

## Challenges of the Divine Word College of San Jose Mangyan Education Center (MEC) during the new normal

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### ***Abstract***

The purpose of this study is to identify the challenges of the Mangyan Education Center during the new normal in order to come up with a sustainable program and to provide the government with the opportunity to assist the Mangyan Education Center. The motivation to pursue this study is rooted from the observation and learnings of the researcher about the management of the center. Descriptive research design was used in this study, with the aim of summarizing the informational content of the challenges encountered by the MEC of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. The general evaluation was performed to 104 respondents who are connected to Mangyan Education Center. In gathering the necessary data, the researcher-made survey questionnaire serves as the main instrument of this study, patterned after the conceptual framework and its relation to the problem of the study. The study discovered that scholars were aware that the center's main goal is to help each student become a person who is firmly rooted in his or her historical past, open to ongoing societal changes, and actively embracing and promoting the richness of their cultural identity. The study findings indicate that the scholars are committed to living their lives in accordance with MEC's ideals in order to grow personally and help their community. In terms of management operation, the respondents to this study reported no problems. The directors' consultative, democratic, and transparent approach to the center encourages the center to keep up the Mangyan Education Center well managed.

***Keywords:*** level of awareness, vision mission and goal, Mangyan Education Center (MEC), indigenous people, descriptive research

## **Challenges of the Divine Word College of San Jose Mangyan Education Center (MEC) during the new normal**

### **1. Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic and its social and economic consequences are dramatically changing the trajectory toward achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including more than 476 million indigenous and tribal peoples throughout the world (ILO, 2019). As a negative effect of this covid-19 pandemic on the current situation today, change is seen not just as "harmonization-adaptation," but also as a "need-necessity" as a result of interaction in social and organizational settings. Such innovations not only influence all educational levels but also compel institutions to include lifelong learning as one of their educational goals.

Mangyan Education Center (MEC) is the flagship program of the Community Extension Services (CES) of the Divine Word College of San Jose. It is where the school provides its usual services to stakeholders in the context of providing education to the indigenous people. MEC is encouraged to develop a long-lasting program that may benefit its beneficiaries over time (Tampol & Aguilin, 2020). The Scholarship Program of MEC was formed in 1992, sponsoring Mangyan students for three decades now. It aims to help young Mangyans improve their lives through education. They are studying at the Divine Word College of San Jose from Senior High School to College. After finishing their studies, they are expected to return to their community to serve and share the learning they have acquired (Undung, 2014). This MEC Scholarship Program is in line with the United Nations declaration of indigenous peoples' equality with all other people. Recognizing everyone's right to be different, to think of themselves as different, and to be respected as such, in exercising their rights, they should be free from any form of discrimination.

Article number 25 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that "Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas, and other resources, and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard". Furthermore, indigenous peoples have the right to self-sufficiency control, protect, and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions, as well as manifestations of their sciences, technologies, and cultures, such as human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of fauna and flora properties, oral traditions, literature, designs, sports and traditional games, and visual and performing arts. Mentioned also in this declaration that they have the right to keep, control, protect, and develop their intellectual property rights over cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions. In achieving the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which was created in 2015, the United Nations provided a framework for measuring the support and progress of its work to advance the rights and well-being of over 400 million of the world's indigenous peoples.

The lack of qualitative and quantitative data on the situation of indigenous peoples at the local and community levels prompted the development of the Indigenous Navigator framework. It was created by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) guidelines for measuring and implementing human rights indicators (OHCHR, 2012). In addition, as this report will demonstrate, the strengthened partnerships and connections established through the Indigenous Navigator project have also proven to be helpful during times of crisis. Through its established network, the project has been able to gather up-to-date, firsthand information on the difficulties indigenous communities have faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures they have used to overcome such struggles. This timely information was essential in developing inclusive and indigenous people-centered responses to the COVID-19 crisis to achieve a "better normal" (ILO, 2020).

Existing inequalities have shaped the lives and livelihoods of indigenous peoples that are affected by climate change. In light of the scarcity of qualitative and quantitative data on indigenous peoples, the information gathered through the Indigenous Navigator Initiative provides valuable insights into these realities such as the indigenous peoples' living conditions before and during the public health crisis. This project also contained elements to identify key components for the development of a targeted response to the pandemic that is rooted in the realities and needs of indigenous peoples. According to the Indigenous Navigator data (2020), there are significant gaps in terms of access to adequate and culturally appropriate health care, social security, and education that may further marginalize Indigenous peoples.

