Understanding The Needs & Aspirations Of " Samahan Ng Magkakapit-Kamay (SMK)" Community In Talon Tres, Las Pinas City: A Grounded Theory Approach

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Abstract: The purpose of the study is to determine the manner by which the residents of SMK- Samahan ng Magkakapit-Kamay Community of Talon Tres, Las Pinas City (Phil.) understand their needs and aspirations. It used a Qualitative Research Design – Grounded Theory Approach. Face-to-face interview and focused group discussion were used to gather the data. To interpret the data, initial coding, open coding, axial coding, selective coding and memoing were employed. Three focal categories came out as a result of the process, namely: Security and Human Survival, Vision for a Better Life and the Need for External Linkages. Moreover, findings also revealed that the residents understanding of their needs and aspirations were product of their own daily encounters with each other. These sentiments are similar to other informal settlers especially those living in the critical areas like the creek side. Furthermore, the same needs and fears were also manifestations of their desire for a security of life for themselves and their loved ones.

Keywords: Grounded Theory, Needs Analysis, Samahan ng Magkakapit-Kamay Community (SMK), Community Outreach, Community Extension Services

1. Introduction

The Republic Act 7722 mandates institutions of higher learning to respond to the call for social transformation. This mandate is geared to serve the poorest of the poor, the least privileged, the deprived and the oppressed as cited in Elman (1998). Bidad and Camposano (2010) in their study of the Community Extension Services of SUCs in Region IX believe that community extension program offered by the SUC's will primarily boost the security of livelihood, alleviate suffering, reduce illiteracy , improve health and nutrition , create a system of governance that will promote, support and sustain human development and protect and preserve the environment. They further advance that the programs will help the poor by empowering their minds, body and resources, to augment their voice and will make the government attuned to their needs, aspirations that will eventually create a better participation. This empowering endeavors, according to them, will enable good governance increase an opportunity for them to participate in the decision making, institution building, and social life.

Moreover, Nasution (2006) in his article entitled "The Performance of Trilogy Function of Higher Education in Selected NOCEI-member of Higher Education Institution in the CALABARZON Provinces" highlights the importance of these functions especially on community extension. For him, HEIs role is to become an agent of development for the nation, hence, it must seek to educate and interact with the community in terms of the trilogy of higher education. He said, however, the priority was given to (1) teaching and to a certain extent to (2) research leaving (3) community extension service receiving less importance. Citing

Bowen & Fincher (1996), education as part of the trilogy on the teaching and learning function, should embrace not only the formal academic curricula but also influences among students that came about from association with peers and faculty members from the varied experiences of campus life. Hence, the teaching and learning experiences should not only be limited to the classroom but also provides opportunities for a broader non-academic relationships and experiences. This initiative requires a capable management for an institution to advance to a higher learning activities. Runnery as cited by Nasution (2006), forwarded the need for effective leadership through the development of educational goals. For him, leaders must respond to the challenges on building up cooperative participation in order to develop and legitimize attainable goals and objectives for the community. Furthermore, the development of educational goals and objectives of higher education institution should always be integrated with the community needs.

To respond to these challenge, the University of Perpetual Help System DALTA reflects in its vision-mission statement the "betterment of life through national development and transformation, which are predicated upon the quality of education of its people". These desire for human development tries to develop the value of "Helpers of God" guided by the principle of "Character Building is Nation Building" (UPHSD Student Handbook, 2013). All these ideals are incorporated on its teaching, research and community extension program, the trident of the University.

To this end, the administrators, faculty, staff and students of every department are expected to exercise this three-fold mandate not only in teaching and

research but also in the community extension program and activities of the department. In the case of the students who enrolled in the Graduate School of Education, they are expected to participate actively not only in the school's curricular programs, but also in the extracurricular activities especially in the Community Extension programs and activities of the department. The task to fully implement them becomes the collaborative effort of the Office of Community Extension and the Office of the Graduate School of Education.

As graduate students of the institution, our first concrete response is to become productive citizens of our country especially those challenged communities. However, the traditional concept of community involvement through artificial dole-out have never produced a long term positive effect in the community. To do this right, the best way to start is through a Social Investigation. Jimenez (2008) defines social investigation as a process of systematically learning and analyzing the various structure and forces in the community (i.e. economic, political & socio-cultural). According to her, this investigation will lead to Community Study Report which is the scientific collation and synthesis of data to draw a picture of the COMMUNITY. Moreover, it is a manifestation of a skill and a standpoint. This enables one to bring into focus of the oppressive & exploitative situation and will starting point of organizing activity. Through social investigation, the following data will become available: geographic, demographic, economic , political and socio-political data.

