

THE FAMILY FARM SCHOOL APPROACH TO HUMAN CAPABILITIES BUILDING A STRATEGY FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Jiza Mari S. Jimenez

Abstract

This study examines several Individual and Collective Capabilities that were observed among rural community members of Roxas, Oriental Mindoro in School Year 2018-2019. These capabilities relate to notions of self-awareness, personal transformation, self-determination, community solidarity, meaningful participation, socioeconomic well-being, leadership development, health promotion, and sustainable environmental practices. In exploring human capabilities building, this qualitative research likewise reveals the unique features and characteristics of the Family Farm School (FFS) approach and how it contributes to both individual and collective strengthening and transformation.¹

Keywords: Family Farm School, Individual and Group Capabilities Building, Community Development

Introduction

Individual Capabilities are “not just abilities residing inside a person but also the freedoms and opportunities created by a combination of personal abilities and the political, social, and economic environment” (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 20). They refer to what a person is “actually able to do and be” (p. 14) through the interplay of internal abilities and external opportunities.

Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2011) focused on individual capabilities development. While Sen (2002, in Rosignoli, 2018) maintained that social interactions ultimately resulted in the formation of individual capabilities, Nussbaum (2006, in Rosignoli, 2018, p. 814) theorized that

“the person, not the group, is the primary subject of political justice, and policies that improve the lot of a group are to be rejected unless they deliver the central capabilities to each and every person.”

Collective Capabilities later emerged to capture the experiences of groups. More than just the sum of all individual capacities possessed by members of a group, Collective Capabilities refer to internal resources that develop into capabilities that are formed specifically from people’s membership and interaction with groups, collectives, or associations, which they could otherwise not achieve solely from individual effort (Comim & Carey, 2001; Ibrahim, 2006; Robeyns, 2017 in Rosignoli, 2018).

Philippine studies on the concept of capabilities include examining the capabilities of public school teachers (Polita, 2001), children of migrant parent(s) (Abenir, 2014), female kin-caregivers in transnational families (Feria, 2015), and people with disabilities in their experience of disability and well-being (Geronimo, 2015). Building on these researches, this particular study aimed to examine the Family Farm School (FFS) approach to human capabilities building in pursuit of Community Development goals.

Community Development involves “recognizing and building up the people’s innate potentials and capabilities, enabling them to define their direction and participate in the process of change through collective actions that will ensure the well-being or welfare of the people” (Luna, 2009, pp. 4-5). This requires both personal and societal change where education is valued as “a potent force for social transformation” (Tungpalan & Hernando, 1990 in Tungpalan, 1991a, p. 2). While enhancements to educational policies, programs, and outcomes contribute to overall societal gains, the underlying socioeconomic and political structures must likewise improve to enhance what people can do and become (Tungpalan, 1991b).

As such, this research aimed to determine context-based terms that members of the Gelacio I. Yason Foundation-Family Farm School (hereinafter referred to as the Roxas FFS) use and associate with their perceptions and experiences of human capabilities development. Likewise, the study hoped to recognize the components that create capabilities, the changes they can foster among individuals and groups, and the conditions that enable or disable them, which are drawn from and shaped by the community members’ respective involvement in the Roxas FFS as learners,

educators, and rural development partners. Thus, this inquiry into the FFS experience of human capabilities building aimed to help enhance, expand, and extend development efforts in the community.

Methods

The research was conducted in partnership with the Roxas FFS—a private, non-profit, alternative secondary school in Barangay San Mariano, Roxas, Oriental Mindoro (Figure 1). The Roxas FFS is one of the 13 family farm schools in the Philippines and was selected because of its rich and meaningful experiences in integrated rural development for almost 20 years. The researcher learned about the Roxas FFS when she served as a community volunteer for 10 months in 2009-2010.



Figure 1. The Roxas FFS Compound, SY 2018-2019

The study applied a qualitative research design in examining the context, perceptions, and experiences of 164 research participants comprising of various community members including Roxas FFS students, parents, tutors,² school administrators, and partners. Non-probability purposive sampling—with the aid of database and the use of fishbowl and snowball methods—was applied in selecting the research participants. Considering that perceptions, interpretations, and experiences vary at different stages of the FFS engagement, students from all grade levels (i.e., Grades 7 to 12) who were enrolled in SY 2018-2019 were included as samples. To enhance the representation of results, the research captured the responses of former tutors and students representing various batches and barangays, including alumni and students who had decided to disengage.

