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Establishing a Sustainable Social Enterprise: Action Research on Riverside Community, San Francisco, San Pablo, Laguna

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Abstract: The prevalence of poverty and impact of environment disasters in the country pose a significant challenge to the government to economically move forward. It is only through inclusive economic growth of communities that this may be effectively implemented. This action research aims to prepare a strategic plan geared toward establishing a sustainable social enterprise for an impoverished community currently untouched by NGOs and government agencies. Needs assessment and environment scanning through family assessment survey and focus group discussion are used to carefully understand the needs and strengths of Riverside residents of Barangay San Francisco, San Pablo City, Laguna. Findings reveal that the most unproductive and untapped sector in the community in terms of income generation is that of the women. Limited education and training and household responsibilities constrain majority of this sector from earning to contribute to their family needs. A complementary multi-sectoral five-year community development plan is hereby proposed.

Key Words: social enterprise, community development, strategic plan



I. Introduction

The pronounced disparity between what persists in reality and the target millennium development goals seeking to address economic empowerment and solve extreme hunger and poverty remains stout especially in third world countries as the Philippines where evidences of poverty continue to proliferate.

Prevalence of permanent and transient poverty attributed by circumstances including the impact of natural disasters still abound. In such cases, the usual “dole-out” assistance provided by charities and NGOs do not ensure long term sustainability. Thus, it is only through inclusive economic growth that community development is assured. To successfully reach this goal, establishing a sustainable social enterprise would be most effective.

Unemployment, especially among women in the Philippines thrives due to a number of reasons like competence deficit and elusive opportunities. Also prevalent in most impoverished sub-urban societies is patriarchal familial tradition that dictates automatic maternal household responsibilities that prevent mothers from exploring greener alternatives. Men with equally limited literacy and training capitalize on their physical abilities to earn for their families while women are left home to take care of the children. This barrier poses constraint for mothers to contribute to the family’s inadequate economic resources.

An impoverished community in San Pablo City Laguna which currently remains untouched by NGOs and government agencies is Purok 3 Riverside Community composed mainly of illegal settlers residing alongside Malaunod River. This community becomes the focus of this action research which aims at proposing a sustainable social enterprise for Purok 3 Riverside community in San Pablo City, Laguna. To ensure inclusive growth, the planned social enterprise is complemented with a multi-sectoral five year community development plan.

II. Literature Review

A. Social Enterprise

Kerlin (2013) defines social enterprises as non-governmental and market based approaches to address social issues in particular establish a “business” that generates revenue of varying activities. These are notably dependent on the prevailing socio-economic conditions.

While these social enterprises are primarily private sector driven, the Philippine government for its part, as introduced by Senator Lorenzo R. Tanada III, has filed a bill to the Philippine Congress entitled: “An act ordaining the promotion and development of social enterprises in order to ensure poverty reduction, providing the mechanisms thereof, and for other purposes” or otherwise known as the Social Enterprise Bill. The bill supports and acknowledges that social enterprises are wealth

creating organizations that have double or triple bottom line (social, economic and environmental) that engage the poor through transactional and transformational services and goals. These are businesses with a mission that develop the poor farmers, fisherfolks, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities improve their capabilities and become active actors in their own poverty upliftment.

B. Economic Empowerment

The International Center for Research on Women (2011) defines economically empowered women as having the ability and power to economically succeed, advance and make economic decisions. The skills and resources instrumental to the success of the individual or community level include the human, financial, social and physical capital. The women's empowerment framework proposed Gola, et al (2011) is illustrated in Figure 1.

