

Interventions to Improve the Quality of Life of the Badjaos in Batangas City, Philippines

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Abstract

This study assessed the effectiveness of the implementation of the programs intended for the Badjaos in Batangas City. Likewise, the problems encountered in the implementation became the bases in the formulation of the proposed intervention to enhance the implementation of the programs in order to improve the quality of their lives. It employed descriptive correlation design supported by interviews and observation techniques. Respondents were 156 from barangays Wawa and Malitam selected through convenience sampling. Results revealed that the Batangas City government effectively implemented massive birth registration, maximum hospital discounts, supplemental feeding program and EBD Health card; however, less effective on practical skills development and burial assistance. The implementation of the programs on health and education resulted to a great extent of impact on the quality of life of the Badjaos. On the other hand, to a least extent of impact were felt on reduction of teenage pregnancy, practical skills development and cash for work programs. Also, the respondents had often encountered problems on unavailability of funds to sustain the programs and poor or limited community participation. The effectiveness of the implementation of the programs affected the impact on the quality of life of the Badjaos and the problems they often encountered. Therefore, a plan of action containing interventions to enhance the implementation of the programs to improve the quality of life of the Badjaos was proposed.

Keywords: Badjaos in Batangas City; Indigenous Peoples (Ips); QOL of the Badjaos

I. Introduction

The quality of life of badjaos is far different from the usual manner of living of ordinary Filipinos due to lack of education and permanent residence. Badjaos can be seen scattered in some districts near the seas and oftentimes roaming in the streets of Batangas City [1]. This migration which is considered a social phenomenon nowadays is influenced by the push and pull forces in the society; hence, further efforts are needed to improve the health and wellbeing of these indigenous peoples (IPs).

According to Tamayo [2], there are considerable number of groups of indigenous people in the Philippines who are nomads by nature - the Mangyan of Mindoro, the Aetas of Zambalez, the Manobos of Cotabato, the Mandaya of Davao to mention a few of these tribal groups - but among them, there is the most marginalized group - the Samal Bajaus of Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga. The Bajaus are the poorest among the poor.

The name of these marginalized indigenous people is spelled in various ways: "Badjao," "Badyaw," or "Bajau." The Bajaus are peace-loving people [3], oftentimes to a fault. They would endure all forms of hardship, inconvenience and lost opportunities if only to avoid getting into trouble, especially with people not of their own tribe. Hence, they prefer to live in peace by themselves at the coastal fringes of population centers, mangrove areas, coves and islets. With the huge logs which they used to carve into houseboats having gone very scarce (and expensive), their mobile dwellings have evolved into shanties on stilts - literally a ramshackle ensemble of poles, palm fronds, and if the family is better off, some pieces of miss-cut planks.

The badjaos are an oppressed tribe. They are referred to as luwaan by the Tausug which literally means “outcasts”. Their livelihood depends on the sea—they use numerous methods of fishing, farm seaweeds, gather shells and so forth as their source of food or to sell/barter for other necessities such as clothing, materials for boat constructions, mats and fishing equipment, until such time when they are driven away from the northern part of the country to look for another source of living. Scattered in the cities, until they reach the southern part, they can be seen begging for food or money or for any material thing which sustains their living. Wherever they live, they are considered citizens of the lowest class: ignorant, dirty, stench-smelling and deprived. In the entire Philippines, there are no other people who are as collectively and individually poor as the Bajaus - without exception [1].

Given this scenario, poverty among the Badjaos indicates underdevelopment, deprivation and degradation which is a call for an appropriate development and intervention to enable them to survive their constantly changing environment; thus, a poverty eradication effort become a part of the international millennium goal (MDGs) [4].

As Batangas City was awarded one of the most livable city in the Philippines, one of its main thrust is to protect and uplift the lives of its residents. Since Badjaos are nomadic groups, who merge the mainstreams of the Batanguenos, the local government has to appropriate for them programs necessary for the upliftment of their living. They enjoy the same programs the city has implemented with additions like Cash for work program, Massive Birth Registration, Provision of Potable Water, Training on Water and Rescue Operation and Practical Skills development.

