



# IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM FOR PANTAWID PAMILYANG PILIPINO PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES: A CASE STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

The Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) has been implemented in various communities as a poverty alleviation strategy, aiming to enhance the socio-economic conditions of marginalized groups. This study explored the implementation of the SLP in Barangay Bonbon for Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program beneficiaries, with a focus on the issues they encountered and how they were able to address the issues using a qualitative case study design. A purposeful sampling method was used to select seven (7) participants who are active 4Ps beneficiaries and 2 barangay officials. The data were collected using Focus Group Discussion (FGD), In-depth Interview (IDI), and Key Informant Interview (KII). The HyperRESEARCH software was utilized to help the researcher identify codes, categories, and themes. Based on the narratives of the participants, four themes emerged such as: organizational process, beneficiaries' welfare, the meaning of membership, and addressing organizational issues. These findings indicate that the implementation of the SLP has provided the participants with improved opportunities for livelihood, skills development, additional support for education, and a financial safety net. However, challenges such as irregular monitoring, inventory, and auditing have hindered the program's effectiveness. The study recommends strengthening monitoring mechanisms and cultivating stronger partnerships to support livelihood development initiatives, thus contributing to the success of the association and creating a better impact on the community.

*Keywords: Case Study, Implementation and Monitoring, Partnership, Sustainable Livelihood Program, Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program*

## Introduction

Poverty is a complex issue. It is a state of being where people lack the financial resources and essentials needed for a decent standard of living. This includes things like food, water, shelter, clothing, healthcare, and education.

The people affected by this problem are the families living in extreme poverty since they cannot provide for the immediate needs of their families. Poverty remains one of the biggest problems in the world. There are conditional cash transfer program that provide cash subsidies and help poor families meet their needs.

In the Philippines, there are a lot of social protection programs which are offered by the government to help alleviate people from poverty, improve the education of the children, and increase the health and nutrition of households especially pregnant women and children aged 0-18 years old. The most known social protection program is the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program formerly known as Ahon Pamilyang Pilipino widely known by the public as 4Ps. It is the most expensive and generous social protection program of the government (Canare, 2017).

The 4Ps program is considered the Philippines' flagship social assistance program. The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) of the Philippines has been piloted since 2007 but its implementation was widely recognized in January 2008. This program aims to provide monetary assistance for Filipino families who are living in extreme poverty and for them to achieve a certain human development goal given by the government. It was influenced by the success of CCT programs in other countries wherein it has helped millions of people across the world alleviate poverty by providing cash grants and educational seminars (Reyes and Tabuga, 2012). Here in the Philippines, the Conditional Cash Transfer program is headed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and it is coined as the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program widely and locally known as the 4Ps.

Micro-enterprises and self-employment are major sources of employment and income for poor and low-income households in the Philippines. In 2017, 28 percent of employed members belonging to the bottom third of the income distribution were self-employed (Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA] 2018). Moreover, 56.6 percent of families in the said income group engage in entrepreneurial activities, which accounted for 25.2 percent of the group's total income (PSA 2018).

One of the largest issues facing the globe today is poverty. Fortunately, some programs offer conditional cash transfers that give financial subsidies and assist low-income families in meeting their needs. Poverty is a worldwide social problem. Many countries in the world are affected by this type of social problem due to varied causes. Hence, Social protection schemes are considered a successful instrument to reduce poverty in most countries. In the Philippines, the importance of a social protection system to build resilience among Filipinos is emphasized in the 2017-2022 Philippine Development Plan (PDP). Since 2011, the Philippines' Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has focused on providing opportunities for income-generating activities and livelihood development through the implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP).

Wherefore, The SLP is linked to the country's conditional cash transfer scheme, known locally as the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, or 4Ps. The 4Ps have one of the most comprehensive poverty-targeting databases in the world and benefit about 20% of the population, catering to the majority of the nation's poor. The Pantawid Pamilya is therefore central to the Philippine government's poverty reduction and social protection strategy.

The SLP is a capability-building program of the DSWD that provides access to opportunities that increase the productivity of the livelihood assets of the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized communities, to improve their socioeconomic well-being. The program aims to enhance human assets through tech-voc and life skills training, enrich natural assets that protect and contribute to community livelihoods, extend social assets through membership in SLP associations and network linkages, expand financial assets through seed capital and access to credit, and establish or acquire physical assets for livelihood operations. Under SLP, beneficiaries are given the option to register in either the micro-enterprise development track or the employment facilitation track after participating in social preparation and capacity-building activities.

