



Participatory Community Planning in Barangay Topas Sogod, Nabua, Camarines Sur

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ABSTRACT – A participatory community planning was done in Topas Sogod, Nabua, Camarines Sur, to address some of the issues and problems that were being experienced by members of the community. The specific objectives of the study were: 1) to identify the resources available within the community; 2) to discuss the existing issues and concerns in the community; and 3) to formulate possible solutions for the existing issues and concerns .

The Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method was used in order to identify and map out the resources available in the community. Along with the use of the problem tree, focus group discussion (FGD), and SWOT analysis, the PRA method was also used to identify and analyze the priority issues and concerns in the community.

Results showed that there were six categories of resources available within the community: 1) human resources, 2) agricultural products, 3) livestock, 4) natural resources, 5) economic resources, and 6) physical resources. On the other hand, the top six issues that were identified through the FGD were 1) lack of unity, 2) drug addiction, 3) absence of irrigation systems, 4) absence of cooperative programs, 5) absence of livelihood programs for women, and 6) lack of budget for road construction. It was therefore concluded that strategic planning is necessary in conducting community work. Also, recognizing and using the power of linkages ensures successful implementation of programs or projects in the community.

Keywords: participatory planning, Participatory Rural Appraisal, focus group discussion (FGD), problem prioritization

INTRODUCTION

Lassiter (1992) defined community development as “the process of working in collaboration with community members to assess the collective needs and desires for healthful change and to address these priority needs through

problem solving, use of local talent, resource development, and management.”

From this definition, it is derived that community planning is necessary to ensure successful implementation of any development program. Since development is always for the people, every development plan gears toward

addressing people's needs, helping them become more productive, encouraging them to realize their full potential, and bringing about positive changes. However, people themselves should be involved in every process of development planning — starting from the earliest until the final stages of the process. In addition, they should also be involved in implementing, monitoring, and evaluating development programs. People's involvement in the process of development planning will not only lead to more responsive interventions but it is also a way of promoting community ownership and learning.

In Brgy. Topas Sogod, Nabua, Camarines Sur, community planning was conducted to help the community members gain a better quality of living within their community and to help them realize their aspirations and desires in life. Although they seemed content with their simple life, the community members knew that there was a need to improve the current condition of their community.

Thus, the general objective of the community planning activity was to assist the local people in devising a plan that would help them identify the steps that must be taken to improve their community, and the most efficient ways to execute these steps. Also, the community planning activity aimed to help the locals identify people and/or organizations that can help in the implementation of their intended development plan.

The specific objectives of the community planning activity were: 1) to identify the resources available within the community, 2) to discuss the existing issues and concerns in the community; and 3) to formulate possible solutions for the existing issues and concerns.

METHODOLOGY

A. The Site

The province of Camarines Sur is located in the Bicol Region, which is situated in the south of Luzon Island, Philippines. It is 450 km south of Manila. Neighboring provinces n

include Camarines Norte, Albay, Sorsogon, Catanduanes Island, and Masbate.

Specifically, the community planning activity was conducted in one of the barangays in Nabua, Camarines Sur. Brgy. Topas Sogod is one of the 42 barangays comprising the municipality of Nabua (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Site map of the province of Camarines Sur showing Nabua (www.google.com.ph).

Topas Sogod is an agricultural barangay. Bordered by the Bicol River on the eastern side, it has a total land area of 126.8207 ha, most of which is used for farming and agriculture. Commonly, agricultural crops in the barangay include coconut, rice, corn, sesame seeds and different types of root crops.

Based on the 2011 municipal profile, Topas Sogod is one of the smallest barangays in Nabua. It has a total population of 1,287 comprising 256 households with 294 head of families spread out along Zone 1 to Zone 7. Barangay is the smallest administrative unit in the country and is the native term for a village. It is commonly subdivided into streets or zones to group residents located in specific areas.

