

**Sustainable Livelihood Program for *Purok Arao, Barangay Vista Alegre,*
*Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, Philippines***

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Abstract

This paper assessed the workability of a sustainable livelihood program for poor urban dwellers relocated to *Purok Arao, Barangay Vista Alegre*, in *Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, Philippines* in line with the government's poverty-alleviation initiatives. The program's viability was analyzed in reference to respondents' socio-economic profile, skills training needs, and a host of anticipated issues and concerns within the community. Data needed were collected using a self-made survey questionnaire, which was administered to randomly sampled respondents (N=817; n=269). Said data were later complemented by a focus-group discussion (FGD) with ten (10) selected participants fairly representing all segments of the community. Initial data analysis characterized the respondents' demographic profile with the older residents outnumbering the younger ones, the females surpassing the males, and the married outstripping the single, widowed, and separated ones combined. Additional data reveal that less than 50% of the residents are high school graduates, but 77% of them own a house. The majority recorded a meager family income of Php8,450, which was attributable to their low educational attainment and limited skills in cooking, personal services, and construction work. Subsequent analysis revealed the respondents' preferred livelihood skills in food and beverage, baking/pastry making, dressmaking, tailoring, culinary arts, automotive servicing, food preservation, electrical servicing, welding, beauty care, cosmetology, massage therapy, and communication and information technology. These findings call for a methodical selection of target beneficiaries, continuous skills training development program, cultivation of entrepreneurial mindset, and strengthening partnership with LGUs and other NGOs to bankroll the proposed sustainable development livelihood program.

Keywords: Sustainable livelihood program, poverty-reduction, *Purok Arao, Barangay Vista Alegre, Bacolod City*

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Introduction

Nature of the Problem

It is imperative for poverty eradication initiatives to be embedded into national policies and programs consistent with internationally accepted development targets. This assertion is implied by an article published in the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020) webpage emphasizing the need to strengthen UN's leadership role in promoting international cooperation for global development. The same article claims that a social perspective on development requires addressing poverty in all its forms and dimensions. Until this very moment, however, this dream remains to be the greatest global challenge.

In 2015, the United Nations reported that more than 736 million people live below the international poverty line. The report also highlighted that around 10 per cent of the world population is living in extreme poverty and struggling to fulfill the most basic needs like health, education, and access to water and sanitation, to name a few. It also denoted a condition that there are 122 women aged 25 to 34 living in poverty for every 100 men of the same age group. More than 160 million children are expected to be at risk of continuing to live in extreme poverty by 2030. According to a 2020 report by U.N. Development Program, recent estimates for global poverty are that 9.2% of the world, or 689 million people, live in extreme poverty on \$1.90 or less a day. These numbers are calculated based on income and a person's ability to meet basic needs. However, when looking beyond income to people experiencing deprivation in health, education, and living standards, 1.3 billion people in 107 developing countries are multidimensionally poor (World Vision, 2020).

Back home, Yap (2016) reported in a local newspaper that more than 26 million Filipinos remain poor with almost half, or a little more than 12 million, living in extreme poverty and lacking the means to feed themselves. It was then predicted that by 2018, 16.6% of the population will live below the national poverty line. The proportion of employed population below \$1.90 purchasing power parity in a day in 2019 is 2.7%. Unemployment rate is 2.2 in 2019 (ADB, 2019). Moreover, the World Vision (2020) has since emphasized that poverty can be a trap. For someone to get out of poverty, they need opportunities such as education, clean water, medical facilities nearby, and financial resources. Without these basic elements, poverty becomes a cycle from one generation to the next. If families are too poor to send their

children to school, their children will have a difficult time earning a decent kind of income when they grow up.

