

Strengthened Resilience: Impact of Pandemic in a Gawad Kalinga Community

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ABSTRACT

An educational institution that offers mostly paramedical courses has a significant role in strengthening community resilience as a recovery response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This study utilized a mixed-methods research design to describe the impact of the pandemic on the lives of 126 Gawad Kalinga community residents in Bacolod City, Philippines. The greatest impact of Covid-19 was the decrease in family income, but the resiliency of the residents was strengthened through each other's support and that of partner institutions. There was difficulty in procuring food, medicine, and health care, but respondents declared their willingness to participate in livelihood initiatives. The following themes emerged from the interview with eight participants to validate the survey responses: Perseverance, Protection for Oneself and Others, Isolation, Better Safe than Sorry, Fear and Uncertainty, Weathering the Storm, Vaccines are Priority and Resiliency. Determining the impact of the pandemic was successful in incorporating the inputs of the residents into the community engagement programs of the partner educational institution. It is recommended that constant communication with the community and a regular assessment of their evolving needs must be monitored even beyond the pandemic. This can yield better recovery responses and health outcomes that may be adopted by other Gawad Kalinga communities all over the country.

Keywords — Social Sciences, Gawad Kalinga, Covid-19 pandemic, impact assessment, mixed methods research, Bacolod City, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The Community Engagement Programs of Riverside College are geared towards answering the needs of its partner communities, one of which is Gawad Kalinga (GK) Smile Village, Murcia in Negros Occidental, Philippines. GK is a Philippine poverty alleviation and nation-building movement founded with a culture of caring and sharing. In GK, everyone takes ownership in solving poverty problems through shared values of concern and selfless service.

GK Smile Village is the second GK community that Riverside College adopted. Riverside College sees to it that the needs of the residents are properly addressed, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Covid-19 is a global issue that has created an extensive amount of social, physical, mental, and economic effects on individuals and communities regardless

of race. In rural Kenya, a study on low-income households by Janssens et al. (2021) showed that income from work decreased by almost one-third after the start of the pandemic. Household food expenditures were the same as during the pre-COVID. Livelihoods have been affected, but they managed to keep food expenditures at a reduced cost.

Suriyankietkaew and Nimsai (2021) investigated the impacts of Covid-19 in Southeast Asia to identify opportunities for recovery solutions toward the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In-depth interviews with 33 organizations revealed various effects, such as those on the intra-trade strategy, green economy, and partnerships between private and public individuals.

In Nepal, Singh et al. (2021) explored food insecurity among low-income families. The study revealed that families who relied on daily wages and remittance experienced increased food insecurity during the pandemic. Members of the community experienced partiality from local politicians during food relief distribution. The food insecurity among community members affected their health, making them vulnerable to Covid-19 infection.

Aside from the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, there are also psychological and mental consequences. Buonsenso et al. (2020) studied a rural village in Sierra Leone, West Africa, and findings revealed a reduction in weekly income compared with the pre-lockdown period. There were difficulties in providing food for the family, and more than half of the respondents experienced anxiety.

In the Philippines, the sentiments of Filipinos toward extreme community quarantine due to Covid-19 were analyzed. Pastor (2020) gathered the tweets from Twitter users in the Luzon area, and it was found out that most Filipinos encountered several problems concerning extreme community quarantine, such as food supply and lack of support from the government.

The pandemic is not yet over and the need to build upon the capacity of the GK Smile Village community to recover is necessary. This research includes an assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the residents and how they have managed their situation individually and as a community. There is an urgent need to strategize plans in collaboration with Riverside College as a partner institution. This will ensure that the Community Engagement programs extended are relevant and responsive to the needs of the residents in GK Smile Village.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The Covid-19 pandemic has taken its toll on communities. This study aimed to (1) determine the impact of the pandemic on the GK Smile Village community residents in terms of physical, mental, social, and economic aspects; and (2) investigate how the residents have managed their situation.

FRAMEWORK

As reviewed by Van Breda (2018), Resilience Theory examines the model of resiliency with relevance to social work. Resilience is a mediating process between adversity and expected outcomes and being resilient can be the outcome itself.

Resilience is a process of adapting well in the face of adversity due to stressful circumstances. These stressful situations may be sourced out from family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or other stressors in the workplace.