In this connection, the study has the following objectives: (1) to determine how is the SLP being implemented in Bonbon, Cagayan De Oro City; (2) to determine the issues encountered in the implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program; and (3) to determine how these issues were addressed.

### Background of the Study

In 2011, DSWD launched the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) to provide livelihood assistance to poor, primarily Pantawid households. The livelihood assistance is in the form of microenterprise development (MD) and employment facilitation (EF). The MD track is derived from the previous SEA-K (Self Employment Assistance Kaunlaran) program of the DSWD, a microcredit program that provides small loans to the poor to encourage entrepreneurial activity and savings generation. On the other hand, the EF track is patterned after the DOLE strategy of job matching and skills training to facilitate employment.

In the initial years of the SLP, rapid assessments were undertaken to look into the development of community-driven enterprises that will improve the participation of households and link communities to markets and financial institutions (PinoyME 2011). The PIDS also provided an earlier assessment of the implementation processes of the SEA-K and EF tracks in 2014 and 2015, respectively (Ballesteros, et.al 2014; Ballesteros, et al. 2015). The assessment studies noted the need to improve the delivery of program services and to assess DSWD's capacity, especially its field personnel, to perform both microcredit and employment facilitation activities at the same time. It was also reported that beneficiaries primarily choose their tracks to participate in either the microenterprise or employment track. DSWD does not have characteristic-based criteria to determine whether a beneficiary is appropriate for a specific track.

DSWD adopted some policy changes thereafter to enhance program implementation. One major reform was the strengthening of community-driven development. Instead of simply resource-based and market-driven initiatives, community development efforts are now focused on results-based innovations and sustainable interventions. Guided participation, internal convergence, and multi-stakeholder approach are given greater emphasis. This also changed the design of track selection and project identification from one that is beneficiary-driven to one that is guided by the

Community Core group (CCG), which is a barangay-based volunteer group composed of organizations and persons in the locality.

Another major change was the shift from a micro-credit scheme to a capacity-building strategy for those in the MD track. The seed capital fund is given in the form of grants to organized groups of beneficiaries to build entrepreneurial skills and the savings capacity of members. Group enterprises are strongly encouraged as well as other activities that will help build cohesion within groups.

For the EF track, the DSWD has strengthened partnerships with both public and private manpower services and training institutions especially those that are linked to employment in the private sector. DSWD also encouraged higher outputs for the EF track. The low take-up rate for employment among Pantawid households has been reported in earlier studies. This was found surprising because employment is usually preferred by households since it is associated with lower risk than microenterprises. This view has also been supported by the labor force data.

### Statement of the Problem

The Sustainable Livelihood Program, also known as SLP, is a community-based program, which provides capacity building to improve the program participants' socio-economic status. As a component of the Convergence Strategy, the program aims to serve the beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilya, hoping to sustain and expand beyond the five-year intervention the socio-economic benefits gained. (DSWD)

Before being called SLP, the Department of Social Welfare and Development already implemented the Self-Employment Assistance Kaunlaran (SEA-K) Program. It is one of the core social protection programs geared to combat poverty. The SEA-K Program is an investment in building social capital at the community level to increase the access of marginalized households to financial services. It has the goal of establishing community-based, self-managed, and sustainable credit facilities to enable the economically active poor to have continued access to credit. (DSWD)

Sustainable Livelihood Programs (SLPs) offer tremendous potential to empower communities and promote long-term economic security. However, the successful implementation of these programs can be hampered by various challenges. This research aims to investigate the specific issues encountered during the implementation of SLP for Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program beneficiaries in Barangay Bonbon. Unresolved issues encountered during program implementation can significantly hinder this success.

### Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the Social Contract Theory by Locke and Rousseau (1762) as cited by Laskar (2013) which is an arrangement between the people and the government to achieve the common good for the benefit of all. It is commonly understood as the surrendering of an individual's rights to the government by honoring its authority and in exchange, the government will then provide security and common welfare, which is advantageous to both the state and the citizens. Rousseau (1762) states that a society's political aspect should be divided into two parts: (1) sovereign and (2) government. The first one should be a sovereign state composed of the whole

population including the women since most of the time they are being neglected especially in a patriarchal form of government. It should represent the general will of the people and shall act as the legislative power within the jurisdiction of the state. The second division of the political aspect focuses more on the government, wherein it should be separated from the first division. These two divisions are essential to the state since the sovereign cannot take in hand specific matters such as the making, amending, and application of the law which is the primary work of the government. On the other hand, a government must be separated from the sovereign body and shall not intervene with it at any cost. Under some circumstances wherein the government interferes with the sovereignty of the people outside its jurisdiction, the people have the right to abolish such government and replace it with a new government. Rousseau also added that the nature of government shall be based on the size of its territory since a government is equally strong as the citizens, and the bigger the territory of a state is then the more effort the government must exert over its citizens to keep an orderly and well-managed state.