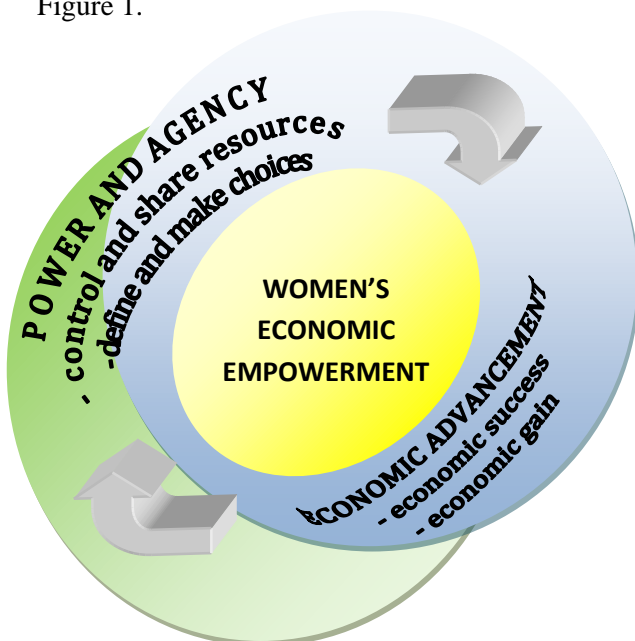


Figure 1. Women's Economic Empowerment Framework (ICRW, 2011)

C. Stages of Empowerment

Shroff (2010) introduced a design model for women's empowerment in developing communities shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Stages of Women Empowerment (Shroff, 2010)

According to Shroff (2010) the first two stages, Powerlessness and Initiation, are the passive phases in which women remain unaware of realities around them (injustice, etc.) that result to their inability to communicate to be able to assert their rights and needs. The latter stages namely Participation, Adoption and Leadership are referred to as the active stages. These occur when women are ready to proactively involve themselves and make economic decisions.

III. Methodology

Three methods of eliciting information from the community were utilized in this study.



First, the family assessment survey conducted in November 2013 on 62 households of Purok 3 Riverside residents of Barangay San Francisco San Pablo City generated preliminary information of the residents using the Family Assessment Guide. The survey provided a socio-economic profile of the community residents.

Second, a dialogue with the community residents was held on January 17, 2014 to pre-assess the residents' attitude and interests toward participating in livelihood programs. True to our expectation based on our preliminary analysis, majority of residents who conveyed their interests to enrol as beneficiaries of future livelihood programs are the women.

Third, a "trial" livelihood training activity was conducted on January 26, 2014 on "empanada making" was met with overflowing enthusiasm by the beneficiaries. In fact, two households happily testified having invested, starting, earning and marketing their empanada products right after the training.

To further ensure sustainability of proposed program, we follow the women economic empowerment framework (Gola, et al, 2011) and stages of empowerment (Shroff, 2010) as guide in coming up with a proposed sustainable social enterprise.

IV. Research Findings

A. Community Profile

Purok 3 Riverside is a community situated Southeast of San Francisco and San Pablo City Proper Laguna whose constituents main sources of livelihood include carpenters, factory workers, drivers, common labourers, and factory workers.

Ocular inspection conducted exposed approximately 200 households residing along the vicinity of Malaunod River most if not all are illegal settlers. A private vacant lot allows temporary accessibility to the area where a community of households thrive. The river surrounded by houses is blessed with fresh clear water hailing from a natural spring that remains fresh, clean and unpolluted

In addition, surrounding the environment where the community dwell are trees and shrubs that abound in the area 10 to 20 meters from the riverbed. Makeshift bamboo bridges have been provided by the residents to serve as their passageway in crossing the river which depth is known to increase substantially during episodes of major storm and heavy rains. However, no severe flooding has yet been experienced in the area.

Findings reveal that the most vulnerable yet untapped sector in the community is that of the women, as most income earners are the husbands who are mostly labourers/construction workers (27.1%), drivers (25.7%) and vendors (14.3%). Majority (49%) of women are



unemployed stay at home with their children as housewives. A few (6.7%) run their own sari-sari stores, while the rest comprises the youth who are of school age.

Preliminary survey profiles the socio-economic information of Riverside women residents as shown in Table 1.

Majority of the households earn an average family monthly income ranges of less than P5,000 (more specifically P2,000 per month), while only 1 household of 9 members noted a monthly income ranging from P30,000 to P40,000. This confirms that majority if not all families are currently below poverty margin thus impact their family welfare.