B. Data Collection

Review of secondary data such as barangay profiles citing the projects and programs of the Barangay Council of Topas Sogod, Nabua, was done. Included in the review of related data were the details on projects that were already implemented and those that are yet to be implemented in the community. A Participatory

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Rural Appraisal (PRA) was the primary methodology used in conducting the participatory community planning since it is an efficient method that would help the “local people share, enhance and analyze their knowledge of life conditions, to plan and to act” (Chambers, 1992).

Under the PRA, participatory resource mapping was conducted. It was then followed by problem identification, which was done by eliciting from the community members some opinions and ideas regarding the social, political, and environmental problems that they were facing. In addition, the problem tree was used as part of the PRA in order to understand the causes and effects of the problems. An analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) was done to identify the positive and negative attributes of the community as a whole as well as the favorable and negative factors present in the environment. After identifying these factors and attributes, capability of the community to carry out activities was then analyzed (IIRR, 1998).

Throughout the workshop, focus group discussions (FGD) among a group of eight community members were done to gather information or opinion and build consensus about community problems and possible solutions.

RESULTS

1. Community Resources in Topas Sogod, Nabua, Camarines Sur

The participatory resource mapping was done in order to identify the strengths of and gaps within the community (Pyles 2009, IIRR 1998, Lamug and Catalan 1995). Resource maps were generated from the workshop allowed the community members to identify, locate, and classify resources within their community starting from the past until the present time. Under this step, the resources’ true value as perceived by every community member was also discovered. This agrees with Lamug and Catalan's (1995) discussion.

In identifying the resources available within the community, both the perspectives of male and female participants were consulted. Figures 2 and 3 show both male and female

groups as they enumerated and identified available resources within their community.

Mapping exercises has contributed to our understanding of the dynamics of civil society, which is important in ensuring the success of future policies and in identifying avenues for future research (April 2008, Webber and Ison 1995).

From the FGD, six categories of available resources within the community were



Figure 2. The male group identifying available resources in the community during an FGD.



Figure 3. The female group identifying available resources in the community during an FGD.

identified. These were 1) human resources, 2) agricultural products, 3) livestock, 4) natural resources, 5) economic resources, and 6) physical resources. It should also be noted that during the FGD, the group of women were more outspoken

than the group of men when it came to identifying the resources within the community. Although the women were not able to identify the different livestock as part of the available resources within the community, they were able to name more agricultural products than the men.. Surprisingly, only the women were able to list the following produce of the farms: turnips, root crops, and fruits.

On the other hand, although several of the households in the barangay have manually-operated or electric water pumps, neither of the two groups identified it as a resource. However, the artesian well might as well have been included in the physical resources available in the community.

Another resource identified during the FGD is human resources. In Topas Sogod, majority of the wives were full-time housewives, while the husbands, or heads of families, were working to provide the needs of their respective families. Most of the workers in the community were earning income from their employment in the government sector, or from business, farming, fishing and driving work, or hired labor (Fig 4).

As shown in Figure 4, majority of the workers in the community were farmers (45%); followed by tricycle drivers (14%); military personnel (13%); barangay workers (11%); teachers (5%); OFWs, skilled workers and fishermen (4%); and businessmen and proprietors (2%). Of the adult population only a total of 24.78% was working (Fig. 5).

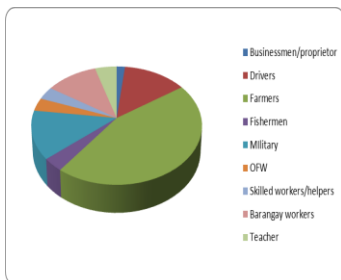


Figure 4. The human resources in Topas Sogod, Nabua, Camarines Sur (2011 survey).

Almost half of the working population was farmers since the barangay Topas Sogod is a

dominantly agricultural area. Also, many make a living by driving tricycles since this was the only possible means of transportation in the barangay, due to the type of road and the location of the barangay. No public utility jeepney routes existed in the barangay; hence, the use of tricycles is more widespread.

In addition to farmers and tricycle drivers, some have been on inactive military service. During the FGD, it was discovered that the people in the barangay greatly respect military men. However, a big chunk of the population was not

working yet since more than half of the barangay's total population of 1,287 (Barangay Profile, 2012) range from 0-21 years. Of the supposed population of workers, only 24.78% have a source of income that would suffice for their family's needs (Fig. 5).

