

# **PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF EDUCATION AMONG FEMALE MEMBERS OF THE ATA MANABO, MANDAYA AND MANSAKA COMMUNITIES IN THE DAVAO REGION**

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## **Abstract**

The Davao Region in Southern Mindanao is rich in IP culture whose unique characteristics have prompted the conduct of several researches. For the purposes of this study, three IP communities of lumad groups were chosen: the Ata Manobo of Talaingod, Davao del Norte; the Mandaya of Sangab, Caraga, Davao Oriental; and the Mansaka of Maragusan, Compostela Valley. The study aims to find out how the female members of the three lumad groups view education and its impact on their respective cultures. The role of the female lumad has been defined by the communities' deeply rooted traditions. They play a vital role for the survival of the indigenous communities. Their attitude towards the kind of education introduced to them by the Philippine educational system, and their views on its impact on their cultural traditions, are essential for the insights that designers and planners of the educational curricula in all levels of education can derive from the data.

**Keywords:** Ata Manobo; education; lumad; Mandaya; Mansaka; views

## Introduction

During the third session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues initiated by the United Nations, the concept of indigenous literacy was qualified as “more than merely ensuring the capacity to read and write...[it] should encompass awareness of the whole body of traditional knowledge” (United Nations, 2004).

In view of this qualification, the current study takes note of the provision in the Philippine Constitution, specifically: “The State shall...establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society... (Article XIV, Section 2). The study likewise refers to the provisions laid out in Republic Act (RA) No.8371, otherwise known as “The Indigenous Rights Act of 1997”:

The State shall, through the NCIP, provide a complete adequate and integrated system of education, relevant to the needs of the children and young people of ICCs/IPs.... (Section 28)

The State shall ensure the participation of appropriate indigenous leaders in schools, communities and international cooperative undertakings.... (Section 31)

How these provisions in the constitution and the laws of the land have been implemented, and what may have been its effects, can be seen in Mindanao. Located in the southernmost part of the country, Mindanao is home to many Indigenous Peoples (IP) or *lumad*, meaning “born of the earth.” Thirty-two percent (32%) of the estimated 2.5 million population of *lumad* in the whole island consist of the major tribes of southern Mindanao. These are the Blaan of Davao del Sur, the Mansaka of Davao del Norte, the Mandaya of Davao Oriental, the Ata Manobo of Compostela Valley, the Bagobo of Davao City and Davao del Sur (*Ethnic Group Briefs*, 2003), and the Mangguangan in North Cotabato and parts of Davao del Norte. For the purposes of this research, three IP communities were

chosen, namely: the Mandaya of Caraga, Davao Oriental; the Ata Manobo of Talaingod, Davao del Norte; and the Mansaka of Compostela Valley.

### **The Ata Manobo of Talaingod, Davao del Norte**

The Municipality of Talaingod, Davao del Norte – created on July 29, 1991 by virtue of RA 7081 – is about 101 km north of Davao City. It is composed of three *barangay* or villages, namely: Barangay Dagohoy, Barangay Palma Gil, and Barangay Sto. Niño, with the latter having the largest land area. Seventy two percent (72%) of the inhabitants of Talaingod are Ata Manobo. The Cebuanos compose only 7.04% of the total population, while the Mandaya compose 2.59%. Migrants from Bohol, Leyte, Iloilo, Ilocos, Agusan, Surigao, and Davao compose the rest of the populace.

Talaingod, meaning “mountain people,” derived its name from one of the three tribes of the Ata Manobo group; the two other tribes are the Langilan or the “warrior people,” and the Kaylawan or the “nomadic people” (The Socio-economic Profile of Talaingod, MPDO). Generally, however, all three tribes of the Ata Manobo are nomadic. Their nomadic nature is accounted for by the following reasons: (1) the traditional practice of abandoning the house where a family member died; (2) their continuous search for available and cultivable lands; (3) their preference to live away from the Visayan-dominated areas; (4) and avoidance of clashes between the government forces and the communist elements in the area. Thus, the Ata Manobo are seldom seen in lowland towns “except [when they go] there to trade.” They are reported to have roamed the valleys and mountains from Bukidnon to Agusan, “doing slash and-burn agriculture and having little or no contact with the outside world” (*Manobo*, 2003). The Ata Manobo’s nomadic history has taken its toll on the education of the younger members of the community.

The municipal center of Talaingod is JBL – the acronym is derived from the name of the town’s late tribal strongman and mayor Datu Jose Balimba Libayao. In 1998, Libayao declared the annual celebration of the Kalibulongan Festival. The Kalibulongan, meaning “gathering,” aims to bring together all the Ata Manobo tribes from the different areas outside Talaingod and to preserve the Ata Manobo customs and traditions. Upon his death, Libayao’s first wife, Pilar, succeeded him as mayor; an uncommon feat for Ata Manobo women who are traditionally subordinate to the men.

### **The Mandaya of Sangab, Caraga, Davao Oriental**

The term *mandaya* means “the first people upstream” – *man* meaning people, and *daya* referring to the upper portion of the river. The Mandaya is a complex group found in the province of Davao Oriental where they are concentrated in the municipalities of Caraga, Manay, Cateel, Lupon, and Tarragona (*Ethnic Group Briefs*, 2003).

While the Mandaya have been converted to Christianity, theirs is a mix of traditional Catholicism and their own indigenous beliefs and practices. Despite the presence of a Catholic chapel in the village, signifying the membership of many of the Mandaya in Sangab to the Catholic Church, the Mandaya still adhere to their traditional religious practices. After the mass at the chapel, the *balyan* who also attend the Eucharistic celebration would gather outside the church and begin their thanksgiving ritual which is usually marked by chanting and dancing ceremonies. The rest of the Mandaya congregation would then join in this traditional worship.

Every year, the Mandaya community of Sangab celebrates the Kalindugan Festival. It is a celebration of thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest. Kalindugan literally means “goodwill and thanksgiving.”

## The Mansaka of Maragusan, Compostela Valley

Although some researches would classify the Mansaka as a subgroup of the Mandaya, a notion based on the observed similarities in the two groups' customs and traditions and cultural characteristics, the Mansaka themselves strongly assert that they are a tribe on their own, not merely a subgroup of any other tribe. The Mandaya-Mansaka group of languages is often classified under the Manobo linguistic group.

Maragusan is a municipality in the recently created Compostela Valley Province, which used to be a part of Davao del Norte. The town is home to a Mansaka community that has taken permanent residence at the Mansaka Village right at the heart of town. The Mansaka of Maragusan has comfortably coexisted with the predominant Visayan populace in the area.

Traditionally, the economic and political concerns of the Mansaka are “determined by tribal elders or *matikadong* who are also *bagani* or tribal warriors. They are tasked to protect the rights and lives of the community or clan members” (Limikid 2004). According to custom, the members of the community are given specific tasks to accomplish. Limikid recounts that “men till the land and perform other farm-related jobs, while women produce clothing and weave mats. [The women] also help in the farm during planting, weeding, and harvesting [seasons]” (2004).

Harvest time is an event for merrymaking among the Mansaka. In Maragusan, the Mansaka community annually celebrates the Pyagsawitan Festival in the middle of November. During the festival, a *balyan* performs a ceremony to offer harvest to Magbabaya, the Supreme Being. Limikid explains that Pyagsawitan literally means “first meal from the farm produce” (2004).

## Statement of the Problem

The government has established elementary and secondary schools for the *lumad* communities in Talaingod, Sangab, and Maragusan. Through a preliminary visit to these areas, the researcher noted that majority of the elementary pupils and high school students are females.