Current State of Knowledge

Theory of Change

This study is anchored on Carol Weiss's (1995) theory of change, a way to describe the set of assumptions that explain both the mini-steps toward long-term goal and the connections between program activities and outcomes observed each step of the way. This suggests strong adherence to meticulous planning that involves a clear statement of future condition a program wishes to achieve, in this case, poverty eradication in the village in focus. Integral to planning are specific mini steps, actions and the means to achieve predetermined objectives, the resources needed, to include constraints, and an impartial evaluation of the overall program implementation. Along this line, Allen (2016) reiterated the need to clearly articulate what a program aims to achieve. Connel and Kubisch (1998), for their part, added that this approach to comprehensive community initiative (CCI) evaluation is a systematic and cumulative study of the links between activities, outcomes, and contexts of the initiative. In this paper, context refers to that specific problem UN and the City Government of Bacolod wish to solve, the audiences who will bankroll the program as well as those intended beneficiaries, and all the steps needed to change the status quo, among others.

Sustainable Livelihood Approach to Poverty Eradication

The UNDP (1997) report stated that the sustainable livelihoods idea was first introduced by the Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development as a way of linking socioeconomic and ecological considerations in a cohesive, policy-relevant structure. Furthermore, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) expanded the concept, especially in the context of Agenda 21, and advocated for the achievement of sustainable livelihoods as a broad goal for poverty eradication. It stated that sustainable livelihoods could serve as 'an integrating factor that allows policies to address 'development, sustainable resource management, and poverty eradication simultaneously.'

Krantz (2001) wrote that the concept of Sustainable Livelihood (SL) is an attempt to go beyond the conventional definitions and approaches to poverty eradication. These had been found to be too narrow because they focused only on certain aspects or manifestations of poverty, such as low income, or did not consider other vital aspects of poverty such as vulnerability and social exclusion. It is now recognized that more attention must be paid to the various factors and processes which either constrain or enhance poor people's ability to make a living in an economically, ecologically, and socially sustainable manner. SL concept offers a more coherent and integrated approach to poverty.

A livelihood, according to Serrat (2008) comprises the capabilities, assets, and activities for means of living. It is deemed sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintains or enhances its capabilities, assets, and activities both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource

base. He further discussed that the sustainable livelihoods approach is a way of thinking about the objectives, scope, and priorities for development activities. It is based on evolving thinking about the way the poor and vulnerable live their lives and the importance of policies and institutions. The approach is a helpful guide in the formulation of development activities that are people-centered, responsive and participatory, multilevel, conducted in partnership with the public and private sectors, dynamic, and sustainable.

Moreover, Krantz (2001) emphasized the three insights into poverty which underpin this new approach. The first is the realization that while economic growth may be essential for poverty reduction, there is not an automatic relationship between the two since it all depends on the capabilities of the poor to take advantage of expanding economic opportunities. Secondly, there is the realization that poverty — as conceived by the poor themselves — is not just a question of low income, but also includes other dimensions such as bad health, illiteracy, lack of social services, etc., as well as a state of vulnerability and feelings of powerlessness in general. Finally, it is now recognized that the poor themselves often know their situation and needs best and must therefore be involved in the design of policies and project intended to better their lot.

The sustainable livelihoods approach discussed by Serrat (2008) also facilitates the identification of practical priorities for actions that are based on the views and interests of those concerned but they are not a panacea. It does not replace other tools, such as participatory development, sector-wide approaches, or integrated rural development. However, it makes the connection between people and the overall enabling environment that influences the outcomes of livelihood strategies. It brings attention to bear on the inherent potential of people in terms of their skills, social networks, and access to physical and financial resources, and ability to influence core institutions.

This study recognizes the importance of active participation of the beneficiaries in the designing of policies, projects and training intended for them. Recognizing their participation poses a great chance of getting their commitment in the program and will improve their performance in the project since they are given the chance to share what they know.

Since poverty problem is multidimensional, this study also recognizes the involvement of the local government units (LGUs), other governments' agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector, community-oriented organizations and other stakeholders in the delivery of basic services, livelihood program and access to resources that will not only reduce poverty but will also improve living conditions.