Research participants were 12 to 67 years old consisting of 66% female respondents. Table 1 provides the distribution of research participants by sex and type of respondent.³

Table 1*Distribution of Research Participants by Sex and Type of Respondent*

Type	Female	%	Male	%	Total	%
Students	64	39%	32	20%	96	59%
Parents	37	23%	9	5%	46	28%
Current Tutors	4	2%	4	2%	8	5%
Former Tutors	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Staff	2	1%	0	0%	2	1%
Alumni	2	1%	5	3%	7	4%
Former Students	0	0%	3	2%	3	2%
Partners	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%
Total	109	66%	55	34%	164	100%

Data gathering ran from August 2018 to February 2019 and consisted of the following: 1) observation of various school and community activities; 2) focus group discussions (FGDs) with structured learning exercises (SLEs) for students; 3) key informant interviews (KIIs) with alumni, parents, tutors, school administrators, and partners; and 4) review of secondary data drawn from various articles and research. Content Analysis was used in organizing, analyzing, and presenting the data.

To enhance the reliability and validity of the study, an audio recorder was used during the various FGDs and KIIs. Data encoding was done in a verbatim manner to capture nuances and increase the validity of analysis. Questions that captured both positive and negative perceptions and experiences were included and were treated with the same attention and consideration. Data triangulation was done through cross-validation of reported information through secondary sources and responses of other participants.

Moreover, the researcher took deliberate efforts in implementing ethical research practices and adhering to the Data Privacy Act of 2012. First, the researcher obtained clearance to conduct the study with full disclosure of the objectives and methods involved without pre-empting the research or overselling the potential benefits that could be derived from the study. Second, the data gathering process was carefully prepared and carried out to minimize any potential threats to the physical, psychological,

and financial well-being of research participants. Third, confidentiality was assured and communicated to the research participants through the informed consent forms and secured at the start and end of every data gathering activity. Pseudonyms were also assigned to protect the personal information of research participants. Fourth, the research data were used only for the legitimate and specified purposes of the study and were stored in a safe environment that was secured either by lock and key or by password encryption. Finally, the research participants were given access to the final manuscript through copies distributed to the Roxas FFS.

Results

A. Background on the Roxas FFS

A convergence of clergy and lay leaders and volunteers established the Roxas FFS on 02 May 2001, following the results of a diocese-wide Participatory Action Research (PAR), which identified the widespread “poverty, inadequacies in human formation, and deficiencies in existing social structures” as the most urgent concerns in the region (Ballesteros, 2009, p. 2). For years, these conditions had left the town economically poor. In response, a series of meetings was launched to help address these emerging needs.

One of the volunteers who participated in these meetings was former Mayor Gelacio I. Yason who realized that the Roxas youth had limited education and employment opportunities. After graduating from high school, some were not able to find work, and those who graduated from college tended to relocate to the cities. This propelled him to rally both people and resources to support the cause of the Family Farm School, after having learned more about it through a series of immersion visits to Dagatan FFS in Batangas, which was inaugurated as the very first FFS in the Philippines and in Asia on 08 August 1988 (Gayo, 2013). These visits revealed the potential of the FFS model in poverty alleviation, integral human formation, health promotion, environmental protection, and spiritual growth, which in turn strengthened the resolve to bring this model of education to the Municipality of Roxas (Ballesteros, personal communication, February 1, 2019).

The Roxas FFS was envisioned to “create sustainable communities through holistic education” (GIYF-FFS, n.d.). As such, it aimed to deliver an agriculture- and entrepreneurship-based curriculum to engage the youth

in meaningful and productive work. The intention was to seek out students who were among the “poorest of the poor” (Anna, School Administrator) because doing so was viewed as the most viable path to rural development. The recruitment of students was across parishes in the municipalities of Bongabong, Bulalacao, Mansalay, and Roxas.

In the FFS model, varied and alternative methods of formation are used to enhance lesson delivery and learning outcomes. These include: 1) the *Alternancia* System (i.e., alternating school and home cycles), 2) Contextual Teaching (i.e., theoretical and practical approach to teaching), 3) Personalized Formation (i.e., chats, counseling, and mentoring sessions between tutors and students), 4) Family Visits, 5) Parents’ Participation and Formation, 6) *Convivencia* (i.e., “living together as a community of persons” [Sibonga, 2006, p. 5]), 7) the Small Group (i.e., a maximum class size of 50 [Zarate, 2000]), and 8) Spiritual Formation.