In terms of education, majority (40.5%) have reached at least high school level, while almost as much (33.3%) only reached primary education. A fewer percentage (26.2%) mostly youth were able to reach tertiary education.

B. Women's Economic Empowerment

The country recognizes the rights of women, as crafted in the Republic Act 9710, Magna Carta of Women (MCW). The MCW is a comprehensive women's human rights law that seeks to eliminate discrimination through the recognition, protection, fulfilment and promotion of the rights of Filipino women, especially those belonging in the marginalized sectors of the society. It conveys a framework of rights for women based directly on international law.

However, as observed, generally, women do not control family properties and decision-making rights on the use of income, further limiting opportunities to break the poverty cycle. Women's economic empowerment through the MCW is deemed crucial in putting a halt to this scenario. The fight against poverty can be won when women are capacitated to generate income for themselves and their families are provided with equal access to resources in doing so.

By definition, a woman is economically empowered if she has the ability to economically advance and power to decide on economic matters.

By laying down the basic foundation, that is, making resources accessible in terms of human, financial, social and physical capital, barriers towards economic empowerment can be confronted. Table 2 applies the economic empowerment framework as experienced in the initial livelihood experience with the Riverside community residents.

C. Stages of Empowerment

Among the three modes used to generate information from the community, the dialogue with community residents where women conveyed with enthusiasm to proactively engage in livelihood projects, suggests that most if not all of them have already surpassed the passive (first two) stages of Women's Empowerment according to Shroff (2010).



This provides direction that the remaining phases for future interventions may be focused at ensuring Participation, Adoption and Leadership. Although it may not still be safe to assume that all household women have surpassed the passive phases (as reality may also be masked by culture and norms) interventions addressing the first two stages are also incorporated in our proposed plan. Table 3 shows possible interventions any external organization may initiate to eventually ensure sustainable and inclusive economic growth of community residents.

D. Community Development

The Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016 adopts a framework of inclusive growth, which is high growth that is sustained, generates mass employment, and reduces poverty. The Plan intends to pursue rapid and sustainable economic growth and development, improve the quality of life of the Filipino, empower the poor and marginalized and enhance the country's social cohesion as a nation. This pertains to creating viable and sustainable communities not only concentrated in highly populated mega cities and also providing employment opportunities to marginalized sectors of the society. The definition of inclusiveness encompasses all angles geared toward sustainability of community development. Sectors left behind will still hinder the community's growth and development.

Hence, a multi-sectoral five-year development program, for Purok 3 Riverside

residents is hereby designed. Table 5 exhibits the five-year community development plan.

V. Conclusion and Recommendation

Several communities in developing countries as the Philippines are still suffering from hunger and poverty as attributed by internal and external factors. The inability of these communities to economically grow and develop puts the overall country's goal of achieving national growth a step backward as their unfortunate welfare has to be addressed first by the government before it can truly ensure an economic take-off.

With the government's support on social enterprises, it is encouraged that public-private sector partnerships be initiated as there are already several government agencies that can develop and provide business skills and livelihood trainings such as the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) - Philippine Trade and Training Center (PTTC) and Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development (BSMED); and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), to name a few. There are also well meaning Non Government Organizations (NGOs) who are in the forefront of social enterprise development. These are organizations with advocacies and philanthropic missions who can be instrumental in helping alleviate the many challenges confronting our many marginalized sectors in the country. However, it is advisable that interventions be strategically planned and evaluated to prevent waste of time, effort and resources.



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Interventions without foreseen long term impact may only improve welfare of communities temporarily but will not translate to sustainable inclusive growth and development. At the end of the day, the same old problems will continue to persist.

The use of tested scientific paradigms to address these issues increases probability of interventions' success and sustainability. Future action researches in this area will greatly contribute to better and effective advocacy implementations.

This proposed sustainable social enterprise as any other action research must be constantly revisited and monitored once implementation has started. Success indicators achieved as well as deviation from expectations must be properly addressed and documented for future planning and interventions.