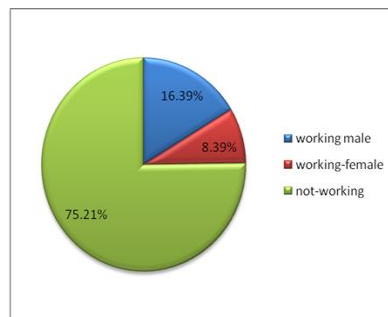


Figure 5. The working population of the barangay (2011 survey).

2. Issues and Concerns in Topas Sogod, Nabua, Camarines Sur

Alongside the resource mapping activity, another mapping activity that aims to identify the pressing problems and issues in the community was done by the third group of participants. This group was composed of both males and females. During this particular activity, the community members discussed among themselves the different issues being experienced

in the community. After the activity, a total of 15 issues/problems were identified by the community members (Fig. 6).

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From the 15 specific issues that were identified by the locals, different themes such as political leadership, farmer concerns, youth concerns, and economic stability were drawn. The identification of these issues in the community showed that Topas Sogod was just like other areas in our country that experience the same issues. As a whole, problems in leadership and management by the government are potentially part of the fulcrum of all the identified concerns.

Too much politics. During the activity, the community members have expressed that most of the community activities have been being affected by too much politics. According to them,

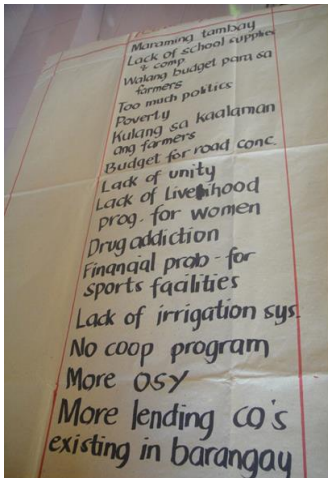


Figure 6. Identified issues and problems existing in the community.

there were instances wherein community members only participated in the activities because of what they can gain from political leaders but when there is no personal benefit, they would then side with the opposition and not participate with the community activities.

Farmer concerns. Being mainly an agricultural area, the main livelihood of locals in the barangay has consistently been farming (Fig. 4). Although the locals have been gaining their income from farming, the income was insufficient. Therefore, most of the locals said they did not have the financial capability to invest in and/or sustain their farming activities. This being the

case, farmers have had no alternative but to loan from private lenders to finance and sustain their livelihood. Farmers also said during the activity that their income from farming was too little to cover their debts and other expenses.

The absence of a good irrigation system has been adversely affecting their livelihood as farmers; thus, they considered this a main issue in the community. Although a river lies along the border of the barangay, people, especially farmers, were not able to maximize its uses and benefits. As an alternative, most of the farms in the area have been depending on rainwater; therefore productivity in the farms was greatly affected. However, the community knew well that if they could have a better irrigation system, crops' yield would increase, hence increasing their income eventually.

In addition to lack of an efficient irrigation system, the participants in the activity, along with representatives from the farmers' group, acknowledged that they had insufficient knowledge in the field of agriculture. Most of the farmer-participants said they still have been following the traditional methods in farming because they have not been exposed to new farming technologies. From time to time, they have been hearing new ideas and information regarding farming, but they did not know how to apply them. To remedy this gap between knowledge and skills, they requested that extension workers meet with them in the field to provide applicable, relevant information and hands-on training regarding the use of new farming technologies.

Youth concerns. Another issue raised during the activity was regarding out-of-school and unemployed youths. The participants in the FGD pointed out that many youths are unemployed because many of them were not able to finish their studies due to financial reasons or simply, lack of interest in school. A graph showing the educational attainment of youths in the barangay is shown in Figure 7.