These teaching methods are supplemented by four School Advocacies: 1) Organic Agriculture, 2) Care for the Environment, 3) Social Enterprise Development, and 4) Natural Health; accompanied by seven Core Values: 1) Compassion, 2) Respect and Honor, 3) Bridging and Linking, 4) Reflectiveness and Mindfulness, 5) Three Acts of Goodness (i.e., “Do good deeds. Speak good words. Think good thoughts” [Ko, n.d. p.5]), 6) Love for Learning, and 7) Creativity and Resourcefulness.

B. Examining human capabilities building in the Roxas FFS

Folk terms on human capabilities

The Roxas FFS community members used the following terms in referring to human capabilities: “*kakayanan*,” “*kakayanin*,” “*kaya*,” “talent,” “skills,” “*halaga*,” and “*lakas ng loob*” (i.e., capabilities, talents, skills, value, self-worth, and courage). These relate to the abilities that people possess, which are associated with the notions of value, self-worth, and resilience in themselves and in others.

These findings converge with the terms identified by Polita (2001) such as “*kakayahan*,” “*sariling sikap*,” “*may K*” (with ‘k’ referring to “*kakayahan*” or “*kaya*”), “*may dating*,” “*may sinasabi*,” and “*may boses*” (i.e., capability, self-reliance, ability, has presence, has something to say, has a voice), which pertain to individual experiences. Whereas the expression “(*nakiki-isa sa*) *sama-samang pagtulong at sama-samang*

pagsuporta” (i.e., [engages in] cooperation and collective support) convey group or collective experiences of capabilities and empowerment (Polita, 2001, p. viii).

Individual Capabilities

This section presents seven individual capabilities of Roxas FFS members, which pertain to notions of self-awareness, personal transformation, self-determination, household and community solidarity, socioeconomic well-being, health promotion, and sustainable environmental practices.

1. **The capability to deepen their self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-confidence, which help cultivate meaningful relationships with themselves and others.** Students at the Roxas FFS admitted to having inferior perceptions of themselves, which translated to their interaction with their peers. With continued Roxas FFS engagement, changes in their self-concept, social interaction, and school performance were cultivated. *“Noong dito po ako pumasok sa Farm School, naramdaman ko na...may halaga din pala ako. Iyong mga bagay na kaya nila, kaya ko rin pala gawin. Tapos..., may mga tao rin pala na nabilib sa kakayahan ko”* (FGD-2, Female Students). (“When I studied in the Farm School, I realized my self-worth. I learned that I could do the same things others could do. And, that there were people who were even impressed with what I could do.”) These changes likewise facilitated improvements in parent-child relationships. *“Nag-iba siya. As a whole, nag-iba siya. At saka ako mismo, nag-iba na rin ako sa kanya”* (Jenny, Parent). (“He changed. He completely changed. I also changed the way I interacted with him.”)
2. **The capability to overcome and transform personal challenges and deficiencies in order to grow and flourish.** Symptoms of poor school motivation such as frequent tardiness, absenteeism, and substandard schoolwork were sometimes observed among the students. Changes were later noted as students attended their classes regularly, exerted greater diligence in their schoolwork, and paid more attention to their lessons in class. The psycho-emotional support, positive influence, and guidance of their peers, tutors, and families, alongside the FFS Advocacies and Core Values, were instrumental in bringing about these changes. The students also acknowledged feeling free to discover their interests without being confined to academics.

In describing his time in the Roxas FFS, an alumnus—Lloyd—recalled a deep, healing, and humanizing experience because of the way tutors treat students with dignity and respect:

(Batid nila) ang halaga mo bilang tao...Noong dito ako sa Farm School, kahit ganoon iyong ugali ko...naramdaman ko iyong pagiging tao ko dahil tinanggap nila ako...Doon ko naramdaman na tao nga pala ako. Marunong din pala akong magmahal. Marunong din pala akong magdasal. Marunong din pala akong sumunod...As in...hindi ako walang kwentang tao...Tao nga pala ako. May puso pala ako.

(They perceive) your value and dignity because you are a human being. When I came to the Farm School, I felt like I was a human being because they accepted me even if I didn't have the best behavior. That's where I remembered that I was a human being. I realized I had the capacity to love, to pray, and to obey. I realized I was not unworthy. I am a person who has a heart.