In this study, Covid-19 is the identified adversity. The mediating process refers to the strategies employed by the community residents to manage the impact of the pandemic. The residents' resiliency to the situation enabled them to overcome their difficulties.

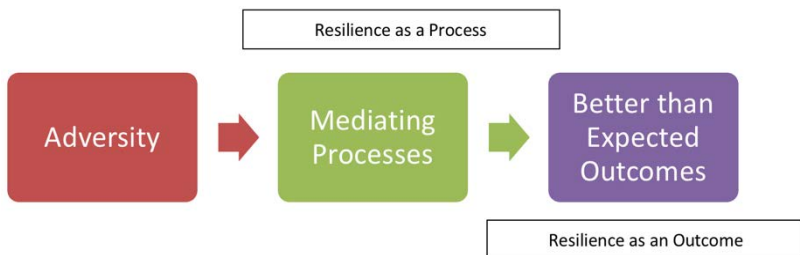


Figure 1. Model Framework for Resilience Theory

Lockdowns and isolation due to Covid-19 had many consequences globally. The study of Hawkins et al. (2020) focused on socio-economic status and its association to COVID-19–related cases and mortality in the U.S. It was concluded that higher rates of Covid-19 cases and fatalities were associated with lower education levels and greater percentages of black residents.

The impact of Covid-19 in six Asia Pacific countries was examined by Kang et al. (2021). The impact was on job loss or reduced income as well as on the food

expenditure of households and food availability in markets. Reduction in income and job loss was higher in urban areas in India, Myanmar and Vietnam. There were larger food expenditures in urban areas in India, Myanmar and Vietnam. There were fewer available food stocks in urban areas in Bangladesh, India and Myanmar.

Aside from the socio-economic impact, health anxiety is also one of the problems encountered during the pandemic. Vigo et al. (2020) discussed how anxiety levels can lead to dysfunctional and problematic help-seeking behaviors. Dysfunctional behaviors are exemplified by the act of stockpiling essential goods, while help-seeking behaviors include demanding in-person medical services.

In UK, a qualitative study by Knights et al. (2021) identified the impact of the pandemic among recently-arrived migrants and how it affected their access to primary health care. The study revealed specific beliefs among the migrants, which included their acceptance or mistrust of COVID-19 and the vaccines as they were influenced by misinformation.

Mackworth-Young et al. (2021) investigated the community and healthcare workers' perspectives on the COVID-19 pandemic in Zimbabwe. Four themes emerged: (1) individuals were overloaded with information which resulted in widespread fear; (2) difficulty in compliance to preventive measures because of limited access to long-term food supplies and water; (3) healthcare workers' inadequate pay and minimal provision of personal protective equipment made them feel undervalued; and (4) other health conditions were set aside because of redirection of resources.

Developing countries all over the world are struggling with the negative impact of Covid-19. Buenaventura et al. (2020) studied the current struggles among developed countries even if these countries had a wealth of resources, a solid economy, and established healthcare infrastructures. The study discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of older Filipinos and how healthcare workers can help in alleviating the negative impact on their mental health.

There are also a number of positive outcomes from the pandemic. In Vietnam, the use of herbal medicine was observed among community residents. A cross-sectional online survey by Nguyen et al. (2021) revealed that nearly half of the respondents are using herbal medicines such as ginger, honey, garlic, and [perilla](#) for the treatment of sore throat, cough, nasal congestion, and fever.

In the Philippines, Lau et al. (2020) studied the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of Covid-19 among poor households. A total of 2224 respondents from 166 communities in rural, urban and coastal settings were surveyed. Coughing and sneezing were identified as the common transmission route, while indirect

hand contact was the least. Among the preventive measures, handwashing was identified by 82.2% of the respondents as the most commonly practiced, while social distancing and avoiding crowds were only identified by 32.4% and 40.6%, respectively.

In order to manage the pandemic, community support is important. Bove et al. (2021) explored the opportunity that helping fellow community members can be unifying for those engaging in the coordinated community helping. The survey in UK in June 2020 showed that coordinated community helping resulted in psychological bonding among community members. This resulted in unity and a sense of community identification among the members, which then predicted increased well-being and reduced depression and anxiety.