But how can the government provide them so when as observed, they are oftentimes resistant to these changes. Mendicancy has never been a problem among the locals in the city, not until these Badjawns come. Some residents in the city has complained that Badjaos make their places dirty, they call them squatters and mendicants which authorities become also worried of their dire condition and safety. The quality of their life, if assessed based on the physical environs and health wellness received from the government can still be said to be lacking. The shanties where they live, the capacity to earn and the way how families portray their community life all speak of poverty.

Quality of Life (QOL) as Deshingkar[5] defined is the general well-being of individuals and societies. Standard indicators of the quality of life include not only wealth and employment but also the built environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, and social belonging [6]. However, he stated that while Quality of Life (QOL) has long been an explicit or implicit policy goal, adequate definition and measurement have been elusive.

Thus, the researchers as responsible Batanguenos working in the academe would like to establish a baseline data about the current condition of the Badjaos in Batangas City by assessing the effectiveness and the impact of the programs implemented, so that, in coordination with the Local government of Batangas City, be able to propose better and appropriate interventions which will help to improve their quality of life.

II. Objectives of the Study

The study generally aims to propose an intervention to address the quality of life of the Badjaos in Batangas City. More specifically, the paper described the profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, number of family members, dialect spoken, place of origin, and length of stay in Batangas City; assessed the effectiveness of the programs implemented by the city government; determined the impact of the programs implemented to the life of the Badjaos; identified the problems encountered in the implementation of the programs; tested if there is a significant relations among the effectiveness of the programs and services, impact of the programs, likewise the problems encountered; and finally, proposed intervention to enhance the implementation of the programs of the Batangas City government to improve the quality of life of the Badjaos.

III. Methods

3.1 Design

Focused on the Badjaos in Batangas City, Philippines, this paper employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Descriptive correlation design was used to test whether a relationship exists between the effectiveness of the program, its impact on the life of the recipients and the problem they encountered during the implementation of the program. These were supported by interviews and observation techniques, since inadequacies in forms of illiteracies among the respondents were observed.

3.2 Participants

From a total of 200 Badjao migrants from Malitam and Wawa in Batangas City (DSWDO Office, 2014), a total of 156 or 78% of the population were considered as subjects through convenience sampling. This was done through some visits of the researchers to the DSWD Office during their meetings with the subjects. The number of participants was determined through their willingness to cooperate in the said study. Five CSWD personnel together with the barangay officials were also included.

3.3 Instrumentation

To gather the data and information needed in the study, a three-part questionnaire was prepared. The items were taken from the related literatures and results of pre-interviews with the subjects. The first part described the Badjauwons; the questionnaire was supported by a structured interview schedule. This was necessary to indicate the baseline characteristics of the respondents including age, sex, number of family members, dialect spoken, place of origin, and length of stay in Batangas City. However, although a structured part is required, majority of the answers were taken through dictation; they answered the read/translated questions while student researchers were checking the answers for them. Thus, Part 1 discussion is limited to narrative description.

The second part enumerated the different programs implemented by the city government as provided by the DSWDO and PIO. The participants were asked to assess these services through choosing from the following scale: 4= Very effective; 3= Effective; 2= Less Effective; and 1= Not effective, if not at all. The third part asked the respondents about the impact of the implemented programs to the quality of life of the Badjauns using 4 point scale also from To a very great extent to Not at all, and the fourth about the challenges or the problems they met during the course of program implementation by the city government with them using 4 - always; 3-often, 2-sometimes and 1 never.

All materials given to Badjauwon participants are in English. The surveys were translated from English to Filipino and are then back translated to English. To ensure item equivalence, attention was paid to how well the items in the survey instrument were fitted to Badjauwons' understanding of Filipino or Tagalog dialect. The translation of items from English to Tagalog and the final wording was performed by university language instructors through the coordination of the staff from the DSWDO who better understand some of the dialects of the participants. All items in the survey form undergone content validation and reliability through the help of an outside expert and university statistician. Moreover, the whole proposal was subjected through the scrutiny of the Research Office.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Before the data gathering, a letter of permission together with a sample questionnaire were sent to the Graduate School dean, the barangay captains of Wawa also Malitam and to the head of DSWD Office for a purpose of approval and endorsement. Hence, target participants were visited so they can be briefed about the purpose, content and outcomes of the paper. An informed consent was discussed with them; likewise, questions raised were addressed properly.

