belonging to the marginalized sectors. Under the signed Executive Order No. 5, s. 2016, Filipinos' ambitions for themselves and the country is considered essential to assist the government to outline and form programs, projects, and activities guiding towards the fulfillment of development results.

Lundström's and Stevenson's "Motivation, Opportunity, and Skills model" (2013) was used primarily as a framework to identify how entrepreneurship can be promoted through different policy measures and to stimulate higher levels of entrepreneurial activity by influencing a greater supply of new entrepreneurs. This research utilized the convergent mixed methods design wherein, the interaction between the researcher and the participants consisted of a survey questionnaire distributed for the quantitative data gathering of the profile of the respondents. A consultative meeting was used as the main method of data collection to understand, explore, and determine the nature and factors related to subject matter and to help assist and understand the factors, problems, motivations, and interests from the perspective of the participants. This study participated by 94 Dumagat members in the community as per the recommended sample using the statistical tool, Slovin's formula. The chieftain of the community selected the members of the Dumagats who participated in the study. Among the 11 Sitios where Dumagats are situated, Sitio Ipo was recommended by the National Commission on Indigenous People – Bulacan to participate in this study; the said area also has the highest population.

The results of the study based merely on the quantitative data revealed that the respondents indeed part of the marginalized sectors of the society. Based on the results of the consultative meeting information data, the Dumagats have their own indigenous knowledge, system and procedures based on their way of living such as planting crops, catching fish, handcrafting, and sewing; however, lacking is improvement and introduction of new techniques. The most common problem encountered by the respondents are the lack of capital funds to continuously pursue their entrepreneurial plans and the lack of marketing linkages with a large market for contact to potential customers. Moreover, lack of qualified assistance or advice when it comes to entrepreneurial activities is also experienced. Nonetheless, the Dumagats community is motivated on any entrepreneurial activity despite their financial incapability.

With these findings, it is recommended that the local government units and local development planners, provincial, municipal, local governments and private enterprises provide programs that will help improve and capacitate the skills of Dumagats community. The researcher formulated a one-year operational plan to give other avenues for a sustainable entrepreneurship development program proposal titled "I-Angat ang Dumagats 2021." This is proposed to run from January 2021 to December 2021. This sustainable Entrepreneurial Development Program proposes to introduce, enhance, hone, and sustain the skills, capabilities, and motivation of the Dumagats community to pursue an entrepreneurial project or activity to help them uplift their lives and to achieve individual growth as perceived through their motivations to perform such activities.

KEYWORDS

*Sustainable Entrepreneurship,
Dumagats, Community*

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INTRODUCTION

As told by an old Chinese proverb, — “give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” This is what prompted the researcher to conduct a study about creating a sustainable entrepreneurial development program – for the Dumagats. The Dumagats are one of the indigenous peoples (IPs) in the Philippines. Like other IPs in the country, they are in need to be equipped with an entrepreneurial mindset to aid them in uplifting their lives as they belong to the marginalized sector of the society. As stated in the Philippine Development Plan 2017- 2022, every Filipino wishes to enjoy a comfortable living, a decent house for the family, convenient transport, spend time with family and friends in a safe community, and be able to travel for vacation. It is human nature to want to feel secure about the future, to live long and healthy, and have a stable plan for retirement.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution recognizes entrepreneurship as an engine of economic growth. Article XII Section 1 emphasizes the role of private enterprises in supporting equitable distribution of income and wealth, sustaining production of goods and services, and expanding productivity, therefore raising the quality of life. [Evangelista \(2013\)](#) noted that in the Philippines, entrepreneurship is seen as vital to empowering the poor, improving production, and as a motivation to innovation. It can address the sustainable use of resources and local community development programs for improving a firm’s social performance ([Linton et al. 2007](#); [Gong 2013](#), [Avci et al. 2014](#); [Cachon 2014](#))

According to The Academy of Management Perspectives, —sustainability is an effort to conserve natural resources and avoid waste in operations, ([Pfeffer, 2010](#)). Sustainability has become a subject of increasing concern to academics and practitioners in recent years; the importance of sustainability has been widely recognized by researchers and practitioners (2015).