3. The capability to become a productive member of the family.

Students shared how they struggled with domestic duties, which sometimes caused conflict in the family. By becoming productive members, the students learned to take initiative, practice responsibility, and manage time efficiently. *“Inuuna niyan iyong mga gawain namin sa bahay bago...mag-aral...Palibhasa’y pagod kaming mag-asawa (sa pagsasaka), nakahiga na kami...Talagang inaasahan namin sila dito sa bahay. Hindi na iyan nagpapa-utos. Sila na ang nagkukusa”* (James, Parent). (“Before doing his school assignments, he does household chores since very often, his mother and I are very tired [from doing farm work]. When we get home, we rest. We really rely on them. They no longer wait for our instructions. Instead, they take the initiative.”)

4. The capability to be helpful toward their peers and community.

Students said that their experiences in the Roxas FFS helped them become more perceptive and responsive to the needs of others. *“Noong pumasok ako ng FFS, natutunan ko po tumulong sa kapwa. Doon ko rin nalaman na mas maganda pala na ikaw ang magbigay kaysa ikaw ang binibigyan”* (FGD-6, Male Students). (“When I studied in the FFS, I learned how to be helpful to others. I realized it is better to give than to receive.”) They also shared how they help maintain cleanliness in their surroundings through monthly clean-up drives.

5. **The capability to discern and aspire for a life one has reason to value.** When asked about their dreams, the students expressed their desire to complete their education, participate in meaningful work, be gainfully employed, and be able to support their family. “(*Pangarap ko*) *iyang simpleng buhay na tahimik. Walang problema...Magkaroon ng magandang buhay, iyong may magandang trabaho...Gusto ko po matupad iyong pangarap namin ng pamilya...yumaman [at] maging successful*” (FGD-9, Male Students). (“[I dream of] a simple and peaceful life. I want to have a good life, and a good job. I want to fulfill our family’s dream of being rich [and] successful.”) Similarly, parents emphasized the value of education, which they believe is their path out of poverty and the only inheritance they could leave their children.

6. **The capability to make efficient use of resources.** The students applied the following learned behaviors: budgeting, keeping a coin bank, living a simple lifestyle, spending within one’s means, cultivating organic backyard gardens, opting for a more plant-based diet to minimize food costs, making personal contributions to household expenses, and practicing self-control. “*Masinop (siya). Gusto niya pag may pera, doon sa may kabuluhan ang kalalagyan. Kaya pinangangaralan niya iyong mga nakababatang kapatid: ‘Huwag kayong magastos ha. Kung bibili...iyong mapapakinabangan. Huwag iyong kung anu-ano lang*” (Vicky, Parent). (“She is prudent when it comes to managing her money. She only spends this on meaningful items and not on just anything. She often reminds her younger siblings: ‘Save your money. Make sure you only buy useful things.’”)

7. **The capability to live a long and healthy life.** Students and alumni shared that, prior to their Roxas FFS engagement, they did not know how to cultivate plants let alone organic gardens, and that their diet largely consisted of unhealthy food. With continued FFS engagement, changes to the household diet, health practices, and mindsets started to take root. These included maximizing the consumption of organic fruits and vegetables and minimizing the use of Monosodium Glutamate (MSG). They also cultivated organic backyard gardens and became more mindful and resourceful of the ingredients they consumed. To facilitate these changes, the Roxas FFS conducted awareness and advocacy campaigns on Organic Agriculture, Natural Health, and healthy food preparation to help students and their families make simple yet deliberate choices in their lives. “(*Mayroong*) *paniniwala na mas mabubuhay tayo...kapag mataas ang kakayahan*

natin sa pag-po-produce ng mga pagkain natin” (John, Alumnus). (“We believe that we could live better with the capability to produce our own food.”)

Group Capabilities

This section provides seven group capabilities of Roxas FFS members, which pertain to notions of community solidarity, meaningful participation, socioeconomic well-being, leadership development, health promotion, and sustainable environmental practices.

1. **The capability to build unity and solidarity.** *Convivencia* pertains to the culture of family and community in the Roxas FFS. It is grounded on the experience of “*malasakit*” and “*pakikisama*” [i.e., caring for and relating well with others]. “*Dito, sabay-sabay kayong kakain... Sabay-sabay kayong magdadasal. Iisang bubong ang hihigaan ninyo... Iyong mga teachers... Tatay talaga... Iyon iyong pamilya... Hindi ko man kadugo iyan, kapatid ko pa rin iyan... Oo, naging kaklase ko lang yan. Pero iyong pinagsamahan namin... ay hindi niyo kayang palitan*” (Lloyd, Alumnus). (“Here, we do things together. We eat together, we pray together. We live under one roof. The teachers are not just teachers, they are parents. We may not be related by blood, but I consider them my family. Even if they were only former classmates, the friendship we shared cannot be replaced.”) This facilitates greater cooperation in accomplishing farm and school activities among the students, tutors, and parents.
2. **The capability to be active partners in the students’ education and formation.** The atmosphere of unity and solidarity in the Roxas FFS translates to greater participation among parents who express their support through their presence, care, and encouragement. They also provide their time, energy, financial and material resources to help the students excel in school. This extends beyond filial relations as some parents act as surrogate caregivers to other students by providing them with food, school requirements, shelter, livelihood, money, and most of all, parental guidance and support. On other occasions, the parents assist through school recruitment, participate in various school maintenance activities, help sew costumes for school events, and operate a first aid station during various school and community activities, among others (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Roxas FFS parents volunteer in various school activities
Note: (GIYF-FFS, 2019)