In its pursuit to strengthen partnership with GK Smile Village as its adopted community, Riverside College will utilize the data to provide recovery measures from the pandemic through the implementation of community engagement programs that will address the residents' immediate needs. Sustainable livelihood projects are part of the long-term plan that will further strengthen the community residents' resiliency despite the physical, mental, social, and economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Making decisions for the improvement of the community is based on the residents' needs and available resources. The impact of Covid-19 on GK Smile Village residents was explored using mixed methods. A quantitative survey gathered the demographic profile of the residents, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their families, and the residents' skills for capacity building. A qualitative approach through a semi-structured interview was conducted to understand the residents' experiences and how they have managed the impact of the pandemic.

Research Site

Data collection was done within the GK Smile Village in Murcia, Bacolod City, Negros Occidental.

Respondents

GK Smile Village community has a total population of 150 households at the time of on the survey. They were all given the survey questionnaire, but only 126

(84%) responded. To further validate the responses, an interview was conducted among the eight residents who were selected purposively as they possessed the characteristics required by the study.

Instrumentation

The researcher-made survey questionnaire was distributed by the Community Extension Office personnel of Riverside College with the assistance of Officers from the GK Smile Village. The questionnaire had three parts: The first part gathered the demographic profile of the respondents, including age, sex, occupation, trainings acquired, and skills possessed. The second part consisted of 12 items that described the respondents' physical, social, mental, and economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The third part focused on an assessment of the respondents' capacity to augment their reduced income. An interview schedule was prepared with ten items on the impact of the pandemic and how the participants have managed the challenges encountered. Similarities and differences among the responses were treated with the flexibility to allow further probing of information.

Validation of the Instrument

All items in the survey questionnaire and interview guide went through the face and content validation by experts in Psychology, Community, and Social Work. Clearance was sought from the Research Office of Riverside College to pursue the conduct of the survey. The purpose of the study was stipulated in the survey questionnaire. Informed consent from the residents was obtained with no coercion made. The interview participants were informed of the purpose of data verification and they were assured of the confidentiality of their responses.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage were utilized to describe the community residents' demographics and responses to the survey questionnaire. The verbatim transcripts of the participants from the interview were noted and audio recorded for verification. A thematic approach was used with the data through coding, then categories were extracted, and themes were generated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The residents' profiles in terms of age, educational attainment and occupation are presented in Figures 1, 2, and 3.