The researchers, together with some barangay officials and DSWD staff personally distributed the survey questionnaires, entertained questions and/ or did checking for them when the need arose. Visits happened during

the semestral break (October, 2015) but the survey administration took two days so that data can also be retrieved on time.

3.5 Data Analysis

All the data generated from the participants were tallied and tabulated for purposes of in depth interpretation. Quantitative data were treated using the following inferential statistics: Percentage, Weighted mean, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). On the other hand, qualitative data like interviews were coded, grouped and given interpretations so that it best support the numerical figures in the tables.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

For purposes of confidentiality, the researchers asked the participants " consent through their imam or leader, and assured them of the confidentiality of the results. They were given also the option to withdraw from the interviews and answering if they feel like doing. They were also assured that in the event they wanted to get the results they can have an access.

IV. Results and Discussion

The Badjaos in Malitam and Wawa, Batangas City Majority of the respondents were under the age between 16 to 25 years old. It was observed that with them, were children seemingly about the age of 10 years old and below. An average household of the Badjao in the community is about 6 to 10, living with extended family members. They live in a hut of about 2-3 square meters, made of bamboo and cogon leaves. The floor of the hut is apart from the ground about 1.5 meters, supported by wooden columns. To get in the house, they use wooden ladder. Men in the community work as fishermen while the women as housewives.

When asked about their place of origin and for how long they have been in Batangas City; in broken Tagalog, they could not just say when and how long but said " matagalna." Some of them were still children, or others were born already there; thus, can be said more than 30 years already. They uttered still in fluent Samal. They live in a separate community, near by the river about 30 minutes by banka (fishing canoe) from Batangas City.

Table 1. Effectiveness of the Programs and Services Implemented to Bajauan Community

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Supplemental Feeding Program	2.96	Effective	3
2. EBD Health Card	2.95	Effective	4
3. EBD Scholarship	2.51	Effective	9
4. EBD Philhealth	2.89	Effective	5.5
5. Massive Birth Registration	3.31	Effective	1
6. Provision of Potable Water	2.22	Less Effective	13
7. Maximum Hospital Discount (Free Hospitalization BMC)	3.29	Effective	2
8. Free Immunization/Vaccination	2.13	Less Effective	15
9. Livelihood Program (banca)	2.85	Effective	8
10. Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program	2.20	Less Effective	14
11. Food Assistance	2.36	Less Effective	11
12. Burial Assistance	1.92	Less Effective	18
13. Health teachings (proper hygiene & sanitation, lactation & breastfeeding & teenage pregnancy)	2.87	Effective	7
14. Family Planning	2.07	Less Effective	16
15. Monthly Check-up for pregnant women	2.89	Effective	5.5
16. Cash for work program	2.00	Less Effective	17
17. Disaster preparedness training	2.42	Less Effective	10
18. Training on water & rescue operation	2.27	Less Effective	12
19. Practical skills development (Beads making, mat weaving, charcoal and rug making, guitar making)	1.68	Less Effective	19
Composite Mean	2.52	Effective	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Very Effective; 2.50 – 3.49 = Effective; 1.50 – 2.49 = Less Effective; 1.00 – 1.49 = Not Effective

There is also an access path from barangay Malitam to their community but only by foot or tricycle because of unpaved, not cemented roads. Majority of the children of the community spent a day mostly playing with friends doing arm wrestling and running while some were attending classes in Brgy. Malitam and Wawa. The staple food of the Badjao is cassava. They buy it at a public market in Batangas City. They also purchase products like canned sardines and munchies and some run a sari-sari store (mini-groceries) selling those products. They eat twice a day; late morning and late afternoon. Some sell merienda (snacks) like boiled corn and noodle in the community. The Badjaos are very accommodating and friendly to visitors. Children approach visitors with a big smile and few approached saying “pahingi (give me money).” Some adults try to sell to visitors their ethnic products like pearl necklace and ring [7].