Thus, these youths spend most of their time sitting or chatting along street sides rather than making use of their time in a more productive way. Families, especially parents, have been fearing that their children be involved in drug abuse and other vices rampant in many areas. They have

been feeling threatened by the seemingly unstoppable spread of drug abuse because many young people would be vulnerable. However, there was no alternative since these youths lacked the necessary knowledge and skills required for employment. Also, the barangay itself and other nearby barangays did not have enough business establishments that can provide jobs for all unemployed and out-of-school youths for employment

During the FGD, the participants also said that there were many youths in the barangay who have not been attending high school. At the same time, only a few had the capacity to pursue higher education. Only 16.47% of the youths in the barangay have gone to college (Fig. 8). The

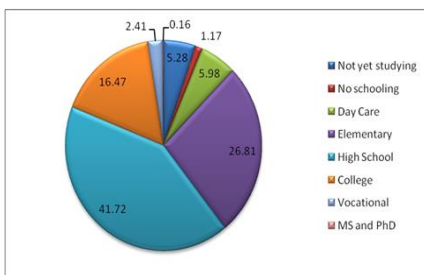


Figure 7. Educational attainment of the people in the barangay.

two main reasons for the low number of enrolled students were the children's lack of interest in school and financial constraints. The participants feared that if the youth were not in school, they might lose a sense of direction and engage in non-productive and risky activities instead of pursuing productive, enabling activities.

The barangay's insufficient budget for sports facilities is also an issue especially among the youths who are the more active sectors when it comes to sports activities. This may enhance the talents and capabilities of the youth who may want to join sports competition in the future. Furthermore, the participants said that recreational activities are important in fostering good relationships and teamwork among community members. Thus, a sports festival has been occasionally being held in the barangay during fiesta celebrations. Such events aimed to gather the locals to enhance the sense of unity and

oneness in the community. These types of activities also help the members of the community realize that they can play a role in the community, either as team players or team supporters. Therefore, community members also see the importance of adding and improving sports facilities in addition to the basketball court currently being used by the locals.

Economic stability. In terms of economic issues, the participants in the FGD said that their income was insufficient to cover their family's expenses, most especially their children's schooling. Most of the locals had no other sources of livelihood aside from farming, wherein they have been getting a limited amount of produce. The field of agriculture in the area, however, still has not improved; thus the locals could not carry out more efficient farming practices. In addition, roads were still inaccessible. Thus, they considered poverty an effect of the community's lack of necessary services such as an efficient irrigation system, potable water supply, and proper health services in the form of barangay health centers.

In relation to this, the community members also believed that the absence of cooperatives and livelihood programs poses constraints for their community's economic development. In order to solve these issues, they believed that the role of the women should be recognized. They must also be given help so that they can establish small-scale businesses and pursue more stable jobs.

3. Prioritizing Issues and Concerns

The 15 issues identified during the FGD were ranked according to urgency, based on the perceptions of the community members (Table 2). Using the pairwise ranking technique, the participants chose the more critical one between a pair of problems until they come up with a final ranking of the problems. In the meantime, only the top six issues were considered in the preparation of an action plan. This enabled the community members to provide due focus on the most urgent community issues, thus helping them strategize and formulate possible projects that can help alleviate, and eventually solve, the issues. In planning a development program, the community members representing coming from different

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sectors in the barangay were encouraged to voice out their concerns regarding the identified issues. If the participants cannot reach a consensus, decision was concluded based on vote of the majority.

From the activity, the top 6 issues that were perceived as most urgent and having enormous impact to the community were decided upon. These were 1) lack of unity, 2) drug addiction, 3) absence of an irrigation system, 4) absence of cooperatives, 5) absence of livelihood programs for women, and 6) lack of budget for road construction.

4. Objective Setting

To find possible solutions to the identified problems, the participants were introduced to the next workshop. They were asked to analyze the causes and effects of the identified problems using the problem tree analysis method. After identifying the causes and effects of the identified problems, the participants proposed the best solutions that they could think of. Also, they enumerated probable benefits of those solutions to the community (April, 2008).

