

Rapid Rural Appraisal of Indigenous Cultural Community in Pangasinan: Basis for Extension Project of Public Administration Department and Lingayen Campus

Jandy Z. Cacapit¹, Nova E. Arquillano², Zshyna Mae V. Ahmed³, Benedict A. Fernandez⁴, Maria Rhodora E. Malicdem⁵, Reynaldo T. Gelido⁶

¹Office of Campus Extension Coordinator, Pangasinan State University-Lingayen Campus

²Center for Human Welfare, Policy, Governance, and Community Development, PSU Lingayen Campus

³Office of Program Department Chair, Pangasinan State University-Lingayen Campus

^{4,5,6} Pangasinan State University-Lingayen Campus

Abstract - Rapid Rural Appraisal has been widely recognized as a methodological response to the limitations of conventional rural surveys, offering an efficient, multidisciplinary, and participatory approach to generating contextual knowledge for planning and decision-making. This study applied in RRA in an upland Indigenous Cultural Community known for both its rich cultural identity and socioeconomic challenges. Data were gathered from key informant interviews with tribal leaders, teachers, health workers, and community members, triangulated through validation with local officials and academic partners. Findings revealed pressing needs across four domains. For education and human resource, the challenges are inadequate infrastructure, lack of electricity and internet connectivity, and limited access to scholarships. Challenges related to livelihood are dependence on bamboo plantations and rice farming with minimal postharvest facilities, alongside emerging opportunities in agri-tourism and value-added food processing. For governance, these are unregistered associations that limit access to funding and formal recognition, alongside gaps in organizational systems and documentation. On health, challenges are restricted access to primary care facilities, malnutrition among children, water quality concerns, and lack of sanitary toilets for several households. The study demonstrates that RRA, when grounded in participatory and ethical principles, is an effective tool for diagnosing multidimensional issues in indigenous communities such as Mapita. The outputs provide actionable inputs for academic institutions, local government units, and non-government organizations in crafting responsive programs aligned with community priorities. More importantly, the process underscores the value of culturally sensitive participatory appraisal in supporting indigenous peoples' agency in shaping their own development pathways.

Keywords – rapid rural appraisal, indigenous cultural community

INTRODUCTION

Rapid Rural Appraisal or RRA began as a pragmatic response to the limitations of large-scale, slow, and costly rural surveys, offering a toolkit for quickly gathering reliable qualitative and quantitative data in rural contexts through an iterative, multidisciplinary process of observation, informal interviewing, triangulation, and cross-checking. Robert Chambers' early work framed RRA as rapid, relaxed and participatory, arguing that teams working in rural areas must prioritize humility, learning from local people, triangulation of evidence, and the use of visual and iterative methods to reduce the distance between researchers' assumptions and local realities. Chambers' work also foregrounded the practical repertoire that permits small teams to generate actionable contextual knowledge in a short timeframe while retaining methodological rigor through constant verification (Chambers, 1992; Gallardo et al, 1995).

Participatory Rural Appraisal or PRA extended the RRA repertoire into a more explicitly emancipatory and empowerment-focused methodology: it prioritizes participatory

mapping, ranking exercises, timelines, transect walks and other visual tools that enable community members to represent and analyze their realities, identify priorities, and negotiate collective action (Chambers, 1994). Applying RRA/PRA to indigenous communities requires methodological adaptation and heightened ethical care; the literature argues that the tools must be culturally tailored and embedded within protocols that respect indigenous governance, knowledge systems, and data sovereignty. Indigenous peoples' experiences with externally driven research have historically ranged from extractive to collaborative, and contemporary scholarship insists that rapid appraisals with indigenous communities cannot repeat extractive patterns. Ethical frameworks for conducting research with Indigenous peoples stress community negotiation, free, prior and informed consent, benefit-sharing, collaborative design, and local control over data and dissemination. In practice, adapting RRA for indigenous contexts means investing time in relationship-building, employing local facilitators and translators, ensuring inclusive representation in workshops

(to reduce elite capture), allowing flexible timelines to enable meaningful consent processes, and co-producing outputs that the community can use for its own advocacy and planning (AIATSIS, 2012; Billan et al, 2020).