The city government of Batangas has been very insistent on the massive registration of the residents; hence, ordinance # 2011-31 (January 25, 2011) known as “Birth Registration of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) for the PantawidPamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)” is being strongly implemented. With regards to migrants like Badjaos, they are asked to register all the members of the family to enjoy all the benefits the city provides. Therefore, massive birth registration posted rank number 1 and is interpreted Effective. It supports a local finding that all Badjao children are now registered in the civil registry and the adults in voters registration; they even all took Christian names[8].

Free hospitalization especially at Batangas Medical Center (BatMC) followed in number 2 and is also effective. This response is very well supported by Supplemental Feeding program in #3, Philhealth in rank 5.5 tied with monthly check-up for pregnant women. It can be noted that all these programs concern the health of the beneficiaries.

Among the less effective services, they considered practical skills development as lowest, followed by burial assistance, and cash for work program. In collaboration with colleges, universities and non-government organizations, different financial empowerment through literacy and microfinance are initiated. Practical skills development on beads and pearl necklace making, mat, charcoal, rug, guitar making are simultaneously scheduled to sustain their needs daily and help them rise from poverty. Where money is concerned, the Badjawuns really find it difficult to subsist on earning stable income since they were used to wander from one place to another and depend most of the time on sea diving.

Generally, they rated the programs and services implemented by the city government as less effective. This is in support to the finding of Santiago [9] emphasizing that there are still additional needs that require support. Specifically, the provision of livelihood opportunities (employment and source of income to community members) to sustain their daily needs and help them rise above poverty and lack.

4.1 Impact of the programs implemented on the QoL of the Badjaos

Among the many programs implemented by the city government, it is quite notable that two very important concerns topped the rank; health and education regarded by the Badjaos impacting their lives to a great extent. In an interview with some mothers, they said that confinement in the hospital particularly at BatMC is no longer a very big problem unlike before when they did not have yet issued Philhealth cards. This is supported by their responses concerning also the preventive and promotive aspects of health. This result from the collaboration among different private and public organizations who provide them seminars and trainings; thus, awareness and compliance are improved.

Likewise, parents are able to send their children in school. During community visits, before dusk, children happily arrive with their bags coming from nearby public schools. They were in school uniforms though majority were in slippers only. According to them, 4Ps or the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, though quite low, “to a least extent” in their assessment; helps them alleviate their poor condition of life. “To a great extent”, they said that literacy program also helps increasing their interest in education.

This finding supports Frufonga [10] as he concluded that the PantawidPamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) in Iloilo City improved in the preventive healthcare among pregnant women and younger children.

Table 2. Impact of the programs implemented on the quality of life of the Badjaos

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. I learn how to prepare & cook nutritious food.	2.76	To a Great Extent	9
2. My children gained more weight & become healthier because of the feeding program.	2.42	To a Least Extent	17
3. I become conscious of the health of my family.	2.87	To a Great Extent	7
4. I always bring my children to the health center/hospital for check-up	2.53	To a Great Extent	12
5. I appreciated the value of education as a means of alleviating poverty	2.65	To a Great Extent	10
6. I can go to govt. hospitals for confinement because of the Philhealth card.	2.95	To a Great Extent	4
7. I feel secured because my personal documents were obtained.	2.95	To a Great Extent	4
8. Illness and sickness of family members are not that stressful anymore because confinement at govt. hospitals are free.	2.98	To a Great Extent	1.5
9. Family members are able to meet their basic needs like food and potable water .	2.05	To a Least Extent	19
10. The 4Ps helped in alleviating their poor conditions.	2.47	To a Least Extent	16
11. I am able to send my children to school.	2.98	To a Great Extent	1.5
12. I can bring my children to health centers and hospitals for check-up and consultation.	2.62	To a Great Extent	11
13. There is food assistance that help in our day to day existence.	2.51	To a Great Extent	13
14. The Cash for work program helped the families augment their family income.	2.02	To a Least Extent	20.5
15. Practical skills development helped Badjao women eam money to augment the income of the husband.	2.02	To a Least Extent	20.5
16. Monthly check-up of pregnant women helps ensure the safety and well-being of the mother and unborn infant.	2.85	To a Great Extent	8
17. Mothers and family members learn the preventive & promotive aspect of health.	2.95	To a Great Extent	4
18. Teenage Pregnancy was reduced.	1.67	To a Least Extent	22
19. Health and sanitation practices has improved.	2.33	To a Least Extent	18
20. Interest in education was developed because of the Literacy program.	2.50	To a Great Extent	14.5
21. The Badjaos has become partners of the local government in rescue operations.	2.91	To a Great Extent	6
22. The quality of life of the Badjao was improved.	2.50	To a Great Extent	14.5
Composite Mean	2.44	To a Least Extent	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = To a Very Great Extent; 2.50 – 3.49 = To a Great Extent; 1.50 – 2.49 = To a Least Extent; 1.00 – 1.49 = Not at All