3. **The capability to organize effectively.** Initially, the tutors and school administrators spearheaded various campaigns on Proper Waste Management. However, they soon realized they were spread too thinly. This presented an opportunity to enlist greater support from the parents so, together, they could work toward promoting the school advocacies and core values to the wider community.

As a result, the Roxas FFS offered free training sessions to build the parents' awareness and skills in diverse topics including: 1) Organic Agriculture (i.e., carbonized rice hull production, preparation of organic fertilizer, system of rice intensification, and organic mushroom production), 2) Care for the Environment (i.e., proper waste management), 3) Social Enterprise Development (i.e., cookies, soymilk, organic mushroom cultivation, herbal soap making, assembly of eco stoves, and training in massage), and 4) Natural Health (i.e., cooking demonstrations).

Figure 3 shows different products made by the Roxas FFS parents including organic rice, herbal soap, citronella insect repellent, coconut oil, and ginger tea.



Figure 3. Products made by the Roxas FFS parents under the Farm School's income generating projects
Note: (Ballesteros, 2016a; Ballesteros, 2016b)

4. **The capability to promote the value of Organic Agriculture.** Students acknowledged how farming enables them to become more self-sufficient and cope with the challenges of rising food prices. The value of agriculture was also affirmed by tutors who expressed: *"Iyong mission (ng Roxas FFS)...ay...matulungan...iyong mga taong nasa komunidad na maiangat iyong antas ng pamumuhay. Kaya unang-unang itinuturo ng Farm School ang Organic Agriculture para matulungan tayo na maangat iyong buhay. Hindi iyong naka-steady lang tayo sa laylayan"* (Erica, Tutor). ("Our mission is to help community members raise their standard of living. That is why Organic Agriculture is one of the first lessons taught by the Roxas FFS to help people improve their quality of life and not just remain in the margins of society.")
5. **The capability to uplift their socioeconomic well-being.** The Roxas FFS also advocates Social Enterprise Development through the Family Enterprise Project (FEP). The FEP takes the form of a research project in which students and their families work together to conduct an initial assessment of their existing farm enterprise and/or conduct the necessary feasibility studies to set up and manage one. Some examples of FEP projects include swine, cattle, and poultry raising; cultivation of crops, fruits, and vegetables; and upholstery making. Students and their families perceive the FEP as a means to: expand access to nutritious food; augment family income; cover allowances, tuition fees and costs related to board, lodging, and review classes; increase the family's access to productive assets; contribute to environmental care; enhance the knowledge and skills of community members; support the development of the local economy; and strengthen food security, among others.

6. **The capability to harness and develop leadership potentials.** The Roxas FFS also aims to provide spaces and opportunities for leadership development. According to students, leadership is determined not by name nor position, but by active engagement and actual contribution. They also shared that they value the trust they receive from their peers, tutors, and school administrators, who motivate them to serve as leaders in the Student Body Organization (SBO)—the official student government of the Roxas FFS (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. SBO aspirants campaign before the Roxas FFS General Assembly
Note: (GIYF-FFS, 2018)

Likewise, the Roxas FFS continues to build leadership capabilities among the parents through the Parent School Association (PSA). “*Ngayon, umaasa kami kung ano iyong nag-e-evolve sa mga parents...Pero ine-encourage mo rin sila*” (Anna, School Administrator). (“Now, we rely on what evolves from the parents. Yet, we continue to encourage them.”) Efforts to engage and empower the students and parents have not been in vain as many are stepping up in their families and communities to help in spreading the Roxas FFS advocacies and core values.