In the Philippines specifically, the Republic Act 8371 or Indigenous Peoples’ Rights Act (IPRA) provides a legal framework that shapes how appraisals and research with indigenous communities should be conducted. IPRA recognizes indigenous peoples’ rights to ancestral domains and lands, to cultural integrity, and to self-governance. Participatory mapping has emerged in the literature as a particularly powerful complement to RRA/PRA in indigenous contexts. Participatory mapping techniques allow communities to visualize spatial claims, seasonal resource-use patterns, sacred sites, and environmental change in ways that are legible both to local stakeholders and to external institutions. Case studies in Mindanao and other parts of the Philippines document how participatory mapping has supported ancestral domain claims, conflict resolution over resource boundaries, and community-driven land-use planning by converting local spatial knowledge into maps accepted by external actors (PAFID, 2019).

Gender-sensitive and intersectional adaptations of RRA/PRA also appear with increasing frequency in the literature. Researchers document that standard community workshops and public ranking exercises risk silencing women, youth, elders, or other marginalized subgroups unless the appraisal design intentionally creates separate safe spaces, uses gender-disaggregated pairwise ranking, and applies facilitation styles that encourage broader participation. Empirical studies from Mindanao and other Philippine contexts demonstrate the value of gendered participatory resource mapping, which reveals differentiated access to resources, distinct livelihood strategies, and gendered vulnerability to environmental change. Incorporating gender analysis into RRA not only improves the validity of findings but also aligns appraisal outputs with equitable planning and culturally appropriate interventions (Boongaling, 2020).

Scholars and program evaluators who have studied Mapita point to specific local challenges that mirror broader patterns in upland IP communities but also have localized features worth documenting in appraisal work. Recurrent community concerns include water scarcity and drought vulnerability for upland agriculture, limited technical capacity for processing and marketing woven products, infrastructure constraints that impede market access and teacher deployment, and intergenerational tensions around cultural maintenance versus outmigration for wage labor (PSU, 2021). In search for more information about this community, this rapid rural appraisal was conducted.

METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative research with key informants as chief source of information. The informants include three tribe leaders and one day care center for education and human resource area, the chieftain and one tribe leader for livelihood and governance areas, and two barangay health workers for health. Interview was conducted in May 22, 2021 in Aguilar. Inquiries for key informants include the profile of the community along education and human resource, livelihood, governance, and health; and challenges they have encountered. Interviews were conducted in Mapita tribal hall. Data were confirmed by elementary and high school teachers in June 5, 2021. Validation of data was conducted by the Pangasinan State University (PSU) Office of the Research, Extension and Innovation composed of the Vice President and University Director for Extension and Community Service in June 16, 2021.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Areas covered in this appraisal are education and human resource, livelihood, governance and health particular the profile, needs and possible remedies. Results are provided from Table 1 to 7.

Table 1. Profile of the Indigenous Community along Education and Human Resource

Education and Human Resource	
Number of students	-29 day care pupils -112 elementary pupils -64 high school students -8 college students
Number of teachers	-1 day care worker -13 elementary teachers -5 high school teachers
Number of scholars	-2 PSU Lingayen -1 PSU Bayambang -4 NCIP
Number of college graduates	-16 graduates
Number of employed	-11 employed
Trainings conducted	-2019 by DA and PSU -2019-2021 by EastWest -2021 TagChemical

The community has their own Mapita Integrated School. It has one day care worker, 13 elementary school teachers, and five high school teachers. There are 29 day care pupils, 112 elementary pupils, 64 high school students, and eight college students. This is equivalent to 1:8 elementary teacher-pupil ratio and 1:13 high school teacher and student ratio. The college students in this community are taking BS Agriculture, BS Agricultural Engineering, BS Elementary Education, B Secondary Education, BS Accountancy, BS Civil Engineering and BS Criminology. College scholarships are provided by PSU and NCIP. On employment in

agriculture, 100 are employed in bamboo plantation, and six in rice mill. There are five college graduates who are currently looking for a job.

On trainings, the Department of Agriculture conducted trainings related to mushroom production, vermicomposting, organic fertilizer and coffee growing in 2019 and corn production in 2019 to 2020. In 2019, PSU provided training on food processing. On the other hand, EastWest trained the farmers from 2019 to 2021 about seedlings, production and growing practices.

Table 2. Profile of the Indigenous Community along Livelihood

Livelihood	
Major crops	rice, tomato, bell pepper, cucumber, baguio beans, tiger grass
Farm area	1000 m ² for tomato 200 m ² for bell pepper 87 ha. for rice
Number of employed	-1 with business -3 broom maker -100 in bamboo plantation -6 in rice mill

On livelihood, the major crops in the community are high value crops. For farm area, 1000 m² is allotted for tomato, 200 m² for bell pepper, and 87 ha. for rice. On yield, 200 kilos average yield of tomato for past three cropping seasons and 1200 kilos average yield for bell pepper also for the past three cropping seasons. For the employment of community members, 100 are employed in bamboo plantation, and six in rice mill.