Improvement was observed in the reduction of malnourished children. Results also showed an increase in the enrolment of children in public schools. Likewise, the attendance rate of children also increased. The decrease to nearly 0% in the drop-out rate of school children was an indication of improvement. Moreover, the results showed that the beneficiaries spent the largest amount of income on food, followed by education, hospitalization (medicines) and savings. In the same manner, the 4Ps increased parents' participation in the Family Development Sessions to nearly 100%.

Moreover, Montilla [11] found that pupils very satisfactorily benefit from the assistance given by the 4Ps in terms of Health and excellent in terms of Nutrition and Education. Thus, 4Ps has significant impact on pupils' education based on its beneficiary conditionalities, is able and motivated to attend classes because of adequate school supplies, satisfied meals, parasitic free stomach and supportive and active parent.

The respondents, however, considered to a least extent both the cash for work program and practical skills development, the lowest among the impact of programs implemented. Although 4Ps according to them has helped their economic condition; it is still not enough so much that majority have 5 and above members in the family, considering also the fact that 4Ps is for children's education purpose. Mendicancy or begging is still practiced by some to augment daily needs. Although practical skills development has been provided for quite sometimes, the earnings do not suffice. Sustainability of the work dwindles because of their unstable total integration with the society. As linkage with other cultures falter, so do their potential to continue with their daily work.

4.2 Problems Encountered in the Implementation of the Programs

Table 3 revealed several common problems being encountered by the respondents during the implementation of the programs or services. Non government organizations (NGOs), public and private

institutions and the city government joined forces in creating and implementing the mentioned projects; however, some of them die even before implementation or in the course of its process.

First reason according to both the implementers and the recipients is because of unavailability of fund which is often a problem. Many times, they have been gathered for seminars and trainings like on beads, mat, charcoal, rug and guitar making; however, after the skills or the production, they are seldom involved in selling or have a hard time with this.

Table 3. Problems Encountered in the Implementation of the Programs

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Cultural barrier	2.42	Som etim es	9
2. Language barrier	1.61	Som etim es	11
3. Lack of personal documents (Birth cert)	2.82	Often	6.5
4. Poor or limited community participation	3.05	Often	2
5. Availability of fund to sustain the programs	3.31	Often	1
6. Failure to consider during planning the possible cost overruns	2.78	Often	8
7. Finalization on the number of program recipients	2.95	Often	3
8. Late processing of projects, preparatory technical requirements	2.11	Som etim es	10
9. Lack of participation and cooperation due to religious beliefs	2.82	Often	6.5
10. Tendency of the Badjaos to go back to mendicancy	2.87	Often	4.5
11. Resistance of the Badjaos to change.	2.87	Often	4.5
Composite Mean	2.67	Often	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Always; 2.50 – 3.49 = Often; 1.50 – 2.49 = Sometimes; 1.00 – 1.49 = Never

Also, an often problem for them is poor or limited community participation. Successful implementation of whatever project depends on very good integration which requires meaningful interaction between the migrants and the receiving society [12]. In the case of Badjaos, they reside as one clannish community in Malitam, Batangas City; however, they are oftentimes visited by the barangay and city officials. Based on an interview and observation, they are very cooperative during gathering but very few speak Tagalog and in most occasions, their leaders need to interpret or further explain concepts with them. Campo [13] in her study revealed that Badjaos experienced constant bullying; thus, their lack of courage and self esteem to mingle with the locals. However, as evidenced by the least WM of 1.61, language barrier is only sometimes a problem for them which suggests that they are open for change and this is a good indication for the government to pursue whatever advocacies they intend for them.