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Table 1
Socioeconomic Profile of Female Community Residents

1.1. Education level of adult female resident			1.4. Age of female residents		
Category	Frequency	Percent	Category	Frequency	Percent
Primary	28	33.3	20 & Below	69	49.3
Secondary	34	40.5	21-30	33	23.6
Tertiary	22	26.2	31-40	12	8.6
Total	84	100.0	41-50	16	11.4
			51 & Above	10	7.1
			Total	140	100.0

1.2. Number of children per household			1.5. Family structure of household		
Category	Frequency	Percent	Category	Frequency	Percent
Up to 2	36	60.0	Nuclear	46	79.3
3 – 4	14	23.3	Extended	12	20.7
5 & Above	10	16.7	Total	58	100.0
Total	60	100.00			

1.3. Family Monthly Income			1.6. Husband's Occupation		
Category	Frequency	Percent	Category	Frequency	Percent
Below P5,000	41	68.3	Construction	19	27.1
5 to 10,000	15	25.0	Driver	18	25.7
10 to 15,000	2	3.3	Vendor	10	14.3
15 to 20,000	1	1.7	Factory worker	6	8.6
20 to 30,000	0	0.0	Farmer	3	4.3
30 to 40,000	1	1.7	Mechanic	2	2.9
Total	60	100.0	Office	1	1.4
			Others (bellboy, extra, butcher, brgy tanod)	6	8.6
			None	5	7.1
			Total	70	100.00

Table 2

Indicators of economic empowerment of women Riverside residents as elicited from the initial livelihood training feedback conducted on January 26, 2014 anchored on ICRW Framework

OUTPUT	OUTCOME	OUTCOME	IMPACT	IMPACT
<i>Women's participation in activities</i>	<i>Increased self-efficacy, ability to make decisions</i>	<i>Increased bargaining power</i>	<i>Increased control of household resources</i>	<i>Increased financial independence</i>
Initial livelihood training of women Riverside residents on Empanada making on January 26, 2014.	The training encouraged two households to venture into selling the learned product.	The initial venture enabled them to experience a return of investment of 200%.	Future trainings or projects will equip more women with skills and training which they can capitalize on to earn even in their own households.	Continuous experience of economic gain will improve financial independence of Riverside women residents.
<i>Women's participation in activities</i>	<i>New skills, changes in business practice</i>	<i>Access to new markets</i>	<i>Increased profit</i>	<i>Improved livelihood</i>
Future livelihood activities are likely to be welcomed with enthusiasm by	The new skills acquired must be further harnessed and proper resource management	Inadequate access to markets will hinder future business ventures of	Increased profit will translate to economic improvement. This may only be beneficial to	Inclusive economic growth will significantly improve overall community



women residents eager to learn.	must likewise be inculcated in them through business trainings.	residents. Thus, a formally established supply chain regularly monitored by an experienced professional is recommended.	the community as a whole if the growth is inclusive. Thus supervision and guidance is still needed by the community to ensure sustainability.	welfare for them to be more productive members of society contributing to the national economy.
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Table 3
Proposed stages in putting up a sustainable social enterprise for women Riverside residents

Stage	Outcome	Actual Intervention	Timetable	Resources needed
<i>Achored on Shroff's (2010) Framework</i>	<i>Desired new skills, changes in mindset and in business practice</i>	<i>Actions to be taken for specific time frame</i>	<i>Target timeframe of implementation</i>	<i>Budget, manpower and other necessary input for success</i>
<i>Powerlessness</i>	The earlier encounters with community residents showed economic limitations a result of their circumstances and household responsibilities	Home visits and counseling if needed; as frequently as deemed necessary	Three months unless serious matters are discovered which may require further preparation for readiness	Guide psychology questionnaire, trained interviewers, counselors