Jean Jacques Rousseau's Social Contract Theory may be applied to the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) because the said program is a great example of a social contract wherein the state provides cash grants to poor households to meet their basic needs. In exchange, the beneficiaries abide by the conditions set by the program. This theory can also be applied in this research since the objective of this research is focused on women's empowerment. She stated in his theory that if allowed to shape society as men had, women could very well change the world. Whatever biological differences between men and women existed, the so-called weaker sex had shown repeatedly that they were capable of greatness.

### Empowerment Theory

Freire (n.d) states that the empowered person, group, or institution are the ones who perform on their own, the changes and actions that cause them to grow and become stronger. The power is not given to them but instead comes from them. For Freire the term derives from the idea of "liberation of the oppressed" (Freire, 2002). Empowerment is in this case seen as the Freirian notion of the conquest of freedom by persons who have been subordinated to a position of economic or physical dependence or any other nature. According to Freire (1992), the oppressed people, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his or her lines of action, are afraid of freedom. Freedom would require them to reject their image and fill their place with autonomy and responsibility. Freedom is acquired by conquest, not as a gift, and therefore, it must be constantly sought. Freedom is not an idea located outside the human being, Nor it is an idea that becomes a myth. It is undoubtedly the indispensable condition of the search for human complementation.

### Purpose of the Study

The study aimed 1) to determine how is the Sustainable Livelihood Program being implemented in Bonbon, Cagayan De Oro City; 2) to determine the issues encountered in the implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program, and 3) to determine how these issues were addressed. This study aims to understand both the implementation of SLP and the challenges the participants encountered.

## Research Questions

The statement of the problem and the purpose of the study have guided the researcher to formulate the following research questions:

1. How is the SLP being implemented in Bonbon, Cagayan De Oro City?
2. What are the issues encountered in the implementation of the SLP?
3. How are these issues addressed?

## Methods

This chapter presents a discussion of the research design, locale, sample population, instrument, data collection procedure, and the statistical treatment that will be used in the study. The most appropriate method will be used to come up with the accurate and needed information.

### Research Design

The researcher employed a qualitative design particularly case study design which is used to examine a person, group, community, or institution. Researchers often use a bounded theory approach that confines the case study in terms of time or space. To conduct the case study, the researcher used multiple sources of data, such as observation, interviews, and documents. All participants chosen must share a unifying factor, which means they all must have a direct or indirect connection to the research question or subject being studied. After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed it to identify common or prominent themes.

Stake (1995) defines case study as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi). Like other qualitative research methods, case studies provide a holistic view of their context.

### Research Setting

The study will be conducted in Bonbon, Cagayan De Oro City where the 4Ps and SLP Beneficiaries were located and where their types of livelihood sustainable program was operated.

### Sample and Sampling Procedure

This study utilized the purposeful sampling approach to select 9 participants who have direct experience with the program. This approach enabled the researcher to gather precise and focused data. The participants are Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries who are registered, active, willing to undergo training, with existing businesses, and committed to abide by the bylaws. It is widely understood that the selection of Pantawid Pamilya beneficiaries was determined through the Listahanan, which identified individuals deemed as poor and in need of interventions to enhance their overall well-being.

The Sampaguita SLPA was chosen because the association has a well-established track record and reputation for implementing sustainable livelihood programs. This can ensure that the research will have access to reliable and experienced participants who can offer valuable insights into the challenges, successes, and impacts of the association's initiatives.

## Data Collection

The researcher gathered data through Key In-depth Interviews (KII), In-depth Interviews (IDI), and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). All interviews used open-ended questions using a Visayan dialect to facilitate a deeper exploration of participants' experiences.

The tool being used was an interview questionnaire that underwent a rigorous review process that gathered data based on the experiences of the participants. To ensure a standardized data collection process, the researcher adhered to a strict interview protocol. This included distributing request letters within the barangay to the participants and following up consistently to schedule face-to-face interviews. Before commencing each interview, the researcher provided participants with a copy of the interview protocol and the informed consent form. The content of both documents was carefully explained to ensure participants fully understood the purpose of the interview and their rights as participants. With the informed consent of the participants, all interview sessions were audio-recorded to ensure the capture of every detail in their responses.