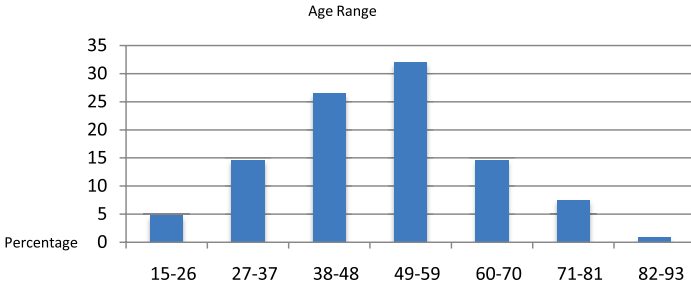


Figure 1. Age of Respondents

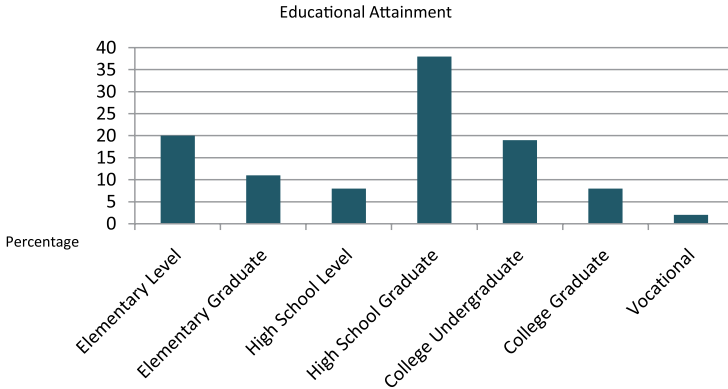


Figure 2. Educational Attainment of Respondents

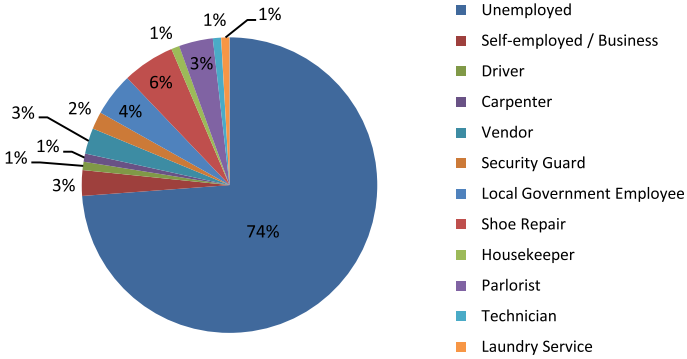


Figure 3. Occupation of Respondents

The majority of the respondents are 49-59 years old, high school graduates, and unemployed. As high school graduates, respondents are aware of Covid-19 and its preventive measures. The cases of Covid-19 are few in the area and this is supported by the study of Hawkins et al. (2020), which implied that lower education levels are strongly associated with higher rates of COVID-19 cases and fatalities.

On the Impact of Covid-19

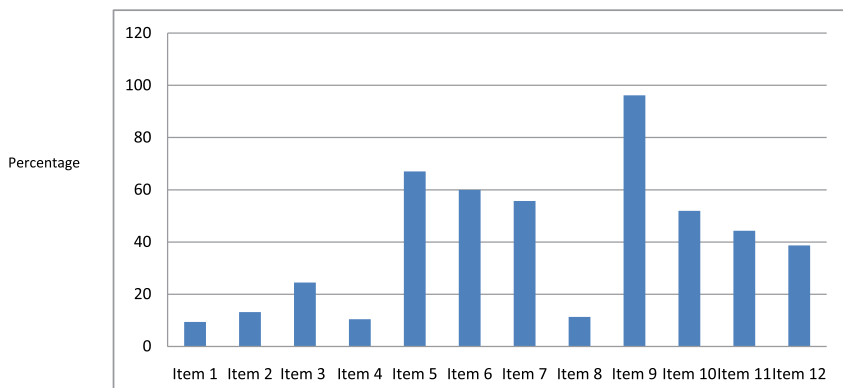


Figure 4. Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic

Figure 4. Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic

Figure 4 shows the percentage of responses to the 12 items in the questionnaire regarding the impact of Covid-19 in terms of physical, mental, social and economic aspects.

Physical. Item 9 reflects 96% of the respondents whose family income decreased during the pandemic. They experienced difficulty in the procurement of food, medicine, and healthcare, especially when Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) status was imposed. This is supported by the study of Buonsenso et al. (2020) on the social consequences of Covid-19, which revealed a reduction of weekly income and difficulties in providing food for the family members.

Mental. Item 3 reflects the 25% of the respondents who had a family member going out for work. Item 4 reflects the 10% of the respondents whose family member worked as a frontline worker in healthcare and Item 8 shows

the 11% who had someone isolated at home due to possible exposure. This was a mental challenge for the entire household as they could be susceptible to the virus. GK houses are small in size, and the space is not conducive for isolation if someone gets infected. The study by Buonsenso et al. (2020) revealed that anxiety was one of the experiences during the pandemic.

Social. Item 1 reflects 9% of the respondents had family members who had to come home because of job loss. Item 2 showed 13% of the respondents had family members who had to move out because of employment requirements. The number of people living in one household was a challenge. Vigo et al. (2020) support this finding wherein home environments of marginalized populations were explored as not suitable for isolation. The practice of proper hygiene and the accessibility to basic necessities are hampered in limited spaces.

Economic. Item 10 presents 52% of the respondents had to cut back hours from work while in Item 11, 44% had a family member who stopped working, and in Item 12, 39% had family members who lost their job. The study of Kang et al. (2021) highlighted the prevalence of job loss and reduced income in the Asia Pacific region due to Covid-19.

On Community Needs

Responses to items 5, 6, and 7 present the percentage of respondents who found difficulty in procuring food (67%), medicine (60%), and health care (56%) respectively. This finding contradicts the study of Janssens et al. (2021), which revealed that even if livelihoods were affected because of Covid-19, the households managed to keep food expenditures the same as during pre-pandemic.