At present, there are 23 Mangyan students and 5 staff members who are living in Mangyan Education Center (MEC), located at Arnoldus Village, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. Mangyan scholars are expected to follow the policies being implemented for their development. However, like any other organization, Mangyan Education Center also experiences challenges that are revealed through this research. By the end of this study, a sustainable program is proposed by the researcher.

**Statement of the Problem** - The purpose of this study is to identify the challenges of the Mangyan Education Center during the new normal to come up with a sustainable program. It sought to answer the following questions: (1) What is the respondents' level of awareness of the existing Vision, Mission, and Goal of the Mangyan Education Center? (2) What is the respondents' level of awareness of the existing organizational structure of Mangyan Education Center? (3) What are the challenges of the Mangyan Education Center during pre-pandemic and during the pandemic as regards: invitations for sponsorships; spiritual formation of scholars; management operations?

**Significance of the Study** - The researcher believes that the findings of this study will benefit the following individuals; First the Mangyan Scholars, through this study, will become more aware of the challenges encountered by the center and help achieve the program's sustainability. Second, the DWCSJ Administrators, administrators will be given the data on the extent of the challenges of Mangyan Education Center. It will help them create programs to address the problems encountered by the center. Third to the Alumni, this study will create an opportunity for the alumni to help the Mangyan Education Center in its sustainability program. Fourth, to the Local Government Unit, this study will provide the government with an opportunity to assist the Mangyan Education Center with its sustainability program. Fifth, to the parents, it will increase their involvement with the affairs of the Mangyan Education Center as well as provide them with knowledge and understanding of the sustainable programs and keep them informed about their children's performances. Lastly, to future researchers, this study will help researchers be aware of the challenges encountered by Mangyan Education Center for their further studies.

## 2. Methodology

**Research Design** - Descriptive Research was used in this study, to summarize the information content of the challenges encountered by the Mangyan Education Center in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, and the proposed sustainable programs aligned with its five pillars.

**Respondents of the Study** - The researcher requested the assistance of twenty (20) Mangyan Education Center administrators, parents of scholars, and alumni to provide the necessary data needed for this study. In general, this study involved five (5) administrators, five (5) staff members, 30 alumni, 36 parents, and 28 students with a total of 104 respondents who are connected to Mangyan Education Center. The respondents were randomly selected and asked to answer a questionnaire on a scheduled date and time.

**Research Instrument** - In gathering the necessary data, a researcher-made survey questionnaire was used as the main instrument of this study, patterned after the conceptual framework and its relation to the problem of the study. The researcher gathered its content from books, online journals, unpublished thesis, and other materials including old documents of MEC relative to the study. The first part of the questionnaire was composed of the

Awareness level of the Vision, Mission, and Goal of MEC. The second part was designed to test the Awareness level of the organizational structure of MEC. Respondents were asked to rate each statement based on a Likert scale using the level of agreement.

Test validation and reliability indexes were carried out before the utilization of the questionnaire. The completed questionnaire framework was given to the experts in the field of the study to determine its validity. In the study, content validity was used to indicate that the items in the survey questionnaire accurately represent the concept to be analyzed (Faghihi & Allameh, 2012). The researcher sought the help of six experts in the field of research from the Divine Word College of San Jose - Graduate School. All necessary suggestions for instrument improvement were considered. With the assistance and support of experts to validate the content of the survey, the majority of statements in each construct were found to be highly relevant. The questionnaire was tried out first to twenty (20) respondents consisting of students, staff, and parents. A week later, it was administered to the same group of respondents who were excluded from the final administration of the questionnaire. The test-retest method was used in determining the item reliability of the instrument. Three components under the level of awareness of the Mangyan Education Center (MEC) and another for the organizational structure were tested for consistency using Cronbach's Alpha measure. Vision, Mission, and Core Values are the three components under the level of awareness resulting in the Cronbach alpha value of 0.723, 0.819, and 0.730 respectively interpreted as high reliability. Moreover, the organizational structure instrument Cronbach alpha resulted in 0.764 (high reliability). Therefore, a generally high assessment of the reliability of the instrument is presented with computed coefficients ranging from 0.723 to 0.819. The questionnaire can then be administered to the final group of respondents.