The tasks that female *lumad* perform at home and in their respective communities are defined by the groups' deeply rooted traditions. The priestess, for instance – called by different names such as *catalonan*, *baliana*, *managanito*, *baylan* – acts as healer and exorcist, as well as guides the tribe through crucial junctures of communal life (*Insight Guide*, 2002). While they continue to adhere to the traditional tasks imposed on them by their culture, the female *lumad* are likewise confronted by the demand for literacy and/or formal education.

UNESCO adopts the definition of a literate person as one “who, with understanding, can both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life.” However, the “everyday life” among cultural communities is not confined to the necessity of adapting to the requirements of modern society's institutions such as schools, offices, or business establishments. Turksma (2004) asserts Freire's views on literacy as “a part of the process by which illiterate people become aware of their personal situation...and learn to do something about improving it.” Indigenous people are most often stereotyped as illiterate, a misconception when put into proper perspective. The abilities to read and to write seem irrelevant to the *lumad*'s daily activities which generally include food procurement, practice of their customs and traditions, and the inculcation of cultural values among the young. The lack of these abilities does not necessarily render them “illiterate.” Traditional indigenous education, which includes the performance of domestic tasks as wells as familiarity with oral traditions, provides a foundation for the conduct of the *lumad*'s daily activities.

Article 18 of the Hamburg Declaration, drafted during the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education in 1997, declares that “indigenous peoples and nomadic peoples have the right to access to all levels and forms of education provided by the state. However, they are not to be denied the right to enjoy their own culture, or to use their own languages. Education for indigenous peoples and nomadic peoples should be linguistically and culturally appropriate to their needs and should facilitate access to further education and training” (King, 1998).

This assertion is recognized in the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing on September 14-15, 1995, that established the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which aims “to promote and strengthen national policies and programs in favor of indigenous women.” Among the areas highlighted is education that aims at “promoting [a] multi-cultural approach...taking into consideration the needs, aspirations, and cultures of indigenous women” (Reed, 1995). The Conference acknowledged the significant roles that indigenous women play in their respective communities, especially when it comes to the issue of formal education. Rippberger (2004) observed that “as indigenous women attain more formal education, they become more aware of their rights and better able to initiate programs that reinforce equity and community mobility.” This phenomenon would be further scrutinized since among the respondents of this study were *lumad* women who have availed of formal education in the tertiary level.

This study aims to find out how the female members of the three selected IP communities in the Davao Region perceive education and its impact on their respective cultures. The research further tackled the following specific issues:

1. What was the distribution of the respondents in terms of the following educational indicators: (a) College graduate and currently working, (b) Currently studying,

- (c) Studied before but stopped due to financial problems, (d) Studied before but stopped due to marriage, and (e) Have not gone to school?
2. What tasks has tradition imposed on the female *lumad*?
  3. Among the identified perceived needs of the community, which was the most important?
  4. What were the career choices of the younger female *lumad* from the selected IP communities?
  5. What were the perceived effects of education among the younger respondents?
  6. What were the perceived effects of education among the older respondents?

## **Related Literature**

In an article entitled "Putting Together a Picture of Asian Indigenous Women," Cariño (2004) gives the following description regarding the role of *lumad* women:

Indigenous women find themselves living within traditional and largely patriarchal societies which dictate that the woman is subordinate to the man.... From birth, females are considered inferior to males.... An indigenous woman is viewed as being there to bear children, serve her father, her mother...her husband and her family...[and] her in-laws in some cases.

She further observes that:

...Women play a primary role in production in indigenous communities in Asia which are largely subsistence agricultural communities.... [They] usually bear the brunt of the work in the fields such as hoeing, transplanting, and weeding.... Traditionally, indigenous women often act as healers or spiritual leaders in the community. (Cariño, 2004)



In the Philippines, the government has implemented programs for Mindanao's indigenous communities with the aim of improving their socioeconomic status. However, Ulindang (2002) observes that "concern for the *lumad* in Mindanao during the contemporary times focuses on the development projects that threaten to displace them from their homeland." Because of this threat, Congress passed legislation for the protection of ancestral lands of the cultural groups. Senate Bill 1728 sponsored by Senator Juan Flavio Velasco and entitled Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997, is a law that aims to "recognize, protect, and promote the rights of the indigenous communities, and to appropriate funds for the purpose."

The provision of formal education is one of the main intervention programs of the government. However, Tiongson (2005) provides a stark description of how the Filipinos generally view education. Tiongson asserts that the prevalent notion among Filipinos is that "the diploma alone is the key to economic uplift and social mobility." Taking a stand against this trend, he stresses that "the education system must be able to produce thinkers and creative persons in order to preserve society and ensure progress."

Arinto's study (1996), "Reconstructing Education: Incorporating Knowledge in Functional Literacy," was a step in this direction. Her study sought "to provide a systematic documentation of community knowledge in marginal Philippine communities" and "to provide models for nonconventional pedagogical methods using community knowledge." The study included respondents considered as the "common folk," regardless of their gender or roles in the community. Despite the extensive coverage of Arinto's work, there are still communities from the rest of the Philippine archipelago which likewise deserve attention for their potential contribution to the pool of socio-cultural and scientific knowledge, and to the development of a special education curriculum which can directly respond to their unique cultural qualities and needs.

Among these are the Ata Manobo of Davao del Norte, the Mandaya of Davao Oriental, and the Mansaka of Compostela Valley.

King's study (1998) focuses on education programs in indigenous communities. In her research, King made the following observations:

Adult education programs for indigenous peoples in the Philippines used to be the monopoly of the church, mainly the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. Indigenous peoples were given basic literacy training to enable them to write their names. Numeracy was also given importance to prevent the people from being cheated of their products by non-indigenous traders. (1998)

King presents an optimistic outlook of how education can best promote the welfare of indigenous groups without having to sacrifice their cultural heritage and traditions.

However, the online publication of the Indigenous People's Center for Documentation, Research, and Information (May-August 2003) quotes a statement from UNESCO (2003) which reveals the actual situation of education among *lumad* children:

...indigenous children continue to be taught in languages they do not even understand. Their learning problems depend in fact on inadequate education. IPs live in very different environments and retain their particular practices and beliefs, that education often destroys. The participation of IPs in decision-making regarding education is still limited.... UNESCO underlines the obstacles to indigenous education and recognizes the need to preserve cultural identity. Bilingual education now aims at maintaining indigenous languages and at strengthening the intercultural nature of education.

The Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCO) rose to this challenge to develop a high school curriculum for the indigenous peoples of Mindanao. In October 2002, with

the Interim Management Group, it initiated a proposal which was submitted to the Japan Foundation Asia Center (JFAC) for funding assistance. The proposal embodied the ideal goal to develop a curriculum that shall promote participation of different IP groups, enhance the culture and traditions of the IPs as well as [the] multi-cultural community of *lumad* leaders in Mindanao. The curriculum may be adopted by schools with high IP enrollees as well as provide a standard curriculum for secondary IP education in Mindanao that is duly recognized by the Philippine Government.

JFAC provided a grant for the drafting of an IP curriculum. Other foreign funding agencies firms have also been active in aiding the educational needs of the *lumad* groups in Mindanao. Aside from JFAC, an Australian-backed literacy project has gained access to formal and nonformal education programs under the Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao (BEAM). As reported in the November 15, 2003 issue of *Inq7*: “179 *lumad* pupils have finished early childhood classes. Four Tribal Learning Centers for early childhood, functional literacy and Grade 1 classes have also been established... TLCs are also made available to 100 parents and out-of-school youths” (BEAM, 2003).

Project director Dr. Ian D’Arcy Walsh reports that BEAM’s “major accomplishments were the education of 344 parents and out-of-school youths...the establishment of a Cultural Learning Center and mobile learning facility, the development of indigenous learning materials, and the conduct of nutrition intervention activities in priority barangays” (BEAM, 2003). The places which benefited from the BEAM project include four villages in Davao del Sur, Little Baguio and Demoloc in Malita, North Lamidan and Baluntaya in Don Marcelino – all of which have no public schools – and eight barangay in the municipalities of Lebak and Kalamansig in Sultan Kudarat province.