Three groups, each composed of six individuals, were purposefully chosen to participate in the activity: the youth, the barangay council, and senior citizens. Each group was given two sketches of a tree wherein they would have to input their opinions about the two pressing problems identified in the previous activity. Fig. 9 shows the sample problem tree and stone balloon analyses that the groups have come up with.

During the problem tree analysis, the participants listed the root causes and probable effects of an identified problem. They also listed possible solutions to the problems inside the stone balloons. Also, they provided their opinions about the benefits that can be gained from solving the problem. After each groups' presentation, the other participants were asked to contribute their own insights in addition to what was explained by each presenter.

As shown in Table 1, the group identified three causes of lack of unity in the community. One of these was political divisiveness, which could be traced back to local culture. According to the community members,

political parties and their supporters tend to develop rivalry to the point that they avert from helping the incumbents in implementing development projects for the community. It was therefore recommended by the participants that consultation and continuous communication among concerned parties in the barangay be consistently carried out in order to foster a harmonious interpersonal relationship among the concerned parties.

Aside from political divisiveness, drug addiction, which is widespread among different areas in the Philippines, is also another issue in the barangay. Although it was not as rampant as in other areas, the gravity of its effects have caused the parents to become immensely concerned. In the problem tree analysis, peer availability of the illegal drugs in the community triggered this problem.

Table 1. The issue/problems identified with its causes and effects.

ISSUE/ PROBLEM	CAUSE	EFFECT
Lack of unity	Lack of <i>bayanihan</i> spirit	Disagreements among community members
	Political divisiveness	Slow development in the barangay
	Lack of consultation with community members	
Drug addiction	Presence of illegal drug dealers Family problems Peer pressure Problem in romantic relationships Curiosity for new experiences	Criminality Family problems Mental problems Ruined future

Lack of irrigation system	Lack of organized farmers' groups which could be recipients of GO funding Lack of initiative among the farm owners Lack of budget allocation from the GO	Low income among farmers Poor agricultural production
Lack of cooperatives	Negative experiences about failing cooperatives Misinformation Lack of initiative from previous administrations	Lesser chances to become an entrepreneur Lesser chances of borrowing money with low interest rate
Lack of livelihood program for women	Lack budget from LGU Lack of opportunity available for capacity building among women Absence of livelihood program proposal from community members	Less economic opportunities Absence of opportunities to help women improve themselves
Lack of budget for road construction	Misdirection of priorities Lack of resource mobilizers	Inconvenience in communication and transportation Poor condition of roads

pressure was mentioned as one of the causes of drug addiction in the barangay and the

Next, the lack of an efficient irrigation system was identified as a top priority issue since farming has been the leading source of livelihood of the community members. At present, no efficient irrigation system existed, although there has been an attempt to build one by procuring water from the river. Also, since about half of the households make a living from farming, the farming system in the barangay needed to be given due attention (Fig. 3). To aid this, farmers should be empowered through proper and sufficient education on improved farming system.

This will help in increasing the farm produce. Eventually, this can also greatly help many families in their financial difficulties.

Another concern in farming was regarding the loan that some of the community members availed of. Some of the community members have loaned from a financing institution to raise sufficient capital for their livelihood undertaking. However, this posed a problem due to the high interest percentage charged by the financing institution. In this situation therefore, building community cooperatives would be a great help to the community members. However, some of the locals were apprehensive about the idea of organizing a cooperative and thus fear venturing onto another one, due to their unfavorable experience in the past (Table 1). However, although the locals were somehow pessimistic about organizing a cooperative, there were some who showed interest.

To change the locals' perspective, people's awareness on the benefits that could be gained from membership to a cooperative should be raised. With proper trainings and education, the locals might soon embrace the idea of organizing a cooperative that can help them in many ways (Phillips & Pittman, 2009).

Also, community members consider women's livelihood programs a very important project because they believed that this can help augment the income of the family. In addition, mothers, or women in general can gain an opportunity to engage in more productive activities. These mothers, being the '*ilaw ng tahanan*' together with the fathers, who we commonly refer to as '*haligi ng tahanan*,' stood as the right examples to the youth; thus if they engage in negative activities, then it is possible that the morality of the youth would adversely be affected (Kenny, 2006). As for now, the livelihoods only available in the community are farming and hired labor for construction which are being stereotyped as "work for men". Majority of the women just stay in the house without any economic activity to engage to. Therefore, there has been a clamor from the women's group that the government must give extra attention to women's welfare.