With all the data available, Community Organization is the next concept to be given importance. Murray G. Ross defines Community Organizing as a process by which community identify its need or objectives, finds the resources (internal and external) to deal with these needs or objectives, takes action in respect to them, and in so doing extends and develops cooperative and collaborative attitudes and practices in the community. Opposite to some understanding, community organizing should be seen in the optic of the community. As presented in the definition, the community organizer is not a superhero. No one knows the need of the community than the community people themselves. The data gathered above through social investigation should be obtained with the community leaders along the way. This will provide a more contextualized data that will become the basis of the programs and activities to be implemented by and for the community. The responses to the identified needs can be responded through tapping or networking with the internal and external resources. Community leaders and the community organizers should work hand in hand in order to materialized the planned activities. Programs

to be implemented should both respond to the immediate or short term needs and the long term needs of the community. The success of the community organization is manifested in the community sustainable development.

Hence, Community Extension to be productive and effective should follow a particular scheme. Personally, the scheme I personally adhere to is known as "SEE-JUDGE-ACT". This is a paradigm normally practiced in the social initiative of the Church Social Teachings. The Catholic Church incorporated this in the Basic Ecclesial Communities in order to enrich the local and even the universal Church. The "see" phase is equivalent to the social investigation discussed above. The "judge" phase pertains to the analysis and the planning stage in the social investigation and the community organization process. The "act" phase" pertains to the implementation of the plans and the evaluation stage that will better the implementation of the program in the community.

Objective of the Study:

This study focused on understanding the needs and aspirations of the community as experienced by themselves. It enumerates concrete ways to address the identified needs and aspirations. It also pointed out responsible persons who can help them in their identified needs and aspirations.

Moreover, the same study suggested concrete ways on how the Graduate School of Education to respond to such identified needs and pointed out some basis of adopting the community by the Graduate School of Education.

2. Methods

Using Grounded Theory Approach, the study determined the understanding of the residents of Samahan ng Magkakapit-Kamay (SMK) community of their personal needs and aspirations as a community. Flores (2015) defined Grounded theory as a methodology that geared towards building theory from the data through the generation of theoretical constructs which came from the qualitative analysis of the same data. It involves the process collecting data where the researcher collects codes and analyzes the information and decides what are the next data to collect and where to locate them in order to develop a theory that emerges. In conducting the process, the researcher collected data through face to face interview and focused group discussions. Flores (2015) considered this approach as *personalist* and constructivist in nature which tried to understand and interpret the experiences in the vantage of the person.

The respondents were composed of ten residents belonging to the two groups of respondents, most of them are leaders and active members of the community. These groups of respondents were divided according to the possible relocation area assigned to them.

For the face-to-face interview, both groups, through their leaders were personally asked about their common experiences in the community including some demographic information such as educational backgrounds, number of members in the family, livelihood and religion. The same respondents were also asked about some activities and programs provided to them both by the private organizations and the Local Government Units. Lastly, the researcher asked the same respondents about their immediate needs and aspirations that will make their lives more productive and dignified. The responses of the residents were then noted through initial coding, open coding, axial coding, selective coding and *memoing.* At the end, the researcher was able to determine the common factors from these experiences that will comprise the framework of the theory.

3. Results

The understanding of the needs and aspirations of the community respondents of Samahan ng Magkakapit-Kamay in Barangay Talon Tres, Las Pinas City was based on major factors. The interview and the encounter of the researcher with the respondents/co-researchers brought him to the realization of the three

major factors that eventually became the three focal categories that came out from the data collection: Security and Human Survival, Vision of a Better Life and External Linkages

The same respondents understood their needs based on their daily experiences of uncertainty of daily survival. Many aspects of human needs and the need to survive surfaced in the interview as part of their lived experiences. It was full of uncertainly that eventually led them to identify certain individuals especial the Local Government Unit and other agencies, including NGO;s as sources of external linkages. All these experiences were later on manifested in their vision and aspiration of a better life away from the present community

Categories of Understanding of Empowerment

The diagram below exhibits the paradigm of the understanding of the needs and aspirations of the residents of Samahan ng Magkakapit-Kamay community in Barangay Talon Tres, Las Pinas City. There are three factors identified by the researcher that contributed to the resondents' understanding of their needs and aspirations as informal settlers of the community. These three factors are also the focal categories of the study, namely, human survival and security, vision for a better life and external linkages.

The diagram presented the Understanding Needs and Aspirations. This is the main focus of the study to which the questions in the interview were directed to draw out. The three factors which are also the focal categories are: human security and

Figure 1. Factors on Residents' Understanding of their Needs and Aspirations

On Human Security and Survival

The residents of Samahan ng Magkakapit-Kamay Community in Barangay Talon 3, las Pinas City their

needs and aspirations are actually manifested by their desire for security and human survival.