## Methodology

This study limits its scope to the three selected IP communities in the Davao Region, specifically the female members of the Ata Manobo of Davao del Norte, the Mandaya of Davao Oriental, and the Mansaka of Compostela Valley. The study made use of the Descriptive Research Design, specifically the Repeated Interviews Method, in collecting the data. The researcher was a mere spectator of the phenomenon being studied and not an active participant. As an observer, the researcher recorded facts from conversations and personal interviews with the respondents during community visits and home visits.

Through the Repeated Interviews Method, this research collected data from observation and informal conversations gathered during the visits to the three communities conducted in a span of one (1) year (November 2002 to November 2003). Within this period, the researcher visited the communities at least four (4) times. Each visit lasted at least two (2) to three (3) days. The following activities were done during the researcher's stay with the three communities:

1. Courtesy call to the tribal chieftain/ head:
  - a. Mayor Pilar A. Libaya in Talaingod, Davao del Norte
  - b. Tribal Chieftain Copertino Banugan in Sangab, Caraga, Davao Oriental
  - c. Tribal Consultant Angkong Limikid in Maragusan, Compostela Valley
2. House-to-house visits to get acquainted with the respondents in every community
3. Informal interviews with the younger respondents
4. Informal interviews with the older respondents
5. Steps #3 and #4 were repeated during succeeding visits

As a Descriptive Research, the study focuses on the present circumstances involving the perceived effects of education among the female *lumad* in the three (3) selected

IP communities in the Davao Region, namely: the Municipality of Talaingod in Davao del Norte where the Ata Manobo occupy the upland portion of the area; Sitio Sangab, in the Municipality of Caraga, Davao Oriental, where the Mandaya live; and the Municipality of Maragusan in the Compostela Valley, where the Mansaka resides in the Mansaka Village located at the town's center.

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of the respondents – the female *lumad* from every IP community – to represent each study group. The *lumad* groups included in this study were specifically chosen based on their being situated in the Davao Region. These are the Ata Manobo, the Mandaya, and the Mansaka; these groups are also the dominant ethnic groups inhabiting the Southeastern part of the Davao Region. Thirty (30) female respondents from each area, for a total number of ninety (90) respondents, were selected. Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents from the three study groups according to age range.

TABLE 1.  
PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO AGE

Age	Ata Manobo	Mandaya	Mansaka	Total	Percentage
12-15 yrs	9	3	2	14	15.55
16-20 yrs	6	12	13	31	34.44
21-25 yrs	4	5	—	9	10.00
26-30 yrs	2	2	—	4	4.44
31-35 yrs	2	—	2	4	4.44
36-40 yrs	1	3	4	8	8.88
41-45 yrs	1	—	5	6	6.66
46-50 yrs	1	1	1	3	3.33
51-55 yrs	1	2	1	4	4.44
56-60 yrs	1	2	1	4	4.44
61-65 yrs	2	—	1	3	3.33
Total	30	30	30	90	100.00

Among the *lumad*, a female is expected to take on mature roles in the family and the community as soon as they reach the age of puberty. These mature roles include taking on domestic tasks both in the house and the farm, looking after younger siblings, and getting married. This pattern is followed among the three IP groups. Traditionally, girls are expected to marry at an early age. Most female *lumad* already have their own families when they reach the age of twenty-one (21). This is the premise considered for the second category, the elder female members, with ages ranging from twenty-one to sixty-five (21-65) years old. A total of fifteen respondents were chosen from the category of younger respondents, and another fifteen (15) from the category of older respondents in every IP community. The younger female respondents, who were all single and were studying in high school during the conduct of this study, belong to the age range of twelve to fifteen (12-15) and sixteen to twenty (16-20) years old. The older respondents belong to a more diverse range of ages, from twenty-one to twenty-five (21-25) years old to sixty-one to sixty-five years old.

Both interview and observation techniques were used in gathering the data for this research. A semistructured questionnaire was formulated as guide for the discussion between the researcher and the respondents. This semistructured questionnaire includes general questions on the following areas: roles performed in the community, views on education, career prospects of the younger female members, perceived needs of the community, and attitude towards the impact of education on the community. (See appendix for sample questionnaire.)

With the use of a voice recorder, the interview and the informal conversations with both the younger female members and the older female members of the communities yielded significant data since the respondents freely expressed and explained their views.

To complement the data gathered from both the semistructured questionnaire and the interview, observation of the daily tasks of the respondents during home visits was likewise conducted. Since this researcher was also welcomed and invited to witness tribal celebrations, insights on the people's existing practices, traditions, and customs were also noted down. The researcher paid close attention to the communities' fondness for celebrations and festivals, which showcase their customs and traditions.

## **Discussion and Analysis**

### ***Educational Status***

Despite the presence of elementary and secondary schools in Talaingod, Davao del Norte; Sangab, Caraga, Davao Oriental; and Maragusan, Compostela Valley, not all the respondents of this study were able to avail of formal education. There are those who studied for a while but failed to continue, although there are also those who were able to complete their college degrees. Those who were in school at the time of the conduct of this study, attended classes at the Salawao National High School in Talaingod; Sangab National High School in Sangab, Caraga; and Maragusan National High School in Maragusan. Table 2 shows the educational status of the *lumad* women. The kind of education referred to in this table is that derived from formal education in schools from the elementary to tertiary level, and not the nonformal education or the kind offered in the Schools for Living Traditions.

The educational indicator "currently studying" which showed 48.88% of the total number of respondents refers to the high school level. Each of the communities have elementary and high school campuses where the respondents were enrolled: Salawao Brgy. High School in Talaingod, which is an extension campus of Brgy. Sto. Niño National High School; Sangab National High School in Sangab; and Maragusan National High School in Maragusan. The respondents who belong to the age

range 36-65 years old were not able to avail of the opportunity to study because of the inaccessibility of schools during their younger years. When asked if they would have gone to school, all the respondents answered in the affirmative.

TABLE 2.  
DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS IN TERMS OF EDUCATIONAL INDICATORS

Educational Indicators	Ata Manobo	Mandaya	Mansaka	Total	Percentage
College graduate and currently working	3	4	3	10	11.11
Currently studying	13	16	15	44	48.88
Studied before but stopped due to financial problems	3	—	3	6	6.66
Studied before but stopped due to marriage	3	2	2	7	7.77
Have not gone to school	8	8	7	23	25.55
Total	30	30	30	90	100.00

Among the respondents from the three study groups, 25.55% have not fully enjoyed the benefits of formal education. Early marriage as well as financial constraints caused 7.77% of the respondents to stop studying. The inaccessibility of the nearest schools prevented the older female respondents from availing of formal education. The forty-five (45) younger female respondents, or 50% of the total number, benefit from the opportunities offered by formal education because of the current existence of schools in the areas.



### ***Tradition and the Female Lumad***

At the outset of the interviews, each respondent was asked to describe the role and duties she performs at home and in the community. Like the indigenous Aztecs of Mexico, the female *lumad* operated in the domain of the household (Reters, 2002). Two daily tasks were enumerated by all the female members of the three IP groups. These tasks include: (1) performing household chores, which include cooking meals for the family, cleaning the house, and taking care of the children and younger siblings; and (2) working in the farm. The term farm generally refers to a plot of land planted with root crops such as *gabi*, *kamote*, and *kamoteng kaboy*. Among the Mandaya and Mansaka, farm also refers to the rice fields. As with the Basseri of the Middle East, women *lumad* in the three IP communities play very important economic roles since no household can survive without the woman's labor (Reters, 2002).