Reducing Poverty Worldwide

According to the World Vision (2020), since 1990, more than 1 billion people have been lifted out of extreme poverty and child mortality has dropped by more than half. Reducing extreme poverty rates was a central goal in the Millennium Development Goals- eight goals signed by all United Nations member states in 2000

with a goal to achieve them by 2015. Since then, the world has made much progress in reducing global poverty.

Ending poverty in all its forms is the first of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promises to leave no one behind and to reach those furthest behind first. Meeting this ambitious development agenda requires visionary policies for sustainable, inclusive, sustained and equitable economic growth, supported by full employment and decent work for all, social integration, declining inequality, rising productivity and a favorable environment. It is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development (UN, 2019).

The Sustainable Development Goals are a plan of action for countries worldwide under United Nations to unify in a global partnership for the benefit of people, the planet, and prosperity (World Vision, 2015).

Efforts to Reduce Poverty in the Philippines

The ADB report in 2009, stated that poverty and inequality have been recurrent challenges in the Philippines and have again come to the fore in the wake of the current global financial crisis and rising food, fuel, and commodity prices experienced in 2008. The main causes of poverty in the country in that report were identified to include: low to moderate economic growth for the past 40 years; low growth elasticity of poverty reduction; weakness in employment generation and the quality of jobs generated; failure to fully develop the agriculture sector; high inflation during crisis periods; high levels of population growth; high and persistent levels of inequality (incomes and assets), which dampen the positive impacts of economic expansion; and recurrent shocks and exposure to risks such as economic crisis, conflicts, natural disasters, and “environmental poverty”.

The importance of a social protection system to build resilience among Filipinos is emphasized in the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022, the first medium-term plan to be anchored on a national long-term vision, or AmBisyon Natin 2040, which represents the collective vision and aspirations of Filipinos for themselves and for the country. Program actions under the framework of change is based on inclusiveness and sustainability and have shown positive change. The plan envisions Philippines as a society with a stable family and well developed and resilient communities (NEDA, 2017).

The paper of Peres (2018), she mentioned that the 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). The SLP is a capability-building program for poor, vulnerable, and marginalized families and individuals focused on generating employment among poor households and moving highly vulnerable households into sustainable livelihoods and economic stability. To make the program succeed, household receive support up to two years after receiving inputs, Project Development Officer (PDO) providing technical assistance where needed. During the

period, the productive projects are assisted to become self-reliant and they can seek support from other programs and services.

The same year, Acosta et al. (2018), in the study *The Philippines Sustainable Livelihood Program: Providing and expanding access to employment and livelihood opportunities*, indicated that the objective of the sustainable livelihood program (SLP) is to reduce poverty and inequality by generating employment among poor households and by moving highly vulnerable households into sustainable livelihoods and toward economic stability. He mentioned that the SLP has two tracks: the micro-enterprise development track that provides access to funds to beneficiaries as well as training to set up their micro-enterprise and the employment facilitation track that provides employable individuals access to locally available jobs through public-private partnerships. According to him, the program has grown from serving 46,000 families in 2011 to 340,000 in 2015, and 166,000 families in 2017.

Since the inception of the SLP Program in 2011, the program has gone through policy enhancements to improve program implementation and chances of success for both the enterprise and employment tracks. Majority of those served by the program have expressed positive results from the SLP intervention. The specialized trainings in particular have provided added skills that enabled some beneficiaries to establish enterprises or to get employed. There is a felt improvement in the standard of living experienced from additional household income, business expansion and a stable source of employment. For those in the EF track, there are also non-monetary benefits such as motivation for higher studies, having a support system, and better links to employers/employment. For those in the MD track, higher income has provided the finances to support for the college education of child and improved values of their children (Ballesteros et al., 2017).

Another government agency is working for the eradicating poverty in the country is the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). TESDA performs a vital role in the provision of skills training and other forms of assistance for the marginalized sector through its scholarship programs in cooperation with other agencies, local government units, community training and employment coordinators, private organizations and other stakeholders. Skills training programs were delivered for the special clients right in the very communities they belong, bringing new hope and opportunities that can change their lives for the better (TESDA, 2019).