7. **The capability to initiate and implement sustainable environmental practices and projects.** By internalizing the school advocacies and core values, the students become more committed to sustainable ecological practices, and also enjoin others to do the same. Like the students, parents realized the encompassing benefits of the school advocacies to people’s well-being, family income, and the environment. They also emphasized the Roxas FFS’s approach in helping the students and their

families understand the impact of their actions on the environment. “*Tatak talaga iyon ng Farm School...holistic...mula doon sa pinaka maliit na halimbawa—iyong simpleng basura—‘Ano ba iyong epekto niyan?’ Kinikintal iyan ng Farm School...sa mga bata*” (Michael, Parent). (“Holistic education is a key feature of the Roxas FFS. Using the most basic example—garbage—‘How does that affect us?’ The Farm School impresses these lessons on the students’ consciousness.”)

This is a critical matter in reference to the proposed construction of a landfill in Barangay San Mariano. Community members are distressed over this matter due to its potential threats to the community’s health, livelihood, and environment. As a response, the PSA mobilized the parents to initiate and implement two community projects: 1) organizing to advocate against the proposed landfill, and 2) implementing an eco-bag project to reduce the use of non-recyclable materials.

For these community projects, the parents adopted practices like attending barangay assemblies on environmental issues, sharing knowledge on environmental care, lobbying for and monitoring the implementation of local ordinances related to environmental protection, and enjoining local vendors and residents to adopt ecologically-friendly practices. The parents viewed these as necessary and meaningful endeavors, which they believed can have synergistic outcomes. “*Pwede namin imulat iyong iba o maging example na iyong ginawa mo dito, pwedeng sundin ng kapit-bahay mo...Magkakaroon iyan ng domino effect*” (Jenny, Parent). (“Parents can help raise awareness and model behaviors to encourage others to apply the Roxas FFS practices, which could lead to a domino effect.”)

The tutors and school administrators also recognized how these community projects signify a deeper sense of empowerment and participation among the parents. “*Sila...iyong nag-ma-market. Sila rin iyong gumawa. Sila iyong nag-po-promote*. So, it’s really inspiring to think na ‘O, *pwede palang ganoon iyong level ng involvement nila*” (Jasmine, School Administrator). (“They were the ones who handled production, marketing, and promotion of the product. It’s really inspiring to think that their involvement can be on that level.”)

C. Key factors that influenced human capabilities building

Enabling factors either enhance people’s internal resources (i.e., self-esteem, creativity, resilience, etc.) and/or reinforce the external context

(i.e., safety, equity, inclusiveness, etc.) to make conditions more conducive for capabilities to flourish. Conversely, disabling factors either reduce the quantity, quality, or efficacy of internal resources and/or render the environment unfavorable for capabilities to develop.

Table 2 presents the enabling and disabling factors identified in the Roxas FFS context.

Table 2
Enabling and Disabling Factors of Human Capabilities Development in the Roxas FFS

Category	Enabling Factors	Disabling Factors
Psycho-emotional Attributes and Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal Resolve and Resilience• Deepening Self-Awareness and Self-Esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor Self-Concepts• Low Motivation
Family Socio-economic Context and Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthy, Harmonious, and Secure Family Relations• Engaged and Wholehearted Parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inadequate Access to Basic Needs• Disengaged Parenting
School Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integral Human Formation• Inclusive Education• Dynamic and Responsive Approach in Achieving Education and Community Development Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenges in Balancing Competing Values• Mismatched and/or Heavy Teaching Load• Quick Turnover Rate of Tutors• Perceptions of Gender Bias

D. An evolving framework on human capabilities building based on practice

In synthesizing the Roxas FFS community members’ perceptions and experiences of human capabilities development, three categories of human capabilities emerged including: 1) Foundational Capabilities, 2) Relational Capabilities, and 3) Transformational Capabilities. These could be used to classify the 14 human capabilities observed among the community members (see Figure 5).



Figure 5. Fourteen (14) human capabilities observed among community members

1. **Foundational Capabilities.** Foundational Capabilities are basic, personal, and individual capabilities that are instrumental for other capabilities to evolve. The main actor, agent, and subject responsible for developing Foundational Capabilities are individuals since the corresponding capabilities that develop are deeply rooted in their core or inner selves. This includes people's values, perceptions, feelings, motivations, habits, and behaviors, which—although these can be influenced by external conditions and social interactions—are primarily shaped and determined by individuals.
2. **Relational Capabilities.** Relational Capabilities (i.e., social or empathic capabilities) refer to the capabilities that develop largely from the intentions and actions of individuals. Yet, they are considered as Relational Capabilities because both the individuals and their community can reap the benefits. Although the efforts of the actor, agent, and subject do not necessarily guarantee that the community at large would develop the same capabilities, exposure to other people's Relational Capabilities can influence people's perceptions,

motivations, and actions enabling them to follow suit, and rendering the environment more conducive to capabilities development.