The sixth issue was regarding the lack of budget for road construction. Community

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members blamed misdirection of the interests of past leaders and the absence of resource mobilizers as the main causes of this problem. The locals felt inconvenienced due to the inaccessible roads. However, with the then-governing barangay administration, which prioritizes the rehabilitation of the road, this problem might soon be solved. According to the participants of the FGD, especially the youth, having a usable and accessible road would improve the economic status of the barangay and enable more services to be delivered to the locals.

5. A priority plan to address issues and concerns

The proposed solutions/programs were further subjected to SWOT analysis in order to have a stronger grasp of the priority plan.

Situational Analysis

Based on the data collected, a situational analysis was done by identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of Barangay Topas Sogod as shown in Table 2-a-f. Table 2-a summarizes the SWOT analysis on the issue of lack of unity among the community members. However, this was somehow a result of malpractice of politics in our country. It might be difficult to change overnight, but the open-mindedness of the community members, the active leadership of the Barangay Council, and the community members' willingness to try new things for positive societal changes will surely help overturn the situation. "Ningas-kugon" attitude reminded us of an unfavorable Filipino attitude of working very hard at the beginning but gradually losing interest was true not only for the barangay, but also for other areas. More opportunities, such as trainings, exposure and incentives, should be given to the council leaders to help them improve their work

Table 2-a. SWOT analysis for the issue of lack of unity.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Activeness of barangay leaders	Low awareness of community members, especially leaders, on their responsibilities in the barangay
Open-mindedness of community members	Insufficient knowledge of community members regarding concretizing their ideas
Willingness of the community members to develop their community	Urgent need to encourage and empower people to participate "Ningas-kugon" attitude / tendency to leave a task undone
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Leadership/value formation training for barangay leaders	Easily-influenced community member, especially by outsiders
Incentives for leaders and other community members (ex. "model family or model community zone of the year")	Political factions extended to the community members which further threaten unity
Exposure visit of barangay leaders to other "successful communities"	

performance and leadership skills. However, locals should also stand on guard for the threat posed by political factions. Instead of being subdivided according to the leaders they support, they can opt to help one another for the welfare of the whole community.

Another SWOT analysis was done on drug addiction, which was considered by the community members a serious issue in the barangay. Table 2-b summarizes the SWOT

analysis on the issue. Although there were no statistical data to prove that the youth in Topas Sogod were involved in drug dependency problems, many parents still worry about the trends of drug abuse among youths.

Table 2-b. SWOT analysis on the issue of drug addiction.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Awareness of the community members on the health dangers of illegal drugs	Presence of drug pushers
Preparedness of the youth for the risks of drug abuse	Presence of unemployed and out-of-school youths
Presence of a youth organization in the barangay	Inability of the parents to guide their children
Presence of a parents' organization in the barangay	Peer pressure
	Minimal participation of members in community meetings
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Creation of a peer counseling group	Drug lords and suppliers outside the community
Seminar/Sharing of the experiences of a previous victim of illegal drugs	Drug addicts from outside the community
Anti-illegal drug laws and task forces	

The youth organization and the parents' organization in the barangay were considered as two of the barangay's strengths that might help eliminate the problem with illegal drug use. However, the presence of pushers outside the barangay was considered a threat both to the youths and their parents. To aid this, creating a peer counseling group and learning the experiences of a previous victim of illegal drug use were considered as opportunities that would

help tackle the problem. Also, the anti-illegal drug laws and the different task forces that were assigned to strictly implement these laws can also help address this problem.

The third issue in the community, according to the ranking done by the community members, was the absence of an efficient irrigation system in the barangay. Table 2-c summarizes the SWOT analysis done on the issue.