Table 1. Highlights of Coding Process – HUMAN SECURITY AND SURVIVAL

CODES	CONCEPTS	CATEGORIES	FOCAL CATEGORY
For now, what we want in the group is to have a clean water supply…the river at the is full of garbage. The garbage stuck in the river so the water rises up…During flood, the garbage are ll gathered there, until it stuck…it reaches the our sleeping quarters…our house..	Lost of shelter	Call for Responsibility	H U M A N S E C U R I T Y & S U R V I V A L
Most common diseases here are cough, fever, flu…many of the residents have TB(tuberculusis) especially with the elderly, most of them are frequently drinking liquors at smokers…	Effects of Vices		
Many residents are rude and trouble makers, sometimesthere were strangers who will enter our house, they are running from someone…We are bothered because we might be part of their trouble…Someone, old friends would come…but sometimes, they just bring trouble. There was even a time that there was even a time that a policeman fire a gun..He was drunk. So my husband went to the Barangay/Municipal Office to seek for help…we are afraid for our children…	Peace and Order	Abuse of freedom /power	
It is nice to have that here..most of the mothers here are just sitting fown the whole afternoon, doing nothing…

…Many from here are working in Perpetual (University) as construction workers…but many are also just doing idle…(… bum)..

…I also want a much comfortable life…others are also willing to work but the lack of education limits them… | Lack of job opportunity/ education | Job Tenure | |

MEMOS
The respondents identified their needs based on the scarcity of their daily needs. These needs they identified were manifestations of their fears on loosing their shelter, the effects of vices, their need for peace and order and the lack of job opportunity and lack of education. The same needs are also expression of the call for responsibility on the daily decisions they have made, the responsible use of freedom and power and their desire for security of tenure. In summary, these needs of the residents are reflections of the need for huam security and survival.

EXTERNAL LINKAGES

After identifying their needs, such as scarcity of jobs, lack of education, peace and order and health and sanitation which are manifestations of their human security and survival, the responden realized that these identified needs can be provided by thrmselves alone. They needed other stakeholders who are in the position to realized these scarcity in their situation as narrated by one respondent:

Table 2. Highlights of Coding Process – EXTERNAL LINKAGES

CODES	CONCEPTS	CATEGORIES	FOCAL CATEGORY
Before, the Barangay/LGU was doing it…we are able to do it..Those who are working were helping each other…we gathered the garbage…we are bringing the garbage in front of Uniwide (a Mall along the road)..and then a garbage truck will collect it…some residents are also helping out…	Cooperation	Subsidiarity	E X T E R N A L L I N K
(They (LGU) are helping..they are coming to rescue…Whn the flood is huge. They are gathering the residents and bring them in the covered court ng Verdan(a Place/Subdivision)..those houses near the river…Some decided to stay at home….they just waited the flood to subside..	Responsiveness		
The Mayor control the policemen, so they will be in charge…so the people would call the attention of the Mayor for action…

Just like before, there wa a livelihood program of Maam Milda (Mayor of the place) … Soap Making livelihood, how to make dishwashing…we used to have it in the covered court…

..We are also taught how to make longganisa (home-made sausage)…DSWD of Las Pinas, we are invited …those interested… | Coordination | Network | |

			AGES
I am part of the 4P's (Government;s program for the Poor)..we have a leader, the government is giving us cash to livelihood, to buy daily needs like groceries. Our leaders are staying at the rear are of the community, we have a Cooperative for 4Ps members only ..the income is collected …then, they will distribute the income…	Leadership	Empowerment	

MEMOS

The respondents daily experiences differences challengies and insuffecienciues, they were able to identify ways to better their situation. However, these experiences also bring theme the realization that they also need other group of individuals or shareholders to help them tarnscent their seemingly miserable situation. These expericnes opened up to development leadership, responsiveness and coordination. The same group of people who tried to respond to their needs manifested the importance of connecting to people or network, subsidiarity and empowerment. Putting these concets and categories together will sum up to the community nee fo external linkages in order to maximize their potentials through these external forces.

VISION FOR A BETTER LIFE

As much as there are many challenges they have experienced in the community, the residents were able to identify significant individuals who can also be of help to them. The respondents however manifested a very positive attitude of hope. The same reswpondents are now in the process of relocation to the two separate sites. The first group will be relocated to Naic, Cavite while the other group will be relocated to Ciudad de Strike in Molino, Bacoor City. This reality is where the hope is coming from.