Purok Arao at Barangay Vista Alegre

Purok Arao or Progreso Village Relocation Site II in Barangay Vista Alegre was developed by the City Government of Bacolod as one of the relocation sites in 2010 (Guadalquiver, 2018). Canet (2013), in a local newspaper reported that as of November 2011, 523 sub-lots in the Relocation Site II with a total land area of 58.67 hectares and with an average lot size of 64 square meters (sqm) per lot were developed and ready to be occupied by the qualified informal settlers. The report further stated that the informal settlers from the different Barangays of Bacolod City who were subject for eviction, victims of natural disaster, and those living in dangerous areas started to occupy the said property in the same year.

By virtue of their relocation at Purok Arao in Vista Alegre, Bacolod City, said settlers were given a chance to own their house and a lot free as processed by the Housing Authorities in Bacolod City. The relocation is the government response to Republic Act No. 7279 known as "Urban Development and Housing Act of 1992: *An act to provide for a comprehensive and continuing urban development and housing program, establish the mechanism for its implementation and other purposes.*" The said Act provides for a comprehensive and continuing Urban Development and Housing Program which shall uplift the conditions of the underprivileged and homeless citizens in urban areas and in resettlement areas by making available to them decent housing at affordable cost, basic services, and employment opportunities (RA 7279, 1992).

With their relocation to Purok Arao, informal settlers were given the privilege to experience decent living and avail the basic services such as health, education, electricity, water and sanitation and other social services provided by the Barangay, other local government units, private sectors and community-oriented organizations. However, decent living for the community is not enough. It should be accompanied by equipping the community members with knowledge and skills to be able to engage in income generating activities through the implementation of sustainable livelihood program with a long-term goal of achieving socio-economic wellbeing of the beneficiaries through wage employment and/or entrepreneurship.

Purpose Statement

This study aimed to assess the workability of a Sustainable Livelihood Development Program for *Purok Arao* at *Barangay Vista Alegre*, in Bacolod City.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the socio-economic profile of the respondents in terms of a) age, b) sex, c) civil status, d) education, d) house ownership status and material used, e) job classification, source and income level, and f) skills and skill acquisition?
2. What are the skills training needs of the community?
3. What are the issues and concerns that may come up in the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the livelihood program?
4. Based on the foregoing findings, what livelihood training program may be formulated to ensure sustainability and make beneficiaries economically viable?

Methodology

This chapter illustrates the supporting structure of this paper in observance of research as a scientific process. Specifically, it discusses the study participants, research design, the research instrument, and the procedures for data gathering and analysis.

Study Participants

These are residents of *Purok Arao, Barangay Vista Alegre*, the first settlers of the relocation site for the urban poor in Bacolod City. A simple random sampling was used to select household heads ($N=817$; $n=269$), who filled up the self-made survey questionnaire. FGD participants, on the other hand, were carefully chosen from ten (10) experts based on their experience, exposure and affiliation as project formulators, implementers, monitors, evaluators, beneficiaries, trainers, and facilitators of the livelihood projects in the provincial, city, *barangay*, and *purok* levels, including those from the academe.

Research Design

This study made use of the mixed method research design, which integrated the quantitative-descriptive design as well as the qualitative design, courtesy of FGD, to determine the viability of a capability-building program for target beneficiaries of said village. The latter includes issues and concerns that may come out in the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the proposed livelihood development program.

Research Instrument

This paper used the socio-economic profile and skills training assessment, a self-made data gathering instrument partitioned in two parts. The first part dealt with socio-demographic profiles such as age; sex; civil status; education; house ownership status and materials used; job classification, source, and income level; and their current skills and mode of acquisition. The second part focused on the skills training needs and assessment, emphasizing on settlers' technical skills, how those skills were acquired, and their preferred livelihood skills training. Discussion points included in the FGD are as follows: (i) issues and concerns that may come up in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the livelihood development program; (ii) training design that is appropriate for the livelihood training; and (iii) recommendations to make the livelihood development program sustainable and successful.