Table 2-c. SWOT analysis on the lack of irrigation system.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Location of the barangay alongside a river	Insufficient budget for an irrigation system
Availability of water pumps	Improper prioritization by the government
Presence off Farmers' organizations	Lack of cooperatives/registered farmers' organizations
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Programs of the Department of Agriculture and National Irrigation Administration	Noninvolvement of GOs
Financial institutions	

One of the many strengths of the barangay regarding the irrigation system was the Bicol River bordering their barangay and the existing farmers' organization. Also, the Department of Agriculture (DA) has a program that would help address the issue on irrigation. The only thing that remains to do is for the farmers to organize themselves. Although there was already a farmers' organization in the community, there was still a need to reorganize and empower it more through proper training. This can increase the probability of getting funding from the DA.

Next, the issue on the absence of cooperatives in the area was also subjected to SWOT analysis. Results of the SWOT analysis is shown in Table 2-d. The community members had had a negative experience of failing cooperatives

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in the past, but they stated that they were still willing to learn how to organize, manage, and sustain a cooperative. It was also identified that possible investors were available in the community. As of the time when the activity was conducted, the Barangay Council has been doing done preparations to pursue the workshops/trainings on how to establish cooperatives.

Another issue identified was regarding the lack of women's organization in the community. Women appealed to political leaders for livelihood programs that would benefit the women in the community. Although there were existing women organizations in the area, these organizations did not have any idea about the practical livelihood programs that would help them become more productive and thus enable them to contribute to their family's budget. Some skills training have been introduced to the

Table 2-d. SWOT analysis for the issue of absence of cooperative programs.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Presence of a farmers organizations	Insufficient knowledge/ low awareness on cooperative management
Willingness and capacity of people to learn	
Presence of possible investors in the community	Negative view about cooperatives Lack of initiatives
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Exposure visit to successful cooperatives	Manipulation from outside the community
Trainings on cooperative management	

barangay in the past but some political factors hindered some women from indulging in these opportunities. Table 2-e presents the SWOT analysis on the issue.

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Table 2-e. SWOT analysis for the issue of livelihood program for women.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Availability of natural resources	Lack of/Insufficient knowledge about business startups
Presence of women's organizations in the community	
Availability of possible resource persons for livelihood program	Lack of/Insufficient practical knowledge on maximizing available resources
Willingness of women to learn and engage in income-generating activities	Need to pinpoint possible skilled persons from the community
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Livelihood training programs	Gender disparity issues
Presence of investors in the community	
Women empowerment training/seminar	

Lastly, a SWOT analysis regarding the issue on the lack of budget for road construction was done. The summary of the results of the final SWOT analysis is shown in Table 2-f . Perhaps, one of the major strengths in the community is the willingness of the community members to volunteer their time and labor in solving the

problems in their area. In the case of Topas Sogod, the community members pledge to be available for *bayanihan* anytime it would be needed. The idea of *bayanihan* of the people was reiterated and that they propose *bayanihan* as a possible solution to different issues. Some of the opportunities that were identified were accessibility and availability of sponsors and investors. However, it was up to the barangay leaders to start the activity.

Lastly, a SWOT analysis regarding the issue on the lack of budget for road construction was done. The summary of the results of the final SWOT analysis is shown in Table 2-f . Perhaps, one of the major strengths in the community is the willingness of the community members to volunteer their time and labor in solving the problems in their area. In the case of Topas Sogod, the community members pledge to be available for *bayanihan* anytime it would be needed. The idea of *bayanihan* of the people was

Table 2-f. SWOT analysis on the issue of lack of budget for road construction.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Willingness of people to volunteer or share labor inputs, if not money	Lack of/ Insufficient household income Bureaucratic process in implementing project/program
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Availability of sponsors and investors in the community Fund-raising program	Improper prioritization of the government (i.e. Infrastructure was not a priority of the government

reiterated and that they propose *bayanihan* as a possible solution to different issues. Some of the opportunities that were identified were accessibility and availability of sponsors and

investors. However, it was up to the barangay leaders to start the activity.