On Respondents' Capacity

Table 1. Trainings Attended and Skills Possessed by the Respondents

Trainings	%	Skills	%
Candle making	22%	Cooking	20%
Mechanic/Electrician	13%	Food Processing	12%
Pastry/Bread Making	13%	Dress Making/Sewing	5%
Flower Arrangement	9%	Beautician	3%
Food Processing	9%	Gardening	3%
Rug Making	5%	Carpentry	2%
Rescue Training	5%	Construction	2%

Massage Therapy	4%	Housekeeping	2%
Dress making	4%	Bread Making	2%
Massage Training	4%	Rug Making	2%
Shoe Repair	4%	Manicure	2%
Tailoring	4%	Gravestone Making	2%

Table 1 shows the percentage of respondents with special trainings and the skills they possess, which are helpful in augmenting their loss of income. The majority of the respondents have attended trainings in candle making and they have skills in cooking, food processing, and dressmaking which are helpful in sustaining their daily needs if these skills are put into small business projects.

Table 2. On Planting Fruits and Vegetables

Items	%
With an adequate water supply	93%
Willing to participate in planting fruits and vegetables in the area	92%
Willing to provide an area for the community to plant	87%
With available area for planting	68%
Currently involved in farming	33%

Table 2 shows the percentage of respondents who are willing to participate in livelihood projects given the available resources. The respondents' willingness to participate is an indication of their resiliency to the impact of the pandemic. The study of Kampman et al. (2021) identified an increase in the interest of the community in home gardening during the pandemic, something that is similar to what the residents in GK Smile have been doing through their focus was more on fruits and vegetables that could sustain their daily food needs.

Interview Results

To validate the survey responses, an interview among selected participants was conducted and the following themes emerged:

Theme 1. Perseverance

The participants expressed perseverance despite the challenges. They boosted their income, remained hopeful, and they strived to survive the challenges of the pandemic.

Boost Income

The source of income was shut down, but life has to go on, so options were considered for boosting income:

Participant 1 (P1): My newspaper business was closed down. Now, we sell vegetables from the farm. We have this second-hand tricycle for vegetable delivery.

P2: I used to sell food at the elementary school and earn as much as 1000 per day. When the pandemic hit, it affected us. Now I sell food and other things online.

Hopeful

The participants showed hope and gratitude in the middle of adversity through these narratives:

P4: It has been very difficult. We are hoping that Covid will stop so we can go back to normal. We never had anyone infected in the family, thankfully.

P5: We have been struggling with our income. I hope this will end so I can do laundry work again and my husband can go back to construction.

P6: I am hoping that when everything goes back to normal, I will have sideline jobs.

Striving to Survive

The participants expressed how they strived for the sake of their families.

P4: It has been difficult because even if I have three children in Manila who are employed, they too have been affected. We sell vegetables, but it is not enough. I hope to get enough money to put up a small business.

P6: If I had the means to start another sideline business, I would help my children get through school.

Theme 2. Protection for Oneself and Others

The best way to protect oneself against the virus is through the practice of protective measures.

Health and Safety Protocol at Home

There are family members who had to continue working outside their homes so they made sure they were free from the virus.

P1: No one in our family got infected, but recently we have had colds, so we maintain social distancing.

P2: When we have someone infected by Covid-19, we will have to stay together since my baby is only eight months old, and I cannot leave her.

P6: As a Frontliner, I could not just go to people's houses and do work for them. It's not safe.

Strengthen relationships with family and neighbors to fight Covid-19

Protection against the virus was not only an individual concern. Participants were watchful of their neighbors' safety.

P8: We could facilitate many donation drives, but it could not sustain us. It has been difficult, so we unite to help each other.

P7: I could not go from house to house as I used to for safety reasons.

Theme 3. Isolation

Isolation is keeping oneself and others protected even if it would mean a challenge to the mental health of the residents. One of the government guidelines is to observe physical and social distancing.

Following Rules

Following rules is not just a sign of obedience to authority, but it is taking responsibility for the consequences once the guidelines are not strictly followed.

P3: Whenever a family member gets in contact with someone who tested positive for Covid-19, I would isolate myself and send my family to my parents' house for 14 days.

P7: When someone got infected, we isolated ourselves.