Among the Ata Manobo, the women toil in the fields, performing the heavier tasks of planting and harvesting. The men simply clear the fields. A typical illustration of this domestic relationship between an Ata Manobo couple is that of the wife carrying heavier work tools while the husband carries a spear, a rifle, or a piece of wood, symbols of his role as protector. Wife and worker seem to be the adopted role for Ata Manobo women. The young females in particular are expected to attend to their chores.

Schieffelin (1990) noted in her observation of the Kaluli society that "girls...are assigned chores to do as soon as they are physically coordinated enough to begin to manage them...their activities are those that are designed to serve others." Like the Ata Manobo females, Kaluli females are conditioned to know that "their own wants are secondary to those of others" (Schieffelin 1990). The "others" generally refer to the male members of the community.

When asked about what role they are expected to uphold in the community, the Ata Manobo respondents unanimously reply that as females they are required by custom to stick to their domestic tasks. Like the Ata Manobo, the Mandaya females are expected to take care of domestic and other housekeeping chores aside from assisting the men in the fields during planting and harvest seasons. A common trend established by tradition is for the females to marry early, bear children, and take care of their families. At present, the younger females who participated in this research say that they are given the right to decide for themselves, especially when it comes to marriage. Despite this conviction, there are still cases of arranged marriages with girls as young as sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) forced by their parents to marry. This phenomenon is attributed to the belief that the earlier a daughter is married, the more honorable it is for her and her family. One elder respondent revealed, “*Madayaw yang maminyo sayo yang bubay. Yagpasabot yaan na madaeg yang yakagusto sang kaniya kinaiya. Garbo yaan nami na ginikanan nilan* (It is good for a young girl to marry early. This means that there are many who desire her. It is an honor for us parents).”

When asked whether they were comfortable with their current status and role at home and the community, five (5) of the younger respondents answered in the affirmative while eleven (11) expressed uncertainty. A follow-up interview revealed that this state of uncertainty was based on what the young females perceived as a conflict between holding on to traditional values and that of exploring their potentials through opportunities provided by education. The eleven (11) respondents later on confirmed that their uncertainty was basically a product of their dissatisfaction with the limited roles imposed on them by their tribal customs and traditions.

The Mansaka respondents, when asked about the role they are expected to perform, also acknowledged the fact that their customs have imposed domestic duties on them. The Mansaka

women asserted that they are equal with the men when it comes to decision-making roles. They are given the full charge of the household which they are expected to manage well. Among their exclusive responsibilities is close monitoring of the female siblings, a duty that the male members of the family rarely interfere with. A common domestic scenario observed is that of a mother or a grandmother showing the younger female members of the home the intricacies of making native handicrafts such as stringing beads into bracelets, anklets, and necklaces, and doing embroidery.

Traditional education is generally restricted to the family within the tribe. This kind of education deals with basic skills related to food procurement and the management of the household. All the respondents from the three communities claim that they have acquired instruction in these areas. Their daily domestic tasks – performing household chores and farm work – are evidence of this. Since the females in an indigenous community are proficient in these tasks, they see no need for further instruction in other skills or other fields. According to them, these skills are already sufficient for the smooth running of the household and the community in general.

### ***Perceived Needs of the Communities***

The *lumad* communities are dependent on what the females consider as important to the welfare of their wards – that is, their children, husbands, and the elderly. The older females determine what the household needs. The priestesses, while invoking the spirits, decide on the right cure for an ailment. The male members of the family, the husbands and the sons, refer to their mothers or wives before making a decision.

From the preliminary interviews, the respondents identified four (4) major needs of their communities. These needs were then presented to the respondents who ranked them according to what they considered the most immediate need. Table 3 presents the ranks of these identified perceived needs.

TABLE 3.  
RANKS OF PERCEIVED NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITIES

Perceived Needs	Ata Manobo	Mandaya	Mansaka	Total	Rank
Preservation of Traditions	1	1	1	3	1
Education	2	2	2	6	2
Preservation of the environment	4	3	3	10	3
Health Services	3	4	4	11	4

The respondents have a high regard for their identity as *lumad* and as members of their respective communities. Preservation of traditions which was ranked as the most important need in each of the three IP communities is evidence of this. Both the younger and the older female respondents agreed that their customs and traditions need to be preserved inasmuch as these are the most significant heritage of the past. They acknowledged the possibility of losing these because of the influx of non-*lumad* habits and practices brought about by interaction with outside communities. The holding of annual cultural festivities helps in preserving and promoting appreciation for these cultural traditions. Pride in their customs and traditions are expressed by the *lumad* especially during the festivals when they perform traditional dances, songs, musical renditions, and special ceremonies to admiring visitors from outside their villages.

Second in rank is education. Although the younger respondents are trained in their domestic tasks patterned after the customs of the tribe, they also acknowledged the importance of formal education in keeping up with the non-*lumad* communities. The older respondents likewise admitted that education plays an important role in eliminating the negative stereotype of *lumad* as ignorant. According to them,

they send their children to school so that they will learn not only the basic academic skills but also so they may also aim for an economically stable lifestyle for themselves and their families.

Third in rank is the preservation of the environment. Both the Mandaya and Mansaka respondents ranked preservation of the environment as third in rank among the identified perceived needs. The Mandaya are dependent on their immediate natural resources for survival since they are relatively isolated from the bigger non-*lumad* communities in the lowlands.

Fourth in rank is health services. There are no health centers located in the Talaingod community and in the Sangab community. It is reasonable therefore for the Ata Manobo community to consider health services as more immediate than the preservation of the environment which they place as the least immediate among the needs. On the other hand, the Mandaya in Sangab have confidence in the ability of the balyan as healer. Even in the absence of a health center, the residents of the village are assured of the services of their balyan. The Mansaka village, being in the center of Maragusan, has better access to the nearest community hospital and health center.

### ***Career Choices of the Younger Female Lumad***

The way a respondent perceives the value of formal education is an indication of her plans to either pursue it or not. When the respondent sees education as important, this will influence her attitude towards the goals she will aspire in the future. Forty-four (44) or 48.88% of the total number of respondents who belong to the younger female category, were studying during the conduct of the study. They were asked to identify possible career paths should they be given the opportunity to proceed to college after high school. Table 4 presents the career choices of the younger female *lumad* from the three study groups.

TABLE 4.  
CAREER CHOICES OF THE YOUNGER FEMALE LUMAD

Career Choices	Ata Manobo		Mandaya		Mansaka		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Teacher	8	61.54	8	50.0	3	20.0	19	43.18
Nurse	5	38.46	2	12.5	—	—	7	15.9
Computer Programmer	—	—	—	—	6	40.0	6	13.64
Doctor	—	—	5	31.25	—	—	5	11.36
Accountant	—	—	—	—	2	13.33	2	4.54
Police Officer	—	—	—	—	2	13.33	2	4.54
Architect	—	—	—	—	1	6.67	1	2.27
Social Worker	—	—	1	6.25	—	—	1	2.27
HRM	—	—	—	—	1	6.67	1	2.27
Total	13	100.00	16	100.00	15	100.00	44	100.00

The Ata Manobo disclosed that their need for health services could be addressed directly if there were medical practitioners among them. Five (5) respondents wanted to be nurses while eight (8) wanted to be teachers. The latter asserted that ignorance should be eliminated first, hence their preference for the teaching profession. The same outlook was shared by the Mandaya. It should be noted though that despite the community's faith in the skills of the *balyan*, the younger *lumad* deemed it necessary to accept established medical and scientific cures to address the health problems of the community.

The Mansaka respondents identified more varied career choices. This is due to the fact that they have more access to the larger non-*lumad* community whom they interact with daily. Accessibility of Maragusan from nearby town centers in Compostela Valley, and the presence of buses and jeepneys that ferry passengers daily to and from the municipality to other places and cities like Tagum and Davao, has likewise influenced

the mobility of the Mansaka residents. This exposure has made the younger respondents familiar with the non-Mansaka culture.