According to a post, originally appeared on Business Insiders (2017), the top most concerning world issues are the following: lack of economic opportunity and employment (12.1%), safety, security, and well-being (14.1%), lack of education (15.9%), food and water security (18.2%), government accountability and transparency, corruption (22.7%), religious conflicts (23.9%), poverty (29.2%), inequality, income, discrimination (30.8%), large scale conflict, wars (38.9%), and climate change, destruction of nature (48.8%). In the Philippines, poverty belongs to the top and will continue to threaten the growth in 2019 despite rising Gross Domestic Product and having become one of the fastest growing economies in the region. The country was unable to attain the target in poverty reduction and still remain in 21.5%. Surveys also indicate that involuntary hunger is experienced in 13.3% or 3.1 million families every three months.

Pillar II of PDP 2017-2020 states that there will be greater economic opportunities from the domestic market and the rest of the world, and access to these opportunities will be made easier. Special attention will be given to the disadvantaged subsectors and people groups.

Small enterprise development can grow into feasible way towards sustainable livelihoods, if basic conditions are made available to rural communities. These include: (a) availability of (or access to) a reasonable start-up capital, which depending on the nature of the enterprise may comprehend natural (land), human (labor, know-how), financial (savings, credit), physical (infrastructure), and social (cooperative

networks) assets; (b) some degree of protection against shocks and negative trends such as social welfare and insurance schemes; (c) supportive structures and processes including rural enterprise enabling policies, business development services, credit, transport and communication infrastructure. Other basic conditions are: (d) access to a well-developed market capable of providing both a steady supply of inputs, food and other consumption commodities and an outlet to enterprise outputs; (e) access to marketing information, including information on contracting and other vertical integration opportunities; and (f) resilience against market failure and capacity to change the enterprise according to changes in demand and market contingencies (*Woldehanna and Oskam; Barret, Bezuch and abound; Abdulai and Crole Rees; Singh 2017*).

This research paper was undertaken because of the need to improve the economic status of the Dumagats and the members of the Dumagats community and equip them with entrepreneurial skills to become feasible citizens of the country. The study attempted to answer what sustainable entrepreneurial development program can be recommended to capacitate and harness the skills and resources of the community to empower them as partners of the economic development and to equip them with entrepreneurial skills. It has been a common sight that whenever riding public transportations, most especially jeepneys, the experience of encountering two or mostly three people adult and minor hands out envelope with a note seeking for money donation in order to provide food. These people are mostly indigenous people. It is disheartening to see these people sacrifice their safety just to have food to eat. This reality prompted the researcher to pursue this study, as a graduate school student. This study is hoped to influence IPs to better appreciate and understand sustainable entrepreneurial activities as these can potentially enrich the lives of Filipinos, especially those in marginalized communities.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher utilized the convergent mixed methods design. The interaction between the researcher and the participants consisted of a survey questionnaire distributed for the quantitative data gathering of the profile of the respondents and a consultative meeting was used as the main method of data collection to understand, explore, and determined the nature and factors related to the subject matter and to help assist and understand the factors, problems, motivation, and interests from the perspective of the participants. The qualitative descriptive nature of the research allowed the researcher to provide a description of the experiences, problems, motivations, and interest of the participants. Meanwhile, the quantitative descriptive nature of the study focused on the tabulation of the profile of the respondents. The study also used consultative meetings with the members of the Dumagat community, particularly the youth, men, women, elders, and political leaders to identify the issues and concerns of the community regarding their previous entrepreneurial activity experiences. Specifically, the consultation discussion tried to extract information on the extent of their interests and motivations on participating in a sustainable entrepreneurial development program. The research approach also measured the need for participation, collaboration, advocacy, and integration of a sustainable entrepreneurial program in the development planning and in decision making processes of creating it. The data gathered were observed, analyzed, and interpreted by the researcher.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Sitio Ipo, Barangay San Mateo, Norzagaray, Bulacan Philippines. Upon consultation with the National Commission on Indigenous People – Bulacan, the commission recommended the Sitio Ipo in Barangay San Mateo, Norzagaray Bulacan, per the record of the commission among the 11 Sitio's in Norzagaray where the Dumagat community is situated. Sitio Ipo has the highest population as well. The Dumagat community present in Sitio Ipo is known to be fishermen in the waters of Angat River, which is inhabited by freshwater fish. Apart from that, many Dumagats at present are engaged with forest product gathering. They are also involved in farm labor activities and personal services as household help, laundrywomen, and the like in the lowland businesses.

Population and Sampling Technique

The study was participated by 94 Dumagat members. The researcher used consultative meeting sampling technique which was administered in the study. The chieftain of the Dumagat community was the one who chose the participants after the researcher had given the criteria needed for the study.