P8: When I got infected by Covid-19, I was sent to a quarantine facility with my mom and sister. We stayed there for 14 days and I was separated from my child.

Health is Wealth

Giving value to one's health became the priority of each household.

P1: The best thing to do is isolate. We could not afford the hospital bills.

P3: I am a healthcare worker, so it's really hard not to be infected. I have been quarantined more than four times already. If I get exposed to someone positive, I isolate myself at home and send my family to my mother's house.

The study of Tee et al. (2020) among 849 participants from 71 cities in the Philippines and 861 participants from 159 cities in China showed higher levels of depression, stress and anxiety among the Filipinos than the Chinese. Filipino respondents were more likely to show concerns about family members contracting the Covid-19 virus and their unnecessary worries on the virus were all associated with mental health.

Theme 4. Better Safe than Sorry

Keeping oneself safe is better than having the virus.

Protect body health

Participants had to keep themselves protected.

P1: We avoided mass gatherings. In doing our business, we distanced ourselves from our customers. We kept eating healthy foods and taking our vitamins.

P2: We have a baby at home, we give her vitamins and we eat healthy food.

P4: We plant and sell vegetables at home to keep us healthy. We don't go out anymore.

Cautious

Being cautious of one's actions is necessary to ensure everyone's safety.

P4: Our community is generally safe. During ECQ, there weren't many cases. We never had a family member infected.

P6: No one in my family was infected, but I isolated myself when I got exposed to someone positive.

P8: When someone in my family gets sick, I will take extra precautions by taking vitamins.

The participants' preventive response toward Covid-19 is mostly through isolation. This finding is in contrast with the study of Lau et al. (2020) wherein the identified most common preventive measure against Covid-19 was hand washing.

Theme 5. Fear and Uncertainty

The participants feared the virus and the possibility of not being able to feed their families. The study of Ong et al. (2020) pointed out how the pandemic and health protocols have disrupted food systems. In the Philippines, households in poverty had to rely on food aids from private donors and local governments and such foods were not sufficient in nutrients putting them at greater risk for diseases.

Need for Support

The participants expressed their need for support from their family and community.

P3: I am okay with my job as a Healthcare Worker, but it is not enough. My husband needs a stable job.

P4: We need enough resources to buy medicine and vitamins.

P7: We need more resources and sponsors for our community to be sustained. We need more livelihood opportunities.

Worried about the Future

The participants expressed their worries about their families' future.

P3: Although I have a stable job, my husband works for a gasoline station only a few days within the week. We try to live on a day-to-day basis, but there's always that fear of being infected because of my job.

P5: It has been challenging for my husband and me. I don't know if we can survive any longer with this situation.

The study of Mackworth-Young et al. (2021) showed that the pandemic yielded fear among their respondents because of the many unanswered questions about Covid-19.

Theme 6. Weathering the Storm

Weathering the storm means to come out of a difficult situation or to survive the hardships with minimal pain. Participants expressed how they have overcome their difficulties.

Overcoming Difficulty

The participants' positive attitude toward their difficulties enabled them to survive.

P1: We managed to sell our products every day and that's where we get our money for our daily needs.

P7: We are managing as a family and as long as we are healthy and safe, we can survive.

P8: We are more careful when it comes to our health. Financially we are surviving, but of course, it's not always the case.

Make Ends Meet

The participants struggled but found ways to survive.

P2: I shifted online, not only by selling food but also by RTW (ready-to-wear) clothes.

P6: Since my eldest is already in college and I lost many sideline jobs, I can barely handle paying the bills.

Theme 7. Vaccines are Priority

Knowledge and acceptance of vaccines are important. The participants believed in vaccines and they encouraged their family members to get vaccinated for protection against severe cases of Covid-19.

Vaccines work

Participants expressed their confidence in the vaccines.

P1: I believe in taking the vaccine because it will protect us.

My husband goes out every day to earn, so we have to be protected.

P2: What's important is I have vaccinated as well as the rest of the adults in our family.

P3: I was one of the first ones here who got vaccinated. It helps a lot.

P4: I am not vaccinated yet, but I am for vaccines and I want to protect my family.

Encouraging members to get vaccinated

Participants encouraged their community to be vaccinated as an expression of their concern for each other.