### ***Factors Considered by the Younger Respondents in Choosing Careers***

After having identified their career choices, the younger respondents were asked what they consider as influential factors in deciding on their choices. Six (6) factors were identified as common among the respondents: (a) needs of the community, (b) personal choice, (c) monetary compensation, (d) job opportunities, (e) intellectual capacity, and (f) family pressure.

Needs of the communities refer to what the respondents consider as the services not currently available in their area. They identified the following needs: health, education, and environmental protection programs. Personal choice refers to the respondents' own decision, without consultation or without considering the comments or reactions of the elder members of their families. Monetary compensation is the projected salary that a particular profession is expected to yield. Job opportunities are the employability of graduates who complete a particular course or degree in college. Intellectual capacity refers to the personal assessment of the respondents about their ability to cope with the academic requirements of a course. Based on their academic performance in grade school and high school, the respondents fairly evaluated their capacity to meet the demands of studying in college. Family pressure refers to the decision made by the members of the respondents' family regarding the appropriate career they should follow. The parents often make decisions for the younger *lumad*. Their decisions are therefore influential. Table 5 shows these factors in relation to the careers identified in Table 4.

TABLE 5.  
FACTORS CONSIDERED IN THE CHOICE OF CAREERS

Factors	Ata Manobo		Mandaya		Mansaka		Total (O)	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Needs of the Community	5	38.46	1	6.25	15	100.00	21	47.47
Personal Choice	—	—	13	81.25	—	—	13	29.54
Monetary Compensation	4	30.77	—	—	—	—	4	9.09
Job Opportunities	1	7.69	—	—	—	—	1	2.27
Intellectual Capacity	2	15.38	—	—	—	—	2	4.54
Family Pressure	1	7.69	2	12.5	—	—	3	6.82
Total	13	100.00	16	100.00	15	100.00	44	100.00

Among the Ata Manobo, being in school had established their interest to pursue formal education. All thirteen (13) of the respondents wished to complete a college course. Teaching and the nursing careers are the major career paths they intend to take. They claim that their community is in need of more teachers responsible for spreading literacy among them. The community also needs nurses who will aid them in health-related concerns. Among the five (5) who considered the needs of the community as an important factor in their career choices, three (3) wanted to be nurses while two (2) wanted to become teachers. On the other hand, the four (4) respondents who considered monetary compensation as the main factor for their choice have a teaching career in mind. It is significant to note that only one (1) among the thirteen (13) identified family pressure as influential in her choice. This reveals that the younger Ata Manobo females are now given more freedom for decision-making.

When asked whether they plan to come back and work in their community after completing a degree in college, 69.23% of the 13 respondents answered in the affirmative while 30.77% expressed their wish to find employment in other places



outside of Talaingod. Although ideally all of them considered it their responsibility to render service to their community, they also admitted the fact that there are no opportunities for employment available to them in Talaingod if they decided to stay. This is the scenario that the four (4) respondents have in mind.

At present, there is only one (1) school that houses both the elementary and high school buildings situated in Brgy. Salawao. There is no medical clinic or health center in the area, with the nearest health facility about 12 km away in Brgy. Sto. Niño. Despite the distance that the female students have to walk everyday from home to school and back, it is noteworthy that every one attends school regularly though oftentimes they would arrive late. A major setback that may cause complications in their education is the nomadic tendency of the Ata Manobo families. Since they have to constantly move from one place to another in search of crops and pieces of land to cultivate, many of the students may not be able to continue schooling.

The teaching and the medical professions also stand out as the most popular career choices among the young Mandaya females. These, they claimed, are the most needed professions and services in their community. At present, there is one (1) elementary and one (1) national high school in Sangab, but no medical clinic or health center. Traditional medicine is still used by the natives in curing ailments. The *balyan* likewise performs as healer.

Personal choice appears as the major factor that the younger Mandaya females considered in their choices for careers. This phenomenon reflects the high degree of freedom enjoyed by the present generation to decide for their future. Although personal interest seems to be the basis for their career prospects, the reply given by the respondents to the question, "Do you intend to come back and work in your community after completing a college degree?" shows their overwhelming concern for the

needs of their community. All of them asserted their plan to return to Sangab and to work there. The only impediment they expect to encounter is the unavailability of jobs.

The Mansaka respondents identified more varied fields of study they intended to pursue after high school. This variety of career prospects can be attributed to their wider exposure to current trends in Maragusan. Despite their assertion that they had the needs of the community in mind upon considering their career prospects, not all of them wanted to return to Maragusan after completing a college degree. Only two (2) out of the fifteen (15) affirmed their desire to find work in Maragusan. The thirteen (13) explained that the courses they have chosen to take in college have more job openings outside of Maragusan. Jobs in Maragusan are obviously limited. Although they all expressed concern for their community, they also acknowledged the practical need of earning a living.

The teaching and medical careers stand out as the most common choices among the young women. Indirectly, these career choices are reflective of the domestic roles the female *lumad* perform at home. The nurturing skills, which are traditionally imposed on the young females, are put into use as they take care of the education and look after the health needs of the younger siblings in the family.

When the young female *lumad* selected the medical and teaching careers, they were influenced by this traditional role of “nurturing.” They believed that through education, the young members of their communities can best help promote their welfare.

The respondents also pointed out to the need to understand the mechanism of the bigger society if they were to survive the changing times. One of the Mandaya women declared that, “[m]ost indigenous people are stereotyped as ignorant. It is time that this notion must be corrected.” Another respondent from the Mansaka community said, “When one is educated, she has more knowledge and capacity to help others. The

other members of the community will have more confidence in someone who is educated.” An Ata Manobo respondent believed that , “Education can improve one’s self-esteem.”

Among the three (3) communities, it is the Mandaya community in Sangab, Davao Oriental, which is the more intact in terms of cultural traditions. This is evidently attributed to the location of the area, as well as the programs initiated and sponsored by the NCCA and the NCIP for the promotion and preservation of the Mandaya culture.

The Ata Manobo of Salawao in Talaingod, Davao del Norte, as they continue to be nomadic and mobile, may not fully experience the impact of education despite the presence of a school in their area. Their hesitation to interact with people outside their community may result in their retaining values exclusive to their group.

The Mansaka of Maragusan, Compostela Valley, seem to be more adjusted to the bigger community outside their village. The fact that they coexist with the non-Mansaka residents who recognize their cultural uniqueness enables them to retain their identity and to partake of the privileges enjoyed by their counterparts in the bigger society.

The environment where the *lumad* communities stay has a significant influence on their choices for future careers and educational fields to be undertaken after high school. The greater the interaction with the non-IP communities, the more varied the choices are. The young women tend to relate their educational and career choices to their domestic and traditional roles when they have less contact with those outside their communities.

Tribal festivals in the three communities have in some degree allowed interaction with non-IP visitors who usually come to the IP communities in order to observe and take part in the celebrations. These interactions provide the young IP females a glimpse into the lifestyle of the lowlanders. Conversations with the visitors also open them up to the educational pursuits that

their contemporaries undergo. Inasmuch as the young female respondents who participated in this study are also students, they are able to compare notes with the lowlanders.

Table 6 indicates the younger respondents' perception on the effects of education. Their answers were categorized into five (5): (a) helps promote welfare of community, (b) enables one to assist family financially, (c) is a key to a comfortable lifestyle, (d) develops capacity to help others, and (e) improves self-esteem.