A total of 11 common strategies to address the issues raised were discussed by the participants together. During the discussion, proper consultation and discussion with the concerned barangay members concerned was proposed to address the lack of unity among community members and the absence of cooperatives. For the sector representatives, a proper dialogue was deemed necessary for the success of a program and for the development of the community.

The old Filipino trait *bayanihan*, or volunteerism, can address the lack of unity in the community. *Bayanihan* may also help in the construction of an irrigation system and roads for the barangay. *Bayanihan* can bring the community people together, thus fostering unity in the process. On the other hand, *bayanihan* for the construction of an irrigation system can be done through the help of every community member who would volunteer to bring water from the river into their own farms. If many would volunteer to help, the irrigation system would surely be done since the river is just adjacent to the barangay. In addition, the community has an abundance of bamboos, which can help irrigate farms during hot or dry season. Some complained that to provide water for the farm, one would need a waterpump and a bamboo as well. However, if there is no available water pump, the only option left is *bayanihan*.

In addition, recreational activities, rehabilitation/orientation programs and proper guidance were proposed to address the drug addiction issue in the community. Recreational activities include inter-zone sports festival. Also, in conducting seminars and programs, tapping resource persons and experts on the subject matter was also discussed.

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Next, the budget for the livelihood program for women should be approved by the Barangay Council and be strictly implemented. Community members also said that livelihood programs are a requirement for the barangay to develop in terms of economic status. Thus, by providing livelihood opportunities to mothers and other women in the barangay would help the community's economy. This should therefore be given due attention.

During the informal interview with the barangay captain, it was discovered that road rehabilitation was one of the priorities since he believed that first and foremost a good road system would help children who travel on the way to school. Of course, the farmers, who transport their produce, would also greatly benefit from a good road system. One of the proposed solutions to the lack of budget for road construction was through fund-raising activities. Fund-raising activities would help but of course, the budget for road construction could not depend solely on the money that would be raised from such activities.

The priority plan devised by the community members of Brgy. Topas Sogod in Nabua, Camarines Sur, can greatly help the barangay attain an active state of development. However, the participation of every community member is vital to the barangay's development.

After the said activity, the participants were then guided in preparing the community action plan. This led the participants to further identify government organizations or agencies that the barangay can partner with in the implementation of community projects. Together, the participants planned for practical activities that would help address the issues, decided for the working time frame of these activities, and identified target agencies/participants needed to accomplish the action plan.

However, these projects and action plans would require regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure that they were implemented strictly and well enough to bring about the desired changes in the community. As said by Arances & Ledres (2004) "monitoring and evaluation system is a must for good management." This will be used to check if the community plan is going in the intended direction and is gradually attaining the objectives it was intended to achieve, as directed by the community members (Casley, 1982).

CONCLUSION

Community members' sincere concern and their interest to serve their fellow community member is a necessary factor in creating and implementing successful community development plan. Community members themselves, being the experts in their own worlds, should identify the issues and problems within their community and suggest possible solutions by creating tentative project and action plans to ensure that every development plan is designed to be context-specific and objective-oriented. During FGD, six categories of available resources within the community were identified. There were 15 specific issues that were identified by the locals with different themes such as political leadership, farmer concerns, youth concerns, and economic stability. Topas Sogod was just like other areas in our country with numerous issues being faced now. Situational analysis was done by identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the community.

The willingness of the community members to participate was an important

prerequisite in coming up with a good community development plan. The sincere cooperation of the participants was essential in completing the workshop. Also, the barangay council was able to

mobilize the community members. This was also vital for the completion of the objectives. As always, strategic planning is necessary in making a community work successful. Also, it must be recognized that establishing linkages with other people and organizations can ensure successful implementation of community programs or projects. In addition, empowering the local people requires exemplary leadership skills which can be enhanced through trainings. The philosophy of participatory community development should always be applied to actual community planning to ensure both short-term and long-term success.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

All authors contributed equally on the study design and the gathering of empirical data. The first and second authors wrote the manuscript and gathered the related literature. All authors conducted the actual community fieldwork. The last author served as the research adviser.

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