The High Value Crops Development Program (HVCDP), established under Republic Act No. 7900 or the High Value Crops Development Act of 1995, is one of the flagship initiatives of the Department of Agriculture. Its primary goal is to provide essential support services, enhance market access both locally and internationally, and implement proactive measures to address supply and demand concerns. In Sitio Mapita, crops such as tomato and onion are regarded as high value crops (OECD, 2017).

Table 3. Profile of the Indigenous Community along Governance and Health

Governance and Health	
Farmers association	4 associations
Health workers and facilities	-Visit of nurses and midwives is every last Wednesday of the month -Nearest lying-in center is 18km away -Nearest hospital is Mangataren District Hospital -Spring as source of drinking water
Yearly projects in Sitio Mapita	-TB DOTS -Garantisadong pambata

	-Vit A for postpartum -Medical mission -Maternal/ child care -Family planning -Nutrition program
Diet Age 1-18	-rice, bread, vegetable (daily) -junk foods, chocolate, instant noodles, canned/frozen, fruits, fish (2x month)
Age 19-59	-rice, bread, vegetable, fish (daily) - junk foods, chocolate, instant noodles, canned/frozen, fruits, meat (2x month)
Age 60 and up	-vegetable, fish, fruits (daily)
Health concerns	4 mentally ill 4 physically challenged

There are four farmer's association in the community, these are Mapita Tribal Indigenous Peoples Organization, Mapita High Valued Crop Growers, Mapita Organic Producers and Traders Association, and Mapita Spring of Life Association. On health, their source of drinking water, the nearest hospital and lying-in center is kilometers away from the community. Daily diet of children aged 1-18 is mostly rice, bread and vegetables while individuals aged 19-59 their composed of rice, bread, vegetables and fish. For senior group, their diet is vegetable, fish and fruits. On health concerns, there are four individuals who are mentally ill and four physically challenged. Yearly projects in the community are TB DOTS, garantisadong pambata, Vit A for postpartum, medical mission, maternal/childcare, family planning, and nutrition program. These yearly services are also provided in municipality in Lingayen, particularly birth control or family planning (Arquillano, et al, 2015).

Table 4. Needs of Indigenous Community and Possible Remedies along Education and Human Resource

Needs	Possible Remedies
Local employment	Provide contact info of PESO
Storybooks for kids in the Day Care Center	Provision of storybooks and other reading materials by PSU, JCI
Electricity, TV and electric fans in Day Care Center	Installation of electrical wirings and appliances; training on alternative sources of power/energy
Non-standard electrical wirings/connection hence no electricity, no internet connection in MIS	Installation of electrical wirings and internet router
Too many assigned teachers / extra teachers in MIS, hence other teachers are not doing anything/not performing	Conduct of relevant skills trainings, and community development activities
Divider cabinet for records keeping	Procurement of divider cabinet
Scholarship/financial assistance for senior high school and college students	Scholarship/financial assistance
Gas stove and kitchen utensils for feeding programs in Day Care Center	Procurement of kitchenware and equipment; training on alternative prep. of healthy food

MIS covered court and some rooms need repair of ceilings	Construction works
Perimeter fence (2 hectares) for Mapita Integrated School	Construction works
1 black board, 30 monoblock chairs and 4 pcs extension wire for Day Care Center	Procurement of blackboard, monoblock chairs and extension wires
3 water tanks	Procurement of water tanks
Bags, umbrella and notebooks for Day Care, elementary and high school students	Procurement of bags, umbrella and notebooks

Based from tribe elders as confirmed by the elementary and high school teachers, the needs of community along education are scholarships, books, blackboard, chairs, bags and trainings for pupils, and divider cabinets, water tanks, installation of electrical wirings, kitchen ware, repair of ceilings and perimeter fence for the school. For possible remedies, these are repair and construction works, and provision of books and other school furniture and supplies. College education in state universities and colleges or SUC is free. For several years, one SUC offered open admission (Arquillano et al, (2015). This is an opportunity for high school graduates. Collaboration of Public Administration Department with different departments of PSU-Lingayen Campus, government agencies, and non-government organizations is also recommended.