To measure the sample size of the population, the researcher used the Slovin formula. The Dumagat members in the chosen locale is estimated to be 400. With a confidence level of 95%, the suggested sample size is 78 respondents.

Data Gathering Procedure

The consultative meeting was used as the main method of data collection. An unstructured consultation meeting approach was adopted, and the approach was facilitated for the understanding of the experiences, problems, aspirations, motivations, and interest of the participants. Their perceptions regarding their past involvements with entrepreneurial activities, motivations, and interest to participate in the entrepreneurial development program were all discussed. The consultation meeting method allows the researcher to interact with the participants and to observe non-verbal cues during the consultation meeting process.

The data gathering procedure is shown below:

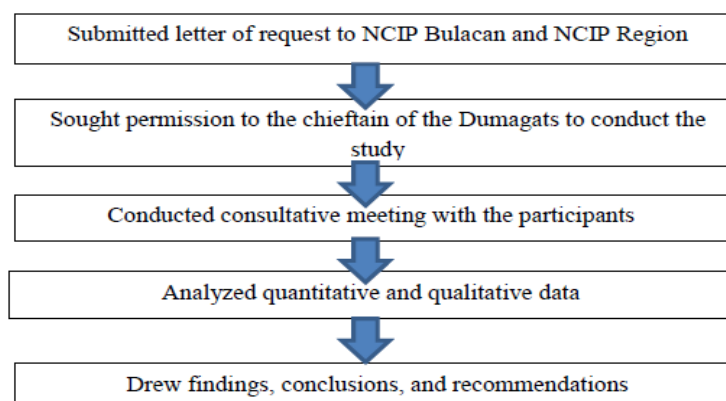


Figure 4. Data Gathering Procedure Flow Chart

Data Analysis Procedure

The quantitative data for the profile of the respondents were tallied, tabulated, and computed through frequency count. The frequency of a particular observation is the number of times the observation occurs in the data. The process of creating a percentage frequency distribution involves the following: first, identifying the total number of observations to be represented; then, counting the total number of observations within each data point or grouping of data points; and then, dividing the number of observations within each data point or grouping of data points of the total number of observations. The sum of all the percentages corresponding to each data were transpired into graphs for a more visual presentation and easier interpretation.

The qualitative information gathered from the responses in the consultative meetings with the community were also interpreted. Here, themes were generated. These were presented in tables, analyzed, and were used to get the accurate interpretation of the findings on the aspirations and motivations of the participants. These became the basis for the in Sustainable Entrepreneurial Development Program of the Dumagat community. The qualitative data collected with the profile of the participants are the input of the study.

Ethical Considerations

Several ethical considerations were considered to ensure that the study was conducted in an appropriate manner. All participants were provided with verbal consent to be part of the consultation meeting procedures of the research. The researcher then asked permission from the National Commission on Indigenous People in Bulacan to conduct and gather necessary data for the research. The researcher explained the research purpose and process both to the Commission and IP group. It was also ensured that the selected IP members had the willingness to participate.

Other important considerations were the following: that the dignity and wellbeing of the Dumagat people and its community were always protected; that the research data remain confidential throughout the study; and that the researcher obtain necessary permission from concerned parties or individuals. To formally conduct the consultation meeting, a written request consent letter was also secured by the researcher. This was approved by the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP) Regional Office endorsed to the National Commission on Indigenous People Bulacan Office, signed by the head of the agency before the researcher was endorsed to the chieftain of the Dumagats community.

RESULTS

Perceived Experiences and Aspirations Encountered in the Entrepreneurial Activities in the Community

The community of Dumagats in Sitio Ipo, Barangay San Mateo Norzagaray Bulacan participated in entrepreneurial activities, projects, and developments that are engaged in agriculture and non-agriculture such as farming, fishing, handicraft industry, and other entrepreneurial livelihood activities. These activities are part of the indigenous people's livelihood and culture system. Below are the primary concerns and experiences encountered by the people of the community with the themes: Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Activities.

Agricultural Activities

These are agricultural uses and practices including, but not limited to: producing, breeding, or increasing agricultural products; rotating and changing agricultural crops; allowing land use for agricultural activities to lie uncultivated in which it is plowed and tilled but left unseeded; allowing land used for agricultural activities to lie dormant as a result of adverse agricultural market conditions; allowing land use for agricultural activities to lie dormant because the land is enrolled in a local, state, or federal conservation program, or the land is subject to a conservation easement; conducting agricultural operations; maintaining, repairing, and replacing agricultural equipment; maintaining, repairing, and replacing agricultural facilities, provided that the replacement facility is no closer to the shoreline than the original facility; and maintaining agricultural lands under production or cultivation.