TABLE 6.  
PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF EDUCATION AMONG THE YOUNGER FEMALE LUMAD

Education	Ata Manobo		Mandaya		Mansaka		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Helps promote welfare of community	4	30.77	5	31.25	12	80.0	21	47.73
Enables one to assist family financially	6	46.15	8	50.0	—	—	14	31.82
Is a key to a comfortable lifestyle	3	23.08	2	12.5	2	13.33	7	15.9
Develops capacity to help others	—	—	1	6.25	—	—	1	2.27
Improves self-esteem	—	—	—	—	1	6.67	1	2.27
Total	13	100.00	16	100.00	15	100.00	44	100.00

As shown above, the most important benefit of formal education that the younger respondents perceived is that it “helps promote the welfare of the community.” According to 47.74% of the younger female *lumad*, an educated populace has a greater capacity to recognize the needs of the community and can consequently identify ways to address these needs. This capacity, they added, is learned through formal education.

The respondents admitted that although their respective communities find sustenance in their traditional system, they are confronted by the problems of poverty, the weakening

grasp on traditional culture especially among the younger generation, the threat of environmental destruction because of poor management, and the failure to recognize the value of their natural resources. A formal educational training, they say, will pave the way to lessen if not eradicate the drastic effects of these problems.

The second benefit of formal education pointed out by the younger female *lumad* is that “education enables one to assist the family.” They all acknowledged the problem of poverty experienced by their families. They said that completing a college degree will provide them with a greater opportunity to find well-paying jobs and to earn substantial pay to provide for their families.

Access to IP communities has led to the spread of a money economy and consumerist lifestyle. The Mansaka community in Maragusan has openly adapted to this, as evidenced by the household appliances each household owns. Even the remoteness of the Sangab area has not prevented the Mandaya from getting involved in trade with lowland businessmen. During festivals for example, the *ukay-ukay* or secondhand clothing business thrives in Sangab. The Ata Manobo of Talaingod, although residing in the mountainous parts, come down to the town center from time to time where they procure their basic needs. This has introduced them to the reality of the importance of money in such transactions. The younger female *lumad* see education as a key to employability, and employability as a means to earning money necessary to meet the financial demands and needs of their families. A “comfortable lifestyle” was described by the young females as characterized by living in a well-furnished home, being able to eat good food, and doing less manual work.

The respondents also pointed out that “education develops the capacity to help others,” and that “education improves self-esteem.” The view that education should be used to promote the welfare of the community is shared by all respondents from

the three areas. It is only by becoming educated that a *lumad* can share knowledge and encourage others to be educated as well. A Mansaka respondent declared, “*Kung maedukar di da masipog sang iban* (When one is educated, she will no longer feel inferior with others).” She added that by being educated she would improve confidence in herself and in her capacity as a member of an indigenous community. All the respondents revealed that they are aware of the stereotype of the *lumad* as ignorant. They affirmed that the best way to erase this misconception is through education which can boost the *lumad*’s pride in their cultural identity while at the same time improve their socio-economic circumstances.

The career choices that the younger respondents have identified reflect a desire to fall into step with their non-*lumad* contemporaries. Both the teaching and medical careers chosen by the Mandaya and the Ata Manobo, as well as the variety of career choices among the Mansaka women, establish this phenomenon. Indirectly through these career plans, the young females have expressed the desire to go beyond the daily activities and the expected roles tradition has imposed upon them. It is evident that although the respondents have identified farm work as a major daily task together with household chores, none seemed to be interested to become professionals in the field of agriculture or to take agriculture-related careers. A Mandaya provides an answer when she declared, “*Di da man nami kinabanglan matigaman yang bulubaton sang pawa. Yaan da yang kanami allaw allaw na pyagabinang*” (We don’t need to study about farm work. This is what we do everyday).

### ***Perceived Effects of Education among the Elder Female Lumad***

Most of the older female members of the Ata Manobo group have not had the opportunity to attend school. With the presence of a barangay and a national high school in Talaingod,

formal education has become accessible to the younger Ata Manobos who are allowed by their parents to study.

The women who have not completed or availed of formal education currently fulfill domestic roles – bearing children, taking care of the family, working in the farm. The older female members of the Ata Manobo community acknowledged the importance of education as a means to a more comfortable lifestyle, especially for the younger generation. All the respondents agreed that there is a need to adjust with and to survive in the bigger non-*lumad* society. They believed that formal education opens doors of opportunities, mostly financial in scope and nature, although they have apprehensions as to its effects on their native culture.

Table 7 shows the consolidated perception of the older female *lumad* on the effects of education.

TABLE 7.  
PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF EDUCATION AMONG THE ELDER FEMALE LUMAD

Education	Ata Manobo		Mandaya		Mansaka		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Provides financial stability	4	23.53	5	35.71	6	40.0	15	32.61
Eliminates stereotype of lumad as ignorant	6	35.29	3	21.43	4	26.67	13	28.26
Causes neglect of traditions	4	23.53	2	14.29	3	20.0	9	19.57
Uplifts situation of community	3	17.65	4	28.57	2	13.33	9	19.57
Total	17	100.00	14	100.00	15	100.00	46	100.00

All of the respondents acknowledged that being formally educated provides a better opportunity to find well-paying jobs, preferably white collar jobs. Despite a generally positive perception of formal education, the respondents also expressed apprehension towards its impact on their native customs and traditions.

One respondent related, “*Nagtrabaho akong anak sa Digos, sa balay ni Pastor; upat na katuig wala nako siya makita. Makaayo man pud nga tua siya didto. Pero sa kadugay na niya didto nakalimtan na jud niya among kinaiya nga Ata Manobo* (My son works in Digos in Pastor’s household. It has been four years since I have last seen him. His being there would be good for him. But the length of time that he has stayed there has made him forget our Ata Manobo culture).”

Among the respondents was one of the wives of a chieftain. She pointed out that, “*Gusto nako nga makaeskwela akong mga apo. Pero kinabanglan linumad nga pamaagi sa pagtudlo kay lumad man mi dili man Cristiano. Importante sa amo nga dili mawala ang among pagkalumad* (I want my children to be educated. But the method of teaching should be indigenous because we are *lumad*, not Christians. It is important for us not to lose our *lumad* traditions).”

The women further elaborated on the value of education. Some of the statements made by several respondents reveal varied opinions: “*Importante yang edukasyon. Kung walay edukasyon di kaw makasabot kung aun mag-iningles kanmo, di kaw makakamang kung unan mga tuyu-on mo sang kinabubi* (Education is important. If you are not educated, you can not understand English, you can not achieve your goals in life).” “*Aun iban sitio na wa moasenso kay wa man silan mga propesyonal. Di parebo adi Sangab* (There are other sitios that have not progressed because there are no professionals there, unlike here in Sangab).” “*Yakatabang gayud yang mga yaka-edukar sang pagpabalik ng kanami kultura pinaagi sang Kalindugan. Yang mga edukado amo yang maga-edukar isab sang mga ignorante* (Those who have been educated have helped in reviving our culture through the Kalindugan. The educated members are the ones who will also educate the ignorant).”

Three of the respondents have completed college degrees. They echoed the view that the educated members of the



community should go back and help in the community. “*Yutanaw kami sang sitwastyon ng kanami lugar. Gusto nami ma-share yang yakat-unan nami sa college* (We are aware of the situation of our place. We want to share what we learned in college).” “*Yangandoy kami na makapasar sagaw sang teacher’s board aron makatudlo kami adi Sangab. Madayaw man yang mga Bisaya na maestra, yakatabang silan kanami, pero di gayud yaan silan magdugay ngadi Sangab* (We hope to pass the teacher’s board exam so we can teach here in Sangab. The Visayan teachers are good, they are very helpful. But they will definitely not stay long here in Sangab).”

The women added that a complete education for them is one that includes the preservation of native culture. Education is important in order to understand and interact effectively with the non-*lumad* communities. Formal education is good only if it fosters unity among the natives, and as long as it recognizes the necessity of preserving native culture and tradition.