3. **Transformational Capabilities.** Transformational Capabilities are essential in achieving personal and collective strengthening through the intentions and actions of groups. Transformational Capabilities consist of the advanced and higher order capabilities that require greater inputs (i.e., assets, stocks, and resources paired with conducive and enabling conditions), yet produce greater outcomes (i.e., impact on individuals, groups, and the environment).

This model aims to provide a simple yet strategic method for community members and development partners to identify, assess, and enhance the human capabilities that are available to individuals and groups. This entails recognizing the capabilities that are present and reinforcing areas that need to develop, whether these relate to their Foundational, Relational, or Transformational Capabilities.

Conclusion

The Roxas FFS approach to human capabilities building reveals its potential as an agent of Community Development through its contributions to personal and collective strengthening and transformation. Its implications to Community Development efforts include:

1. **The cultivation of critical consciousness among community members.** The Roxas FFS was created, developed, and propagated through the process of collective consciousness-raising, problem/issue identification, consultation, dialogue, and action-planning by farmer-parent leaders and volunteers. Together, they decided that the best way to address the scarcity of resources, opportunities, and social structures was through an inclusive, holistic, and integrated approach to education and development. This practice of continuous personal and collective reflection and action is still very much ingrained and institutionalized in the education and development strategies of the Roxas FFS. In this context, community members not only perceive how they potentially contribute to prevailing problems, but they also realize that they possess the freedom, capability, and responsibility to effect change.

2. **The strengthening of social cohesion and cooperation through *Convivencia*.** This principle reinforces the community's sense of group identity and feelings of affinity, rapport, and trust. This helps community members recognize their common values and priorities despite individual differences and unique circumstances, thereby enabling them to take greater ownership of their shared aspirations.

3. **The enhancement of local knowledge, capabilities, and resources.** Through the Roxas FFS' agriculture- and entrepreneurship-based curriculum, alongside its free training sessions grounded on the school advocacies, community members not only acquire new knowledge and technologies or engage in mutual learning and support, but also increase their access to food, livelihood, and income. These opportunities confront poverty beyond its economic terms as they contribute to greater consciousness-raising and cultivate deeper unity, cooperation, and empowerment in the community. The intention is not to confine the community members to farming and limit their opportunities in exploring other professions. Rather, the goal is to expand their options by helping them realize that they need not leave their families and rural communities in search of education or employment elsewhere. Yet if they choose to do so, it should not be out of necessity, but out of their free choice.

4. **The transformation of power dynamics and relations among community members.** The Roxas FFS has taken steps toward shifting greater responsibility and power to the students and their parents by providing spaces for participation and leadership (i.e., the SBO and the PSA). At home, students are exercising greater cooperation in accomplishing both domestic and livelihood duties, while in school, they are considered as co-learners, collaborators, and co-owners of the school advocacies and core values. Parents are likewise practicing greater initiative, participation, and leadership in domestic, school, and community affairs.

5. **The promotion of a deeper sense of empowerment and participation in the wider community.** The Roxas FFS' approach to human capabilities building and Community Development initiatives is not only inclusive and responsive to individual and collective needs, but is also humanizing, empowering, and life-enhancing. This is evident in the community members' contributions to the promotion of various

school advocacies and community projects, which demonstrate their propensity for leadership and collective action.

May their example inspire, enable, and embolden others to recognize and utilize what they could do and become to achieve their personal and collective goals and aspirations.

End Notes

¹ This article is an abridged version of the author's thesis entitled "Development Education in Human Capabilities Building among Rural Youth in the Philippines: The Case of the Family Farm School in Roxas, Oriental Mindoro," in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Community Development, submitted to the College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines Diliman in August 2020.

² Family Farm School tutors are referred to as such because they perform various obligations beyond classroom instruction, such as values formation, vocational training, enterprise development, and community organizing.

³ As a preliminary study on human capabilities building among Filipino rural youth, ethnicity was beyond the scope of the research. Nevertheless, the author recognizes the significance of identifying the nuances in the perceptions and experiences of various ethnic groups when it comes to human capabilities building as a learning opportunity for future research endeavors.

References

- Abenir, M. A. (2014). *In their voices: The rights and capabilities of the "anak ng OFW"* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Quezon City, Philippines: College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines Diliman.
- Ballesteros, M. C. (2009, December). GIYF-FFS: A history and vision of faith and action powered by convergence. *Devcare Newsletter*, 2–3.