**Data Gathering Procedure** - The researcher sought the approval of the research proposal, it then underwent the proposal defense where the proposed study was examined and approved by the research panel. Upon approval, the researcher prepared and reproduced the pertinent questionnaire and other materials needed for the study. After which, necessary permits were sought from the director of Mangyan Education Center. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the respondents to explain thoroughly the purpose of this study to avoid the source of errors. During the administration of the questionnaire, the respondents were informed that their anonymity and privacy would be treated ethically and confidentially.

**Statistical Treatment of the Data** - After the data were collected and tabulated, the processing of the quantitative data was done using the statistical software, SPSS version 26. This generated the statistical results to answer the statement of the problem. In describing the level of awareness of the Mangyan Education Center, weighted means were computed.

### 3. Results and Discussions

Table 1 discloses the level of awareness of the vision, mission, and goals of Mangyan Education Center. Based on the survey, respondents depict a very high extent of awareness of the three identified variables as reflected by the composite mean of 4.94, 4.94, and 4.97 respectively.

**Table 1**  
*Mean of respondents' level of awareness on the existing vision, mission, and goals of the MEC*

Awareness	Mean	Verbal Description
Vision	4.94	Very High Extent
Mission	4.94	Very High Extent
Goals	4.97	Very High Extent

*Legend:* 4.50-5.00- Very High Extent; 3.50-4.49- High Extent; 2.50-3.49- Moderate Extent; 1.50-2.49 – Low Extent; 1.00-1.49- Very Low Extent

It is revealed that the awareness of the respondents on vision, mission, and goals was evaluated to a high extent since all the descriptors have means ranging from 4.50 – 5.00. Mangyans use a primitive style of living and have a way of life. Education is not as formal as now for the lessons they (Mangyan) learn are mostly those, which pertain to the means of earning a living, and those, which concerned moral and religious training

(Leykamm, 1979). The problem of education among the Mangyans is not as pronounced as before. In the past, Mangyan parents considered sending their children to school taboo (Dagohoy, 1994). For them, acquiring lowland education was unnecessary and a waste of time and effort, arguing that their forefathers were able to manage without any formal training at all. Bright rays of hope began in the dawn when the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) came to Mindoro in 1936. The Society of the Divine Word started to build local churches and educate people in faith and practice. It was a task for both the Divine Word Missionaries and Mangyans, a tremendous challenge that they together had to reckon with.

And this study shows that most of the Mangyans are more aware now of the importance of education with the help of the Mangyan Education Center. They are also known that the Mangyan Education Center has requirements, such as being a member of one of the seven main Mangyan tribes and being an indigenous person. The responses also display a very high level of awareness of the fact that their selection as scholars were made in part on the advice and support of their parents, community members, and their parish priest. The table also shows that the respondents have a very high degree of awareness of the fact that they were selected as scholars based on their character traits, cultural fit, and intellectual aptitude for lowland education. In addition, they are also well aware that the collaboration among their parents, the local community, the school where they are enrolled, and the Mangyan Education Program makes it feasible for them to pursue their education in the municipality of San Jose. The study reveals that they are conscious of the fact that spending time at the Mangyan Education Center coincides with formation based on its five pillars, including academics, community, spirituality, psychoemotional, and livelihood/self-reliance. The study also reveals that the respondents are aware of how the five pillars of the Mangyan Education Center work to develop them into mature, integrated people who deliberately respect their culture and identity. They are also aware of their obligation to assist their community or tribe once they have returned, taking into account what they have learned and their capabilities to do so.

The aggregate mean of 4.94 shows that the respondents were extremely aware of the goals and role of the Mangyan Education Center for the Indigenous people. A 4.93 demonstrates the extremely high level of awareness of the message that MEC is promoting; The respondents' level of awareness of the ongoing communication, evaluation, and change that was essential for their personal development received a very high score of 4.90. 4.96, or to a very high extent, in terms of knowing that while undergoing formation at Mangyan Education Center, they must abide by specific norms and regulations not only in the school but also in their community for peaceful interactions. Also, there was a very high level of knowledge that the formation at the Mangyan Education Center includes self-evaluation and human development (4.96). The table demonstrates the respondents' excellent level of comprehension of the Mangyan Education Center's objectives and goals. The mangyan's awareness suggests that they have a thorough comprehension of the rules and regulations; their observance of them shows that they have the discipline and desire to learn and receive a good education.