The following perceptions were based on the older Mansaka women’s observations on the effects of formal education. The location of the Mansaka Village in Maragusan allows a greater interaction among the Mansaka and non-Mansaka populace. Since the elementary and high schools are accessible, most of the younger members of the community go to school within town. Many have been sent by their parents to pursue college education within and outside Maragusan. “*Madyaw yang edukasyon kung makatabang unta sa grupo. Pero yang magkaedukar da di da magsunod sang pagkanetibo. Gibiyaan da yang kultura, gipalabi da yang syudadnon* (Education is good if it could help the group. But those who are educated already no longer adopt their native culture and practices. They have neglected their culture and embraced the lifestyle of the city).” This sentiment was repeated by another respondent who said, “*Isa sang kadayawan ng pageskwela amo yang katigaman sang pagnegosyo. Di da kami mailad. Gipaeskwela ko yang kanak anak pagka HRM. Yang kadaut*

*lang dida magistorya ng Minansaka yang makaeskwela* (One of the advantages of having gone to school is the knowledge one gets about business. We can no longer be cheated. I send my daughter to study HRM. The disadvantage of getting educated is that they no longer use the Mansaka language).” A worse impression given by another elderly respondent was that “*Hambugero da yang ya-edukar da. Yabiyaan da nilan yang netibo na kinaiya* (Those who have been educated have become snobs. They have neglected their native ways).”

Most of the women though acknowledged the benefits of education. All the respondents agreed that education is imperative if one has to survive economically. Three of the respondents have completed college degrees and are currently working in government offices. They expressed that education empowers women. It provided them with more choices in the kind of lifestyle they would live. They admitted that formal education indeed focuses only on academic learning and not on the preservation of culture. However, they still consider education as essential so they can adjust with the changing times. One of the working women is connected with the Tribal Affairs Office in the Municipality of Maragusan. She revealed that the government has instituted programs that assist and provide opportunities for higher education which benefit the *lumad*. The major requirement for these scholarships is the retention of native culture and adherence to native practices by the scholar.

The older female members of the three (3) communities agreed with the younger female members’ view that formal education is necessary to achieve financial security and to eradicate poverty in their respective families and communities. From the opinions they have shared, the older female members established the following significant views on education: first, that the kind of education needed by the *lumad* is that which is in consonance with the unique cultural customs and traditions

of the community. This education should complement, enhance, and preserve their traditional values, not seek to replace them.

Second, as expressed by an Ata Manobo respondent, the methodology of education to be adopted should be *linumad*. This means that the methodology should meet the psychological and mental characteristics and capacities of the *lumad* learner. Methodology here refers to the medium of instruction and the teaching-learning styles within the classroom. Since this will require familiarity with the culture of the *lumad*, the best teacher should be one who is a member of the community herself. Thus, more effort should be given to encourage and assist *lumad* who intend to become teachers. They should also be prioritized in getting the teaching jobs offered in the schools located in their communities.

The economic concerns of the outside non-*lumad* society have trickled down to the *lumad* communities. Procurement of food and clothing has become a basic concern as well as the financial obligations that go with sending children to school. Although the *lumad* are self-sufficient in producing their own food from farm crops, there are fewer farm workers among the younger generation to do the job. Because of this, the *lumad* are compelled to purchase food instead of producing their own. To do this, they have to have money. Table 7 reveals that 32.61% of the older female *lumad* consider financial stability as a positive effect of education. By sending their children to school, the *lumad* projected a better lifestyle especially when their children are able to land jobs that assure them of regular compensation. The respondents admitted that work in the farm is difficult for older people. With the salaries their children will be getting, they may not need to labor much in order to produce food or to sell farm produce in exchange for money. Education, since it provides financial stability, can ensure a more comfortable lifestyle for the *lumad* as well as provide them the ability to adjust with the demands of the bigger society.

Education eliminates the stereotype of the *lumad* as ignorant. This comes second in the list with 28.26% of the respondents. Like the younger female *lumad*, the older respondents said that they are aware how lowly other people look at them being *lumad*. By going to school, and eventually getting a college degree, this stereotype can be eliminated and can boost the *lumad*'s confidence in themselves. An educated *lumad* is deemed by the rest of the community as somebody who can bring about positive changes. An educated *lumad* is somebody who can create and build linkages with influential personages in the bigger society and therefore initiate programs geared towards addressing the basic needs of the indigenous communities.

About 19.57% of the older female respondents believe that "education causes neglect of traditions." This is a major apprehension expressed by the older *lumad*. Most of the younger *lumad* openly adopt the behaviors copied from their contemporaries in the outside communities. The older members of the indigenous communities disclosed this concern based on observations of their own children. They admitted that they could not fully control the influences brought about by exposure to the kind of ideas learned in school. Education may have several positive effects, but the older *lumad* also fear that this could also cause neglect of their significant customs and traditions.

Another 19.57% of the respondents believed that education is a way of "uplifting the situation of the community" which they identified as a positive result of education. The educated members of the community shoulder the responsibility of preserving the *lumad* culture, promoting appreciation of it among the younger generation, and protecting the rights of the *lumad*. Being an educated *lumad* entails important responsibilities for the community. The more educated *lumad*

there are, the better it is for the whole community. It is the educated *lumad* who have the capacity to work to address the needs of the *lumad*.

It is interesting to note that despite the differences in their cultural affiliations, the respondents from the Ata Manobo, the Mandaya, and the Mansaka communities in the Davao Region express similarities in their views on education. They all agreed that the kind of education to be promoted among the *lumad* communities is that which aims to preserve their cultural customs and traditions. They all acknowledged the fact that the influx of non-*lumad* value systems has eroded the foundations of their cultural heritage especially among the younger members of the communities.

The Ata Manobo, Mandaya, and Mansaka females acknowledged the necessity of keeping their traditions alive and promoting their cultural values to the coming generations. Education is the tool to achieve this goal. As expressed in an interview with the older females, “education molds the attitude and behaviors of the young. They need to develop good values to become productive members of society.” The respondents also expressed that their cultural values should be properly instilled in the young because these are what keep them distinctly *lumad*.

The respondents asserted that education, to be effective, should be geared towards the continuation and preservation of the efficiency in the conduct of domestic duties, and the appreciation of cultural values and traditions. The current educational system, if it has to take the place of the *lumad*’s traditional education, must not only promote economic gain but also instill moral principles founded on a strong appreciation of one’s cultural identity and cultural roles.

## Findings

The following findings are noted:

1. Schools have been established in areas where there are IP communities with the end of making education accessible for the IP. Of the 90 respondents, 44 or 48.88% of the total number, are currently studying. All of the 44 belong to the younger female category. About 23 respondents or 25.55% of the total number, all of whom belong to the older female category, have not gone to school. Seven (7) respondents or 7.77%, and six (6) or 6.66% of the respondents, used to go to school but stopped due to marriage and financial problems, respectively. Ten (10) respondents or 11.11% who belong to the older female category have graduated from college courses and are all currently working.
2. Tradition has imposed typical roles for the female *lumad*, which are basically limited to the performance of domestic tasks. Like their contemporaries from other parts of the world, the female *lumad* of Davao recognize that the quality of life in their homes and their communities depend on their management skills. These roles include females' responsibility to see to it that the needs of everyone are taken care of. Both within the home and in the farm, the females have shown their efficiency in the performance of their tasks. This imposed traditional role is related to their view that education of women should promote skills that enhance their capacities to maintain order at home as well as assist the husband in his economic duties and undertakings. The younger female *lumad* are expected to serve and assist their parents. Upon marriage, their duties shift to the paternal home.
3. Sufficient education among the female *lumad* includes knowledge of their cultural customs, traditions, practices, beliefs, and values. Likewise, the daily

activities and tasks performed by the female *lumad* which are focused on household chores as well as farm work represent skills that are traditionally considered as sufficient education for the female *lumad*.