Reiterating the importance of confidentiality, the researcher reminded participants that all personal data would be kept confidential as previously explained during the informed consent process. Following the study's completion, all collected data will be deleted one year after the study concludes.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis is the backbone of any solid research project. It is what transforms raw data into knowledge and understanding. It deals with non-numerical data. This data captures the experiences, feelings, and perspectives of participants.

The researcher used thematic coding to identify recurring themes and patterns in the data. Data gathered from various sources were collated and organized using the coding guide of Saldaña (2018). The data analysis followed a thematic approach. Codes were first identified within the raw data, representing recurring concepts or ideas. These codes were then clustered into categories based on similarities. Finally, common categories were organized into overarching themes that captured the key insights emerging from the data. These themes were then interpreted in the context of the research questions and objectives. To ensure the validity of the findings, comparisons were made with existing literature, relevant theories, and other credible information sources.

This study employs an intrinsic case study approach. As explained by Stake, we are interested in the case, not because by studying it we learn about other cases or some general problems, but because we need to learn about the particular case. (Stake, 1995, p. 3). The researcher was interested to understand the specific case which is the implementation of the sustainable livelihood program.

## Summary of Findings

This research study, Implementation of Sustainable Livelihood Program for 4Ps beneficiaries involved the following themes: organizational process, beneficiaries' welfare, meaning of membership, and addressing organizational issues.

The organization process in a sustainable livelihood program (SLP) research study is the critical first step that lays the groundwork for the implementation of SLP in Barangay Bonbon. The organizational process defines the criteria and procedures for selecting participants in the SLP. This includes identifying eligibility criteria, such as income levels or vulnerability status, and establishing procedures for application and selection. The effectiveness of the selection process is influenced by the clarity and transparency of these organizational processes.

The participants narrated how the Sustainable Livelihood Program recognizes the need better uplift the living conditions of the beneficiaries and be able to cater to their needs. It ensures that its livelihood interventions are backed with appropriate innovations and remains responsive to the vast needs and welfare of its beneficiaries. Participants talked about life experiences and how their lives benefited from the program. Changing their welfare and financial status as it caters to their needs in terms of finances and improves it positively. Beneficiaries' welfare for the participants means client response, knowing the benefits of the program and its competitive edge, and providing livelihood opportunities.

Resilience, tasking, gratitude, team support, uniting members, and willingness to learn are integral to the meaning of membership as they embody the spirit of collaboration, growth, and shared responsibility within the program. These traits cultivate a supportive and collaborative environment where members feel valued, motivated, and confident in their ability to contribute to the success of SLP implementation. This sense of belonging and shared purpose strengthens the meaning of membership and creates a team that can achieve great things.

The implementation of the SLP faced numerous challenges, including auditing, resource accumulation, conflicts related to livelihood, controlling expenditures, and the pivotal role of permanent cashiers.

Responding to the needs of every member and its association leads to successful management. It entails accountability, accepting challenges, and giving importance to education will help in the management of conflicts.

## Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusion was drawn from the merged themes of implementing the SLP. This study provides us with a glimpse of the experiences of the implementation of the sustainable livelihood program. The implementation of the SLP brings solutions to the financial status of the beneficiaries, however as always in an association it is unavoidable to experience issues and conflicts. The four themes that were extracted from the data embody the implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program for the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino program. The association manages the issues and conflicts in the association. Everyone must cooperate and practice transparency.

The SLP is a capability-building program of the DSWD that provides access to opportunities that increase the productivity of the livelihood assets of the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized



communities, to improve their socioeconomic well-being. Under SLP, beneficiaries are given the option to register in either the micro-enterprise development track or the employment facilitation track after participating in social preparation and capacity-building activities. However, as it goes along, some issues and problems cannot be avoided. To be successful, these issues must be addressed to come up with a better solution that will benefit the 4P's members.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions presented, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. The Implementing Project Development Officer (IPDO) and Monitoring Project Development Officer (MPDO) may strengthen partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and private sector organizations, to leverage their resources and expertise in supporting livelihood development initiatives.
2. That City/ Municipal Link may strengthen their monitoring of the status of the association and provide interventions to the delinquent members.
3. The Department of Social Welfare and Development may provide training and capacity-building opportunities for program implementer to enhance their skills and knowledge in livelihood development. This will improve the quality of implementation and increase the program's impact
4. The LGU may strengthen coordination and promote greater community engagement and participation in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of SLP activities. This can help ensure that interventions are culturally appropriate and responsive to local needs.
5. That future researchers may conduct a similar study particularly the livelihood program to improve their existing micro-enterprises or pursue other enterprise activities with market opportunities leading to an in-depth investigation of successful livelihood and management of the said association.

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