About the goals of the Mangyan Education Center, the table above shows the scholars' level of awareness. The scholars' understanding that one of Mangyan Education Center's objectives is the preservation of culture—that is, that as they are undergoing formation there, they live and practice their cultural beliefs, rituals, and traditions—received a score of 4.95, which is indicative of a very high degree of understanding. 4.96, or a very high level, of respondents understand that one of the objectives is to raise awareness of the need for both mainstream and indigenous peoples' cultural education for fostering harmony in the current generation. They keep their Mangyan culture while learning important lowland mainstream culture at the Mangyan Education Center, assuring the enrichment of their culture to meet the demands of the time. To build a foundation for respect and collaboration between people, it is important to respect everyone's culture, whether it be Mangyan, Tagalog, Visayan, Ilocano, or another. The final indicator, which measures awareness of the Mangyan Education Center's objectives, scored 4.97. These objectives include assisting each student in becoming a person who is firmly rooted in his or her historical past, open to the ongoing changes in society, and actively embracing and promoting the richness of their cultural identity. Hence, it can be inferred from the overall mean of 4.97 that the students grasp the Mangyan Education Center's objectives to a very high degree. These outcomes demonstrate the scholars' determination to live their lives by MEC's ideals to develop personally and support their

community.

**Table 2**

*Mean extent of the organizational structure of Mangyan Education Center*

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. I am aware that Mangyan Education Center is headed by a director who oversees and directs the daily activities of the program anchored on its five pillars.	4.91	Very High Extent
2. The Educational Staff is in charge of the educational needs and studying routine of the scholars coordinating with their teachers and parents to ensure their progress and success in academics.	4.93	Very High Extent
3. I am aware that the Finance/Marketing staff ensures the proper use and accounting of finances in food purchases and preparation, payment of bills, procurement of agricultural and household needs as well as students' personal, medical, school fees, and other	4.99	Very High Extent
4. I am aware that the Agriculture and Project Staff is in charge of the cultivation of rice and vegetables, raising of hogs and chickens, and other livelihood and income-generating projects.	4.93	Very High Extent
5. I am aware that the maintenance Staff is in charge of the well-being of the dormitories in terms of orderly functioning electrical equipment and fixtures, water source as well as the cleanliness and orderliness of facilities at Mangyan Education Center.	4.97	Very High Extent
6. I am aware that the Formation Staff is responsible for the spiritual, cultural, and values formation of scholars at Mangyan Education Center.	4.96	Very High Extent
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.95</b>	<b>Very High Extent</b>

*Legend:* 4.50-5.00- Very High Extent; 3.50-4.49- High Extent; 2.50-3.49- Moderate Extent; 1.50-2.49 – Low Extent; 1.00-1.49- Very Low Extent

The lowest mean score for descriptor item number one was 4.91, which explains a very high level of knowledge that Mangyan Education Center is run by a director who supervises and guides the daily operations of the program based on its five pillars. The educational staff is responsible for the student's educational needs and study habits, working in conjunction with their teachers and parents to ensure their academic achievement. On the other hand, descriptors item number 2 received a 4.93, which indicates a very high level of understanding. The knowledge that the Finance/Marketing team assures the proper use and accounting of funds in food purchases and preparation, bill payment, agriculture, and home requirements procurement, as well as student personal, medical, school fees, and other expenses, received 4.99.

The study also shows that the students had a very high level of awareness that the Mangyan Education Center's maintenance staff is responsible for the dormitories' well-being in terms of properly functioning electrical fixtures and equipment, water sources, and the cleanliness and orderliness of facilities. The final descriptor, number 6, garnered 4.96, demonstrating that respondents are well aware that the Mangyan Education Center's formation staff is in charge of the student's spiritual, cultural, and value development. The survey's composite mean of 4.95 indicates that respondents had a high level of understanding of the Mangyan Education Center's organizational structure. The fact that all of the descriptors have means between 4.50 and 5.00 indicates that the respondents' awareness of organizational structure was appraised to a high degree.

Based on transcribed, encoded, and analyzed data of respondents, eight out of ten are saying that one of the difficulties they encountered before and during the pandemic is that most of the benefactors who help in nurturing the scholars suddenly stop supporting and financing the center. Due to losing some of its donors, the Mangyan Education Center finds it difficult to maintain a certain number of scholars. The pandemic affected the financial status of the center, likewise the potential to look for sponsors, to sustain the needs of students at Mangyan Education Center. Despite the challenges and difficulties the Mangyan Education Center currently faces, ten out of ten respondents are extending their gratitude to the Divine Word College of San Jose for exerting efforts to reach out to the needs of the Mangyan Education Center.