4. The female *lumad* from both age categories consider the preservation of their traditions as the most immediate perceived needs that has to be addressed. At home, the younger females are still instructed by their elders on their traditional tasks and roles.
5. The teaching and the medical careers are the most popular careers identified by the younger respondents. They affirm that their communities need teachers and nurses to take care of educational and health concerns in their villages. The choices for both the teaching and the medical careers are likewise reflective of the domestic roles a female *lumad* performs in the family and in the community. These include the rearing of children, which is related to teaching, and healing of the sick, which is medical in nature. By choosing the teaching career, the younger respondents acknowledge the importance of instilling significant values and knowledge to the younger generation.
6. The factors considered by the younger respondents in choosing careers include: needs of the community, personal choice, monetary compensation, job opportunities, intellectual capacity, and family pressure. It is significant to note that both the Ata Manobo and the Mansaka respondents consider the needs of the community as the most important factor influential in their career prospects. This will lead back to their choice of the teaching and medical careers which they consider as direly needed by their communities. The Mandaya respondents express the freedom they enjoy

in deciding what they would want to be in the future. Majority claimed that their career prospects are based on their personal choices.

7. The younger respondents of this study all affirm their plan to pursue higher education after graduating from high school. They view education as a tool to promote the welfare of their communities. They also view education as a means of surviving the changing times, and being able to understand the mechanisms of the bigger society.
8. The younger respondents perceive the following as the effects of formal education:
  - a. Education helps promote the welfare of the community.
  - b. Education enables one to assist the family financially.
  - c. Education provides a stable lifestyle.
  - d. Education develops capacity to help others.
  - e. Education improves one's self-esteem.
9. The older female respondents are anxious about the impact of education on their cultural traditions. This anxiety, which refers to the respondents' view that "education causes neglect of traditions," is not expressed by the younger respondents who focus more on the economic and social benefits of education.
10. The older respondents, although apprehensive of the effects of education on their native customs and traditions, acknowledge the need to send their children to school so they can assist the family financially. They perceive education as instrumental in addressing the need to adjust and interact with the bigger society. They perceive education as an important factor that will enable them to preserve their native customs and traditions through the initiative of the educated



members of their community. Moreover, the older female *lumad* believe that education should further enhance the capacities of the *lumad* learners in tasks related to home management.

11. The older respondents consider the preservation of their cultures and traditions as essential. This is a factor that puts into focus the deep concern of the elder females for the survival of the cultural identity despite the influx of influences from the bigger society.

## Conclusions

The findings of this study yielded the following conclusions:

1. The female *lumad* view education as a means of preserving their cultural customs and traditions while at the same time providing them with the opportunity to live a more comfortable lifestyle. However, they also express apprehension over the tendency of the exposure as a cause in the neglect of traditions, especially among the younger generation. The younger females are no longer as adept and knowledgeable of their native customs and traditions, and are less appreciative of these as the older females. The older females strive to compensate for this predicament by inculcating native traditions and values to the young in the home.
2. The female *lumad* also view education as necessary to equip the *lumad* with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and socio-political connections that will enable them to address social and environmental problems. They assert that the best teachers for them would be those coming from their own ranks, *lumad* like themselves, who have a good grasp of their culture's customs and traditions.

3. Education, as viewed by the female *lumad*, boosts the confidence of the *lumad* in their ability to decide what is good for them, and to set goals that will eventually uplift the situation of the community. Because of this, the educated *lumad* are highly respected. The rest of the community depends on these educated members to facilitate development within the community as well as preserve their cultural customs and traditions.
4. Education is also viewed as a means of eliminating the stereotype given to *lumad* as ignorant. This concept of ignorance is based on the inability of many *lumad* to read, write, and count. Being able to go to school provides the opportunity of learning these basic skills that the *lumad* consider as essential in surviving the rigors of the bigger society.
5. The kind of education needed by indigenous learners is one that recognizes the uniqueness of their traditional culture. Even the older members of the community admit that their children, the younger generation, can best be instructed when they are familiar with the medium of instruction used, the values taught, and the methods employed by teachers. Some of the older respondents express willingness to go to school if the curriculum is *linumad*. They recognize the weakening of the value of tradition and appreciation of it among the young.

## Recommendations

The issue on women and education is extensive and needs further attention. What this research has accomplished is still limited considering the scope of women studies and those involving the indigenous people of the Philippines. The following are thus recommended:

1. The adult learning program should be promoted in as many *lumad* communities as possible. This will address the need of female *lumad* to learn basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics.
2. It is evident in this study that many young *lumad* desire to pursue higher education. Because of the lack of financial support, many of them, especially those with leadership and intellectual potentials, fail to go to college after high school. Varied scholarship opportunities should be made available for these young *lumad*.
3. Mindanao is home to many IP communities. More studies and in-depth researches should be conducted in other communities within the Davao Region as well as in communities in the other regions of Mindanao.
4. This research can be treated as basis for a further inquiry into the educational and career accomplishments of the participants. A follow-up study is essential to find out whether the young women from the three IP groups have indeed pursued their educational and career prospects, and if they have, whether they are able to accomplish what they seek to accomplish in terms of the driving factors they have identified in this study.
5. To effectively address the educational needs of the IPs, it is essential that the Philippine educational system should recognize their cultural characteristics. There may be a need to reconstruct the curricula or create one which directly addresses the goals of the IPs.
6. Both the NCCA and the NCIP should further promote programs and projects that apply to the concerns of indigenous women. Aside from putting focus on livelihood programs and tourism, both organizations should likewise tackle issues that deal with the women's well being and dignity.

7. Both the NCIP and CHED should actively disseminate information on the availability of scholarship opportunities for *lumad* directly to the communities.
8. Teaching items available in schools situated in the *lumad* communities should be given to qualified graduates coming from the community itself.
9. An IP curriculum is yet to be implemented. In its drafting process, the IPs should have representatives coming from their ranks because they are the ones who truly know the needs of their communities and their people.
10. Tribal festivals should be considered as a venue for the IPs to share and promote the uniqueness of their culture to the outside communities, not as a means to promote the economic potentials of indigenous products and traditions. The local government should assist in the preservation of traditional cultural values of IPs in their respective areas of responsibilities. Aside from supporting the Schools for Living Traditions, the government unit should create a committee responsible for the monitoring of the educational needs of the *lumad*. **B**

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## **Appendix**

### ***Questionnaire***

#### **Views on Education among Selected Female Members of the Ata Manobo, Mandaya, and Mansaka Communities in the Davao Region**

*Ang Mga Pangbunabuna Mabitungod sa Edukasyon sa mga Piniling Kababaiban nga Ata Manobo, Mandaya, ug Mansaka sa Davao Region*

#### **Background Data:**

Cultural Community (*Tribo*): \_\_\_\_\_

Age (*Edad*): \_\_\_\_\_

Educational Status (*Nabuman nga Grado sa Pag-eskwela*): \_\_\_\_\_

Civil Status (*Dalaga, Minyo, Biyuda*): \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Guide Questions:**

1. What tasks/role do you carry out in the household? (*Unsa ang imong mga bulubaton sa balay?*)
2. What is considered as traditional education for lumad women? (*Unsa ang kinaraan nga pagtuon para sa mga lumad nga kababaiban?*)
3. What do you perceive as the needs of your community? (*Sa imong panlantaw, unsa ang mga pangbinabanglanon sa imong tribo?*)
4. Do you agree that education is important to your community? (*Uyon ka ba nga kinabanglanon ang edukasyon sa inyong tribo?*)
5. What are the effects of education to your culture? (*Unsa ang mga epekto sa edukasyon sa inyong lumadnong kinaiya?*)
6. Do you agree that traditional education is sufficient? (*Uyon ka ba nga ang lumadnong edukasyon busto ra?*)  
*Why? (Ngano?)*