P6: I see the importance of vaccines, especially that I am an encoder in the municipality.

P7: I am fully vaccinated and because I go house-to-house for visitation, I need to protect myself. We are trying to work out that everyone gets vaccinated.

P8: Having experienced Covid-19 in the family, vaccination is a must. I also want my community to be 100% vaccinated.

Theme 8. Resiliency

Resiliency is the ability of an individual to bounce back from a pressing situation.

Driven to Acquire New Skills

Participants expressed how they acquired new skills to augment their income and sustain their needs. The study by Razon (2020) showed that many opportunities were unveiled among Filipinos who were on extreme lockdown. Community spirit surfaced and values of compassion and empathy became evident.

P1: I am working on my sewing skills and I sell rugs so we can get by.

P3: I used to attend workshops and trainings before and if they were given online today, I am also okay to attend.

P5: I used to avail myself of the free dental check-up from Riverside College, but now I can't have my teeth checked anymore. I used to be very active in workshops for making rugs and graduation togas.

Need Assistance with Health and Livelihood

Participants expressed their need for assistance in health which they presumed Riverside College could provide since it is a paramedical institution. They also expressed their willingness to participate in livelihood initiatives.

P2: I just want more capital to help with my business.

P3: My mother and relatives were a great help during the pandemic, so we managed the little that we had just to get by.

P7: The pandemic affected everyone and we were there to support each other, but if it is really different if there were constant support in terms of goods, medicine, and workshops to help the members make a living.

Observations from the Interview with the Participants

Participants have similar sentiments. Covid-19 has dramatically affected their way of living. They are an organized community, **but** their needs differ. Most of the participants verbalized their fear for their family's health, where many cannot easily **access** medical consultation, much less be admitted to a hospital. They expressed their need for medical and financial assistance, but they are open to programs provided by benefactors for additional sources of income. They are open to remote trainings as opposed to the traditional workshops they used to avail pre-pandemic. The majority expressed they have ideas on recovering economically, and the challenge is how to materialize these ideas. The community does not necessarily rely on donors coming to their village, but they need support to jumpstart their recovery from the impact of the pandemic. On the medical side, 70% of the community members have been vaccinated, and almost 100% of the senior citizens have been fully vaccinated. Fortunately, this community has easy access to the Covid-19 vaccine through their community leaders and local government unit.

CONCLUSIONS

The impact of Covid-19 pandemic to the community residents are both negative and positive. They suffered from unemployment, decreased income, increased health risks, and vulnerability to stress. This finding is supported by the study of Kimhi et al. (2020) which revealed the negative impacts of the pandemic on their participants' level of distress and sense of danger.

The GK Smile Village residents' resiliency was strengthened by their concern for their families and their community plus the support of partner institutions. This finding is in contrast with the study of Kimhi et al. (2020) wherein a decrease in national resilience was observed due to the participants' mistrust in government decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As an educational institution known for its paramedical programs, Riverside College plays a vital role in strengthening the resiliency of GK Smile Village community. It is recommended that there should be constant communication with the residents and a regular assessment of their evolving needs especially in the areas of health and livelihood. The results of monitoring can yield better recovery response and health outcomes which can be shared with other Gawad Kalinga communities all over the country.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The findings of this study may be best translated through benchmarking and 357 implementing best practices from the other successful night market of Southeast Asia. 358 Infusion of tourism-value to the night market may be worth exploring and program may 359 be operated year-round to achieve a higher social return on investment.

The significant findings of this study may be best translated through the Community Engagement Programs of Riverside College for its adopted community with emphasis on Health and Nutrition, Enrichment of Family Skills for Livelihood, Awareness and Advocacy, Community Organization and Mobilization, Instruction for Children and Youth, Environmental Protection, and Volunteers' Development. These programs will enable Riverside College to strengthen and sustain its linkage with its partner communities in the middle of this pandemic.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researchers are grateful to all the residents of GK Smile Village, Murcia, Negros Occidental. Their participation in this study contributed to the realization that a strong linkage with partner institutions can strengthen resiliency. The challenge to pursue a mixed method of research is indebted to the Asian Qualitative Research Association and the Philippine Association of Institutions for Research Inc., whose passion for research has inspired enthusiasts to keep doing research for dissemination and utilization.

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