Spiritual Formation of Scholars - According to interview transcripts, encoded, and analyzed data from respondents, a hundred percent of the respondents said that there is no difficulty when it comes to the spiritual formation of scholars. They are very welcoming now when it comes to the formation of their spirituality. They are the ones who signify that they (Mangyan *students*) wanted to be baptized or wanted formally become Roman

Catholics. They are role models because they pray daily the Rosary, the novena, the Stations of the Cross, and the different prayers that they have at the center. Furthermore, the pandemic has had a great impact on the Mangyan Education Center its terms of spiritual formation, they become more prayerful which is supported by the study (Gecewicz, 2020) reported that their faith had become stronger because of the pandemic. These Mangyan youth had already embraced the Catholic faith and had initially received catechism and religious education in their basic education. Another intent of this study is to propose a parallel formation that might lead these youths back to their roots and hence provide adjunct alternative learning through a faith formation which should lead them to become mature and committed Christians who would be witnesses to their faith by word and example as they live their faith (Authentic Christian Formation of the Youth (Colloquium on Education of the FABC-OESC January 27-30, 1992).

Management Operations- There is no problem encountered as stated by the respondents of this study in terms of management operations. Ten out of ten say that the current director, Br. Vince Iopam, SVD is very good at management. Salute to the well-being of their director, he is very consultative. He sees to it that all matters in Mangyan Education Center consult it are properly dealt with. Aside from being consultative, he also is very democratic and transparent. Every problem the center faces about the management is properly solved and addressed. The key to success in life, conferring to the research of (Razali et al. 2018), is effectively managing the resource that each person has in equal measure and placing enough emphasis on planning.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn; The respondents are aware of and accept responsibility for upholding Mangyan Education Center's vision to the best of their abilities. They are more aware of the reputation that Vision has in the community. The majority of the respondent understand and acknowledge their responsibility for carrying out the Mangyan Training Center's mission. They are more knowledgeable about Mission's reputation in their community. They understand that if they are chosen to study and live in the Mangyan Education Center, they will return to their communities to serve based on their qualifications and capacity to do so. The respondents are very knowledgeable about the Mangyan Education Center's organizational structure and are aware that the director oversees and manages the center. They understand that the organizational structure has been effectively communicated to the community and that this aid in the management of the Mangyan Education Center. The pandemic affected the center's financial situation and its capacity to find sponsors to support Mangyan Education Center students. Due to the Center's loss of some of its donors, it is difficult for them to maintain a certain number of Scholars. The pandemic has significantly impacted the spiritual development of Mangyan Education Center; as a result, they are now more prayerful and have stronger faith. The operation management reveals no issues. The directors' democratic, consultative, and open approach to the center encourages the center to maintain the Mangyan Education Center's good management.

##### *4.1 Recommendations*

The study was conducted to determine the extent of the challenges of Mangyan Education Center. Furthermore, this aimed to propose a sustainable program for Mangyan Education Center under the New Normal. Based on the findings, the following are hereby recommended: Given the limited budget, the Divine Word College of San Jose offers a scholarship scheme for selected College students at least twenty-five (25) percent of the MEC population. Occidental Mindoro State College, being a state college that offers free college education in the province should also be considered for courses needed in the mountain communities such as agriculture, midwifery, social work, and other courses. The remaining twenty-five (25) percent may be enrolled in TESDA for skills training. A written policy should be in place in terms of courses or skills training to be taken by the students. Some students are fitted in four-year baccalaureate courses, while some are aligned with the technical and vocational fields. A set of criteria for the recruitment and selection of scholars should be formulated and strictly implemented. These include academic and proficiency standing, good morals, tribal membership,

recommendation of the parish priest, and participation of the community. Each existing tribal community comprising the five major tribes should have an equal ratio of applicants in admission to the program and not concentrate only on a few communities. Those who will be admitted to the center should undergo an orientation program that would last for a week to determine the readiness of the incoming student to embrace life at the Center. These include bridging class, doing household chores and groundworks, workshops on student life in town, and accepting leadership roles in the dormitory.

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