Small Farming/Rotational Cropping

Experiences in the entrepreneurial development, activities, and projects	Aspirations	Theme
<i>"lumiliit po ang mga lugar na napagkukunan naming ng makakain, sapagkat ginagamit ang mga ito ng mga malalaking korporasyon para sa kanilang interes kaya ay upang magamit ng mga taga-syudad ang mga lupa bilang bagong matitirhan"</i>	Enough land for the indigenous community where they can plow their crops and use for other activities concerning farming	Agricultural
<i>"sa kadahilanan na kami po ay nasa loob ng reserved area ng MWSS may mga lugar malapit sa ilog na hindi naming maaaring taniman"</i>	Modern techniques like aqua plant farming should be introduced and implemented in the community where they can maximize the use of water-based systems as a method of farming.	Agricultural
<i>"ang paraan ng aming pagtatanim ay sinaunang paraan walang halong chemical ito ang aming kinalakihan o tradisyon na hindi naglalagay ng anumang fertilizer kaya ang aming mga aning gulay ay masustansya at walang nakakatakot na chemical na nakakasira sa kalusugan ng tao at ng lupang aming pinagtataniman, subalit ang paraan na ito ay matagal bago kami makaikot ng bagong itatanim at lumiliit na rin ang lupang aming pinatatanam"</i>	Find new practices and methods of farming where traditional farming system of the Dumagat community will be incorporated with a modernized restructured breeding procedure allowing them to cultivate crops effectively.	Agricultural
<i>"Nagtatanim kami ng Kalabasa, malalaki ang kalabasa na aming naani. Ang naging problema wala kaming sasakyan na magdadala ng aming kalabasa sa bayan para maibenta kaya kami ay napilitan na ibenta sa</i>	In this situation, the organization and other linkages that will aid for the community's	Agricultural

Indigenous farmers search mountainous areas to farm, leaving their fields to lie uncultivated for some time before returning. Rotational cropping has always been an integral part of the indigenous people's lives. The term rotational farming is preferred over shifting cultivation in order to counter government discourse against this traditional indigenous livelihood system and to emphasize that lands are fallowed and returned to after an appropriate period of time. IPs are being displaced from their lands because of the intervention of large corporations and lowlanders who choose to resettle in the highlands, hence they are left with limited lands where they can farm their crops. Indigenous people are being displaced from their ancestral land due to large corporations' activities which arise as problems resulting to having limited lands where they can grow crops as well as build their homes.

The main issues surrounding rotational farming or shifting cultivations are laws that make this livelihood system illegal. This system has proven to be ecologically sustainable, provided that enough land is available for indigenous peoples engaged in this type of livelihood. Governments argue that shifting cultivation is technologically primitive, inefficient, and wasteful, destructive to forests and soils, and prevents development, thus keeping people in poverty (*Towards an Alternative Development Paradigm: Indigenous People's Self-Determined Development, 2010*). However, these types of arguments fail to go beyond purely economic point of view, heavily based on the dominant development paradigm, and fail to take into consideration the multi-dimensional characteristics and value that systems of rotational farming hold for indigenous peoples.

Fishing

Experiences in the entrepreneurial development, activities, and projects	Aspirations	Theme
"May mga lugar lang ditto sa dam na pwede kaming manghuli ng mga isda.	Introduction of modern methods and practices.	Agricultural (Fishing)
Yung iba pinagbabawal na kaya minsan onti lang ang aming nahuhuli"	Other sources of income other than fishing	Agricultural (Fishing)

Similar, to the situation in the small farm agriculture, the Dumagat community in Ipo Dam faces the same adversity. Accordingly, there are parts in the dam where they are allowed to get fish, as most parts of the dam are prohibited, which is why they can only fish a handful. Based on one of the respondents' account, they have limited access in the dam area where they can fish for their own consumption as well as for other purposes. As mentioned by documentary photographer Nico Sepe, —the river was not only the source of livelihood, transportation, and everyday necessities to the Dumagats, it was the river that shaped their lives. (Sepe, 2019). Aquaculture is an environmentally responsible source of food and commercial products through breeding, raising, and harvesting fish, shellfish, and other aquatic plants. Ultimately, this is farming in water.