<i>Initiation</i>	<p>The dialogue between residents and implementers prove trust on the part of the community. The importance of trust on project implementers is necessary for the success of the project.</p>	<p>More dialogues with small groups of household may be conducted on more frequent occasions with different participants to ensure that all targeted households in the community are met.</p>	<p>One month of continuing dialogue between implementers and residents in small batches may be practiced to validate the perceived interest and willingness of residents to participate.</p>	<p>Building trustworthy relationships among small groups with simple team building activities may be vital for success.</p>
<i>Participation</i>	<p>Strategic planned livelihood training schedule starts as soon as proper motivation of tapped participants is ensured. Maintaining enthusiasm, interests and willingness throughout the program is desired.</p>	<p>Livelihood trainings shall proceed as scheduled (Appendix C). Achievers will be rendered recognition to motivate best practices among participants.</p>	<p>Two years of ladderized training programs with intermittent evaluation of acquired skills and knowledge</p>	<p>Conducive venue, adequate materials and resources, competent trainers, community coordinators</p>
<i>Adoption</i>	<p>Incorporation of entrepreneurial skills among already trained participants</p>	<p>Business planning, attitude building, idea development, cooperative planning, with continuous team building activities</p>	<p>Six months to one year business training assistance based on pre-assessed strengths and weakness of participants</p>	<p>Linkages with funding agencies, requirements in putting up cooperatives, establishing organization, rules and regulations</p>



<i>Leadership</i>	Emergence of leader qualities are observed, the absence of which will require the implementing organization to take charge	Formal planning and establishment of sustainable enterprise. Formal business planning and capitalization	One year planning phase, manpower recruitment, investment, market testing with continuous monitoring for consistency, need for replanning and avenues for growth	<p>Initial capitalization</p> <p>Linkages with regulatory agencies for assistance, assistance in legal and accounting practices.</p> <p>External party assessors for strict monitoring</p>
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Table 4
Livelihood Training Schedule (with intermittent evaluation schedule)

Year 1			Year 3		
January	Empanada Making Packing, Costing, Marketing	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center	January	Soap-making	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center
March	Seminar-Workshop- House Keeping	Venue: SPC Hotel	March	Liquid detergent making	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center
May	Business-Expense Savings Techniques Seminar (BEST);	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center	May	Business-Expense Savings Techniques Seminar (BEST);	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center
July	Cellphone Troubleshooting and Repair	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center	July	Soap-making	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center
September	Seminar-Workshop- House Keeping	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center	September	Liquid detergent making	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center
November	Gupit -Gunting Seminar- Workshop	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center	November	Candle making	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center
Year 2			Year 4		
January	Kakanin Making- Processing Packing, Costing, Marketing	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center	January	Handicraft training, costing, marketing	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center
March	Gardening	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center	March	Bartending	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center



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May	Business-Expense Savings Techniques Seminar (BEST);	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center	May	Business-Expense Savings Techniques Seminar (BEST);	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center
July	Kakanin Making- Processing Packing, Costing, Marketing	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center	July	Handicraft training, costing, marketing	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center
September	Gardening	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center	September	Bartending	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center
November	Hilot-Pinoy Seminar- Workshop	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center	November	Basic food processing	Venue: Riverside Outreach Center



Table 5
Five Year Community Development Plan, 2014 to 2019 (Beneficiary: Purok III Riverside, Barangay San Francisco, San Pablo City)

AREAS OF CONCERN	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES/ STRATEGIES	TIME FRAME	PERSON/s CONCERNED	BUDGET	SUCCESS INDICATOR
I – Orientation	- Establish rapport with the barangay officials and residents of the community for a smooth working relationship and success in all projects	Community Assembly	2014 to 2019	Barangay officials DREAMS Committee Students Riverside residents	P 3,000.00	Smooth working relationship and success in all projects
II – Communication and Knowledge Transfer	- Convey up to date and accurate information among the stakeholders of the projects and beneficiaries and ensure transfer of knowledge during trainings	Information Dissemination and Trainings	2014 to 2019	Barangay officials DREAMS Committee Students Personnel Barangay residents	P 1,000.00	Efficient and accurate transfer of information
III – Health	- Train the parents the proper care of children - Improve health condition of the	Parents' class Provision of garbage cans and schedule for garbage	2014 to 2019	DREAMS Committee Students Barangay residents NGOs	P 27,000.00 Solicitation	Improved health conditions of the family and community Drug Free