- Ballesteros, M. C. (2016a, May 19). [Organic rice and peanut butter produced by the GIYF-FFS parents] [Photograph]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1185242214842898&set=pcb.1185242381509548>
- Ballesteros, M. C. (2016b, May 19). [The organic soap and insect repellents are made available through a community store] [Photograph]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=1185228501510936&set=pcb.1185242381509548>
- Feria, M. (2015). *Caregivers left behind: Exploring the role and capabilities of female kin-caregivers in transnational family caring arrangements* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Quezon City, Philippines: College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines Diliman.
- Gayo, J. R. C. (2013, January 27). Mapping the future: Celebrating 75 years of the Family Farm School System. Retrieved from *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. Retrieved from <http://business.inquirer.net/104619/celebrating-75-years-of-family-farm-schools>
- Gelacio I. Yason Foundation-Family Farm School, Inc. (n.d.). *Vision, mission, goals of GIYF-FFS* [Institutional report]. Oriental Mindoro, Philippines: Mina C. Ballesteros.
- Gelacio I. Yason Foundation-Family Farm School, Inc. (2018, July 23). Student Body Organization aspirants show off their development platform during the campaign event [Photograph]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/gyfffs/photos/pcb.1857100024594882/> 1857091581262393
- Gelacio I. Yason Foundation-Family Farm School, Inc. (2019, January 02). (Late post) Funny moment: The smiling teacher and smiling parent: A supportive parent volunteers to sew the costumes of performers for the Panuluyan [Photograph]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/gyfffs/photos/a.1523571757947712/1953125211659029/>
- Geronimo, J. A. U. (2015). *Towards a more inclusive society: A participatory research on disability and well-being with AKKAPP members* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Quezon City, Philippines: College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines Diliman.
- Ko, N. (n.d.). *The three acts of goodness*. Manila: I.B.P.S. Manila & Fo Guang Shan Foundation, Inc.
- Luna, E. M. (2009). Community development: A practice and a discipline. In E. M. Luna, O. P. Ferrer, M. C. Tan, L. Polotan-dela Cruz, A. B. Bawagan, T. B. Magcuro, & A. T. Torres (Eds.), *Community*

- development praxis in Philippine setting* (pp. 1–29). Quezon City, Philippines: College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines Diliman.
- Nussbaum, M. C. (2011). *Creating capabilities*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Polita, M. H. (2001). *Teachers' concepts of empowerment in selected Philippine public schools*. Quezon City, Philippines: Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman.
- Republic Act 10173. (25 July 2011). *Data privacy act of 2012*. Retrieved from <https://www.privacy.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/DPA-of-2012.pdf>
- Rosignoli, F. (2018). Categorizing collective capabilities. *The Open Journal of Sociopolitical Studies*, 1(3), 813–837. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/500b/ae523d6fa6346ba7ee901e0a4106baec1867.pdf>
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. New York: Random House, Inc.
- Sibonga, J. (2006). *The family rural school system: A new way for a sustainable rural development* [Institutional report]. Philippines: Dienst voor Internationale Samenwerking aan Ontwikkelings Projecten Philippines.
- Tungpalan, M. T. V. (1991a). *Popular education: An alternative educational approach* (Lambatlaya No. 1). Quezon City, Philippines: College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines Diliman.
- Tungpalan, M. T. V. (1991b). Community education and people's organization: A framework for action. In M. T. V. Tungpalan (Ed.), *Community education: Concepts, processes, methods and experiences* (pp. 1–19). Quezon City, Philippines: Research and Extension for Development Office, College of Social Work and Community Development, University of the Philippines Diliman.
- Zarate, L. (2000). *Family farm school address: Background of the project* [Institutional report]. Batangas City, Philippines: Dagatan and Balete Family Farm School.

Jiza Mari Salazar Jimenez is a Project Management and Community Development Professional who aspires to make meaningful contributions to community-driven and people-centered social development efforts. She earned her Bachelor of Arts Major in Psychology from the Ateneo de Manila University and her Master of Community Development degree from the University of the Philippines Diliman. She is a former Jesuit Volunteer who believes in the significance of harnessing collective will and action—not only because development work is sometimes daunting, but also since there is immense strength and synergy in one another.

jiza_mari.jimenez@upd.edu.ph

How to cite this article in APA 7

Jimenez, J. M. S. (2021). The Family Farm School approach to human capabilities building: A strategy for Community Development. *Philippine Journal of Social Development*, 14, 147–168.