Non- Agricultural Activities

This sector includes economic activities like household and non-household manufacturing, handicrafts, processing, repairs, construction, mining and quarrying, transport, trade, communication, community, and personal services.

Handicraft

Experiences in the entrepreneurial development, activities, and projects	Aspirations	Theme
<i>"Naturuan naman po kami ng mga iilang organisasyon kung paano gumawang mga handicrafts kaso nga lang po hindi nagtutuloy-tuloy yung progreso dahil sa kakulangan sa pondo,</i>	Financial support from LGUs, NGOs, and other private enterprises can help this community to start on their feet.	Non-Agricultural
<i>wala rin po kaming customer mga ganoon po"</i>	Additional business theories and practices to help them market and sell their product	Non-Agricultural
<i>"yung naging isa sa kabuhatan po naming dito bilang komunidad ay paggawa ng barbeque sticks. Ang kaso nga lang po ay hindi iyon nagiging tuloy-tuloy na may naggagawa kaming produkto dahilun ang una po talaga ay wala kaming buyer na permanente."</i>	Equipping the Dumagat community with business theories, practices, and knowledge in order to help them navigate the market and potential customers	Non-Agricultural
<i>"Wala po kaming pera na pang tustos sa tuloy-tuloy na paggawa ng mga handicrafts kaya po natitigil din kami"</i>	Support or donation from LGUs, NGOs and private enterprises to be able to buy tools and other necessities for the business production.	Non-Agricultural

In the interview, most of the women in the community are highly engaged in handicraft developments. Most of them have the knowledge and experience in creating. However, there are still challenges within the community because the activities and entrepreneurial undertakings did not prosper. According to them, they learned handcrafting techniques through the help of some organizations, but the progress is not continuous because of lack of capital funds as well as lack of contact with potential customers. Another respondent also said that one of their livelihoods is making barbeque sticks (skewer made of bamboo), however the income here is not stable because they do not have a permanent buyer. According to [Corpuz \(2010\)](#), indigenous Handicraft development is an area which has not been properly discussed more substantially. Another respondent stated that lack capital to produce the handicraft is the main reason why they stopped pursuing the activity.

The respondents claim several problems and challenges relating to their experiences in participating in entrepreneurial activities due to the following reasons: lack of contacts to potential customers, inadequate opportunities on proceeding with the activity, lack of qualified assistance or advice when it comes to entrepreneurial activities, and some members of the community are not knowledgeable enough of the skills needed for the entrepreneurial development and projects.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The Dumagats indeed belong to the marginal subsectors of the society. They mainly rely on solar-powered devices as their source of lighting and their income is below the standard minimum wage set by the government. Although the community is situated in an MWSS property where there is a dam, they mainly get their water source from spring or bokal as the locals call it. Their houses are also made from light materials like wood, which is not a viable material for protection. Most of the Dumagats in the community are only elementary graduates, and only one of them was able to attend college.

Dumagats possess livelihood skills as this is not only innate among them, but they are also accustomed trainings sponsored by different sectors. They engage in planting crops, catching fish, handcrafting, and sewing. However, the community's experiences shows that the Dumagats greatly lack opportunity. They lack financial capability to sustain an entrepreneurial activity. They lack advance knowledge and skills to innovate more products and ideas. Along this line is also their lack of networks or linkages that could support their supply or broaden their market. Although they are motivated and willing, there is also a lack of opportunity to continuously hone crafts and skills due to the deficiency of guidance from experts. As for their aspirations, the Dumagat community has the knowledge in producing handicrafts, but they lack financial ability to support this type of livelihood business. Financial support from LGUs, NGOs, and other private enterprises can help this community to start fresh. Moreover, the community needs a designated land for them to farm. For their livelihood to be sustainable, they need to be equipped with business theories, practices, and knowledge in order to help them navigate the market and potential customers; new practices and methods of farming should be combined with the traditional farming system of the community to help them cultivate crops efficiently.

The members of the Dumagat community have the motivation, but since they are in the marginalized sector, there also exists some deficiencies. With this, their psychological needs, safety needs, and self-actualization have to be fulfilled. They want to pursue and participate in an entrepreneurial activity to increase income to afford basic needs, for personal growth and development, for their construction and improvement of houses, to afford education, to improve their way of living, to learn new things, the desire to make a difference in the community and more. With the Dumagats' desire for a better quality of life, an entrepreneurial development program can be developed for them to be empowered as partners of economic development.

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