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	<p>community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote a drug-free community - Educate parents on parenting to improve parents-children relationship 	<p>collection</p> <p>Lecture or symposium on drug addiction</p> <p>Symposium on parenting</p>				Community
AREAS OF CONCERN	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES/ STRATEGIES	TIME FRAME	PERSON/s CONCERNED	BUDGET	SUCCESS INDICATOR
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver health services to the people to improve their health status - Create awareness and stewardship on environment protection 	<p>Free clinic, immunization, vaccination, dental check-up, operation tula</p> <p>Tree-planting, seminar on clean and green</p>	2014 to 2019	<p>DREAMS Committee</p> <p>Health workers</p> <p>Students</p> <p>Personnel</p> <p>Barangay residents</p>	<p>P 130,000.00</p> <p>P 3,000.00</p>	<p>Improved health status of the residents</p> <p>Sustainable environmental development</p>
IV – Education	<p>Expose pre-school children to the rudiments of the 3R's</p> <p>Develop children's literacy</p>	<p>Day Care Program for children ages 4 to 6 years old</p>	2015 to 2021	<p>DREAMS Committee</p> <p>Faculty</p> <p>Personnel</p> <p>Students</p>	P 300,000.00	100% literacy among pre-schoolers



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V- Spiritual Formation	Deviate faith passivism through spiritual formation	Catechetical instruction Evangelization Baptism Confirmation	2014 to 2019	DREAMS Committee Faculty Personnel Students	P 30,000.00	Renewed Christians
VI – Social Development	Promote physical fitness, spirit of camaraderie and sportsmanship among youth and a drug free community	Sportsfest (volleyball, basketball leagues), Cultural presentation	2014 to 2019	Youth DREAMS Committee	P 100,000.00	Good interpersonal relationship among youth, absence of vices



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AREAS OF CONCERN	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES/ STRATEGIES	TIME FRAME	PERSON/s CONCERNED	BUDGET	SUCCESS INDICATOR
VII – Economic Development	Train parents to set up their own small scale business	Conduct livelihood programs on: cooking, handicraft, cosmetology, reflexology; Conduct business planning and business-expense savings techniques seminars; Linkage with microfinance agencies; Organize cooperatives	2014 to 2019	Parents DREAMS Committee Relevant Government Agencies Microfinance Agencies	P 200,000.00	Sustainable small scale enterprises Cooperative
VIII – Nutrition	Promote proper nutrition among children	Deworming Feeding Program	2015 to 2021	Children DREAMS Committee	P 110,000.00	Well-nourished children



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IX – Technology Readiness	Train and expose youth on the basics of Information Communication Technology (ICT)	ICT-related training workshop	2014 to 2019	DREAMS Committee Youth Adult	P 20,000.00	ICT- literate residents
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AREAS OF CONCERN	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES/ STRATEGIES	TIME FRAME	PERSON/s CONCERNED	BUDGET	SUCCESS INDICATOR
X – Infrastructure	Provide a center for the outreach program	Construction of DREAMS Outreach Center through linkages with civic government and non-governmental agencies	2014 to 2019	Barangay Officials DREAMS Committee GO/NGO Residents	Solicitations Free labor from residents	SPC DREAMS Outreach Center
XI – Christmas Drive	Inculcate in the mind of the students the value of generosity Share the spirit of Christmas	Gift-giving programs and parties	2014 to 2019	SPC Management DREAMS Committee Faculty Personnel Students Residents	Solicitation Proceeds from DREAMS T-Shirt	
XII - Documentation	Establish DREAMS data bank	Documentation of activities, programs, projects, surveys, etc.	2014 to 2019	Documentation Committee	P 50,000.00	Strong DREAMS data bank



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