Table 4. Impact of the Programs and Problems Encountered in the Implementation of the Programs

	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Impact of the Programs	0.537	**0.000	Highly Significant
Problems Encountered in the Implementation of the Programs	0.259	**0.003	Significant

Legend: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As seen from the result, the computed r-values indicate moderate correlation (0.537) and (0.259). However, all computed p-values of 0.000 and 0.003 were all less than 0.01 alpha level, thus the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between the impact and problems encountered is rejected. This means that the amount of impact of the programs implemented is affected by the problems encountered in the implementation of the programs. It was observed that the when the problems encountered in the implementation of the programs are high or increasing, the greater is its impact also to the lives of the Badjauns.

This can be gleaned from the results generated from tables 1 and 2 where projects like massive birth registration (rank 1) and maximum hospital discount (rank 2) coincide with their impact on sending children to school (rank 1.5) and no worries because of hospitalization. Since the city government issued a clear policy and regulatory statements about presenting personal documents through their opinion leaders, this process influence much the Badjaos" awareness on health and education that in the long run will alleviate their poor condition.

Table 5. Proposed intervention to enhance the Program implementation of the Batangas City government to improve the quality of life of the Badjaos

Key Result Area	Objectives	Strategies	Person/s Involved
Programs/Projects			
-Practical Skills Development	-to develop skills on sales and entrepreneurship	-seminar on salesmanship	-NGO's -Academic Sector (CBAM)
-Burial Assistance	-to increase awareness on death registration and burial assistance	-seminar -leaflets -campaign	-City Registrar -Barangay leaders -Badjao leaders -All Badjawun
Impact of the Programs			
-Teenage Pregnancy	-to lessen incidence of teenage pregnancies -to increase women's capacity to earn	-conduct more seminars on Family Planning -promotion and linkage to local organizations	-City Health Office -Brgy Health workers -LPU Nrsg Dept. -female Badjawons -private/public entrepreneurs
-Supplemental Income for Women			
Problems Encountered			
-unavailability of fund	-to increase capital providers	-linkage for business prospects and opportunities	-city, local and private organizations -group leaders
-poor or limited community participation	-to increase community integration between the city and the Badjaos	-conduct teambuilding & socialization workshops	-brgy officials -local city and brgy officials

Based on the literatures included, the quality of life of the Badjaos have been measured through the responses they provided on the effectiveness and impact of the programs implemented by the city government. A difference before and after they have undergone or experienced these services or programs indicate a change. The findings revealed that they considered the programs effective; yet, there will still a lot more room to make it very effective. Thus, the researchers suggest a matrix to enhance the implementation of the programs for the Badjaos in order to improve the quality of their life.

V. Conclusion

The Batangas City government effectively implements the following programs and services: massive birth registration, maximum hospital discounts, supplemental feeding program and EBD Health card; however, less effective on practical skills development and burial assistance.

The implementation of the programs on health and education resulted to a great extent of impact on the quality of life of the Badjaos. On the other hand, to a least extent of impact are felt on reduction of teenage pregnancy, practical skills development and cash for work programs.

The respondents often encounter problems on unavailability of funds to sustain the programs and poor or limited community participation. A significant relationship exists between the problems encountered in the implementation of the programs and their impact on the lives of the participants. A plan of action containing interventions to enhance the implementation of the programs to improve the quality of life of the Badjaos is proposed.

VI. Recommendations

The Local Government of Batangas through the CSWD office may encourage community participation from the Badjao people by involving them in planning projects intended for them. The local government of Batangas may consider the unique culture and traditions of the Badjao people in providing programs and services to address their needs and concerns. The LGU of Batangas City may assess the implementation of the programs that are considered less effective and has a least impact to the Badjaos specifically practical skills development, burial assistance and cash for work program. The local government of Batangas city may coordinate or may forge partnership with other government and non-government organizations to work hand in hand their effort to alleviate the living conditions of the Badjao people. The proposed interventions maybe considered for implementation and evaluation thereafter. Future researches on the same topic specifically on community-based entrepreneurship linkage maybe conducted to further determine their ability to merge with the locals.

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