Table 3. Highlights of Coding Process – VISION FOR A BETTER LIFE

CODES	CONCEPTS	CATEGORIES	FOCAL CATEGORY
Like now, my husband want us to relocate…we want to leave this place..away from flood..at least now, we are having a possible relocation…	Stability of Shelter		
..So we can be safe, the whole family..most of us here wanted to relocate..for our children, ..like those with little children who are always playing in the creek…most parents here wanted to transfer to more secure place… *…We wanted to transfer so we can have more comfortable life..livelihood..and maybe, small business to give a better future for our children…*	Safety of children	Harmonious Relationship	VISION FOR BETTER LIFE
We want to have our own livelihood…those that we know of…we are also told, the the relocation place for us can be donated to us in time ..of the foreigners (the Sponsors)	Financial stability	Financial Freedom	
We are not yet sure, we will try still…We hope for the better..becaus someone will be in charge of us…there will also be a curfew..there will be a guardhouse…before you enter, you will be asked to present the ID to see to it that you belong to the place..We want things to be in order for our children..unlike here many children are cutting classes, hardheaded..many bad influences around…	Healthy Neighborhood	Secured Community	

MEMOS

The respondents daily experiences of insufficiency in different facets of life made them envision for a better life. The scarcity in their financial needs, the lack of jobs that hindered them to supply the family needs, the absence of other sources of income, the lack of education, the test nature like flood and sickness in their family became their motivatosr to look for ways to trsncend their present situation.

4. Discussions

The study Understanding the Needs and Aspirations of Samahan Ng MagkakapitKamay Community in Talon Tres, Las Pinas City : A Grounded Theory Approach helped the community of the Samahan ng Magkakapit-Kamay understand their needs and aspirations. The results of the study will become the basis of adopting the adopting the community by the Graduate School of Education Community Extension Program.

The result of the study identifies three major factors that reflected the community needs and aspiration based on their daily live d experiences. The three focal factors identified by the researcher are the same factors in considering the needs and aspiration of the community after undergoing the process of data gathering and data analysis. The following factors are (1) human security and survival, whereparticular needs such as education, livelihood, peace and order, value formation, risk reduction came out, (2) Need for External Linkages; and (3) Vision for a Better Life.

The respondents, in general, identified their needs as enumerated above as manifestation of their deeper desire for human survival and security. Their experiences of flood, absence of peace and order, lack of job and livelihood, poor health and sanitation made them identify their needs as an urgent response to this daily scarcity of life.

The identified needs enabled them to realized the role of the external linkages and the other stakeholders such as the City Mayor, Barangay Captain and Council, Philippine National Police, DSWD and other agencies. These external linkages played a big role in responding to the needs of the community. These linkages make needs met directly and indirectly by using their own resources to complement the needs of the community.

Lastly, the reality of the immenent transfer of residence from the informal settling to a formal relocation site also manifested another factor in the lives of th respondents. Since the communityof the Samahan ng Magkakapit-Kamay will be relocate to Naic, Cavite , the first group, and in Ciudad de Strike in Molino, Bacoor City, the second group, the desire for a better life that provides a harmonius relationship among com munity member, possibility of financial freedom and secured community.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study using analytical nd comparative method of data analysis based on the grounded theory approach as a qualitative study, the following conclusions are forwarded by the researcher:

The understanding of the residents of the Samahan ng Magkakapit-Kamay community of their needs and aspiration are purely based on their daily experience of scarcity and inadequacy of life. These needs might be very concrete and simple yet they will surely alleviate them from the feeling of inadequacies they are experiencing right now.

1. The need for human survival and security is indeed very inherent. There is a need for education, job and livelihood, skills for risk reduction, and proper health and hygiene. These are primary needs of the family in order to have a descent living condition especially in the informal settlement.

2. The researcher also concluded that the significant role of the external stakeholders can never be under estimated especially in the less privilege area like the Samahan ng Magkakapit-Kamay. The programs and activities of the Local Government Unit were indeed beneficial in the daily survival of the community.

3. The researcher also concluded that the aspiration of the community of a better life especially in the relocation area is creating a very positive effect in the lives of the residents. Their efforts to strive to provide a better life for their families became their motivation of living life everyday the best way they can and learned to be contented but not complacent in what they have now.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended for the interested groups who will be involved in the community of Samahan ng Magkakapit-Kamay.

1. **Revisit and Conduct an In-depth Needs Analysis of the community of the Samahan ng Magkakapit-Kamay** in order to complement the information regarding the actual needs of the community. This will be very beneficial and in making a Community Extension Program especially for possible adoption. The program to be developed will become more responsive to the needs of the community.

2. **General Assembly** for both groups (based on their Relocation Site) should be done to update the residents of the situation of the community and the development of the relocation program.

3. **A Social Investigation** should be done by the University/HEI especially those planning to adopt the community to have a better grasp of the life of the community.

4. **Conduct Leadership Training** for Community Leaders provide them with skills in handling their group. This will be helpful ina persuading members and eventually developing activities for the common good of the community.

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