Table 5. Needs of Indigenous Community and Possible Remedies along Livelihood

Needs	Possible Remedies
Livelihood training	Conduct of skills training and community development activities
Farm facilities	-Training hall -Green farming facility -Post harvest facility -Food processing facility -Talipapa
Source of income for women	-Conduct of skills training -Procurement of equipment and tools -Provide financial assistance
Livelihood/ supply chain management/ commodity management	Conduct of seminar
Soil testing/ soil management	Soil testing
Agri-tourism for Wangwang river	-Develop feasibility study -Develop project proposal -Construction works
Gravity irrigation	-Construction of gravity irrigation -Procurement of pipe/hose
Road repair/ soil erosion	Road repair
Repair of farm equipment/ new farm materials and equipment/ technology	Procurement/repair of farm equipment and materials
Sun drying area/ rice processing area	-Develop feasibility study -Develop project proposal -Construction works
Pest control/ crop management	Conduct of pest control training

As gleaned from the Table, needs of the community along livelihood are facilities and trainings. For facilities, they need training hall, green farming facility, post harvest facility, food processing facility, gravity irrigation, and agri-tourism. Training needs are about livelihood, pest control, and supply chain. Possible remedies are trainings and construction of facilities. This will be possible with collaboration or partnership of Public Administration Department with different academic department of PSU Lingayen Campus, government agencies, and non-government organizations. Amparo et al (2018) provided similar interventions about technology and production side of agriculture.

Table 6. Needs of Indigenous Community and Possible Remedies along Governance

Needs	Possible Remedies
Registration of Association/Tribal council for funding and NCIP documentation	Preparation of NCIP registration documents
Road signage to take the right route going to Sitio Mapita	Make road signage
Manual of Operations for Mapita Tribal Indigenous Peoples Organization and Mapita Organic Producers and Traders Association	Development of manual of operations
Constitution and by-laws of Mapita Organic Producers and Traders Assn	Development of CBL
Drafting of communication letters and computer literacy	Training and seminar
Survey of boundaries	Survey of boundaries
Computer and printer for Mapita Tribal Hall	-Procurement of computer and printer

On governance, the needs of community are registration of organization, trainings and computer and printer. To meet these needs, the possible remedies are preparation of registration documents, provision of trainings and seminars, and procurement of computer.

Table 7. Needs of Indigenous Community and Possible Remedies along Health

Needs	Possible Remedies
10-15 households without toilet	Construction of toilet
Spring as source of water. Need water analysis. Water analysis last 2004 or 2005	Request for water analysis from DOST
Vices of adults – tobacco & rice wine	Health Education
Three (3) children aged 1-6 are malnourished	-Health assessment -Nutrition education
Rabies control program	-Health and safety Education -Ordinance/resolution on stray animals
Colds during Nov and December	Health Education
Three (3) children aged 1-6 are malnourished	Intervention and regular monitoring
Four (4) are mentally ill	-Mental health assessment -Intervention and regular monitoring

Four (4) are physically challenged	-Health assessment -Intervention and regular monitoring
RHU (18 km away from the Sitio) has no stretcher, syringe for adult, emergency kit, surgical packs and instrument, table covers and towel, surgical gloves and facemask, and medicine like antibiotic	Procurement of medical equipment and supplies

In health area, the needs of community are toilets, health assessment, health nutrition and education, and medical equipment and supplies like stretcher, syringe, emergency kit, surgical packs, table cover, and medicine. Possible remedies are construction of toilet, procurement of medical equipment and supplies, and conduct of health nutrition and education.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The indigenous and farm community covered in this study has an integrated high school and day care center. Class sizes are small given the 1:8 elementary teacher-pupil ratio and 1:13 high school teacher and student ratio. For college students, they are enrolled in state university and one is scholar of NCIP. Those who completed their college education last year are looking for a job. Education needs are along school furniture and supplies, and repair and construction works. On livelihood, farm-related trainings were provided by government and private companies from 2019 to 2021. The major crops of the community are high value crops like tomato and onion. On governance and health, there are four farmers association in the community. Major health facilities and source of drinking water are kilometers away. Community people have health diet and there are yearly health activities being conducted by the Municipal Health Office.

Along education, school furniture and supplies and repair of ceilings. Facilities and trainings are needed for the areas of livelihood, governance, and health. On possible remedies, repair and construction works, and provision of books and other school furniture and supplies are recommended in education area. Conduct of trainings and seminar, and construction of facilities are needed in the areas of livelihood, governance, and health. Collaboration or partnership with different academic and non-academic departments of units of PSU Lingayen, government agencies, and non-government organizations is also recommended especially for construction works and provision of equipment and supplies for the school and tribal hall.

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