Procedures

Validity/Reliability of the Instrument

The research instrument was subjected to validity testing by enlisting the services of three (3) experts from their fields of endeavor using the validation criteria of Goods and Scates. Said test obtained a score of 4.96, indicative of the instrument's validity. Thereafter, the instrument was subjected to a reliability test. Thirty individuals not forming part of official study participants underwent pilot testing to determine whether the instrument was reliable or not, utilizing of Cronbach's Alpha. The test obtained a score of .9, indicative of the instrument's reliability.

Data Collection

Permission to conduct the survey was secured from the Barangay Captain of Vista Alegre right after those rigorous tests in validity and reliability. Arrangements were made with *Purok Arao* Officers and *Barangay* Health workers who facilitated the data gathering. An orientation was likewise given to enumerators before the conduct of the instrument. Groups were formed, and with the assistance of the *Barangay* health workers, the trained enumerators proceeded with data collection from randomly selected respondents. Filled questionnaires were gathered then data were tabulated and analyzed.

Meanwhile, official communications were sent to chosen participants to obtain their free prior informed consent (FPIC) before the actual FGD. The discussion was facilitated by a seasoned moderator who introduced the topic, asked questions based on the group interview schedule, controlled digressions and ensured all participants made his/her contribution to the group interview, which was made open, reflective, and flexible. Aided by a tape recorder, participants' ideas, views, opinions, perceptions, knowledge, and experiences shared during the FGD were collated and processed for analysis purposes.

Data Analysis

Data gathered were analysed and interpreted using varied tools. Mean and percentages were used in determining the socio-economic profile and skills training assessment of respondents earlier generated by a self-made survey questionnaire. Participants' accounts characterizing their particular experiences in the research environment were then coded into themes and sub-themes to get a clear picture of their understanding of social issues earlier identified, i.e., (i) issues and concerns that may come up in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the livelihood development program; (ii) training design that is appropriate for the livelihood training; and (iii) recommendations to make the livelihood development program sustainable and successful. Subsequent findings related to the socio-economic demographics, along with the perceptions, opinions, and ideas identified in the FGD were utilized as inputs for analysis, policy formulation, and a relevant and realistic livelihood training program.

Ethical Considerations

This paper intently addressed ethical issues specified by the National Ethical Guidelines for Health and Health-Related Research of 2017. Firstly, settler-respondents were made fully aware of the objectives of the paper and were subsequently briefed that their participation is purely voluntary especially in data collection phase. They were subsequently informed that they have all the options not to participate should they feel their safety being threatened by the research work.

Results and Discussion

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data, which were gathered to carry out the predetermined objectives of this paper.

Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents

This section brings the spotlight on the respondents' demographic profile. Included for discussion are matters related to age, sex, civil status, education, housing status/and materials used, and job classification and income level, among others.

Age, Sex, and Civil Status

Data gathered shows the older residents (41 years and above) outnumbering the younger ones (40 and below), the females outnumbering the males, and the married outstripping the single, widowed, and separated ones combined. Data suggest that the village is inhabited by persons with leadership and decision-making skills. While Stephens (2018) assert that age results in the decline in working memory and some long-term memory, it cannot be denied that through it people gain life experiences and knowledge that guides decisions-making. But barring any unforeseen issues in fertility, the gathered data would seem to predict population “explosion” in the same village in the years to come.

Education

In terms of education, the same data show that the majority of residents are high school graduates, a level of education that spells almost the same with unemployment. A distant second are those who barely had the chance to get their elementary education, which we can attribute to their meager family income recorded at an average of Php8,450 a month. Barely 6% completed their vocational courses, and a measly 8% completed their college education.

Housing Ownership Status and Materials Used

A big chunk (77%) of the residents owns a house and lot, but roughly 17% are found staying with their relatives. It did not come as a surprise that 7% of them were found renting. Subsequent analysis shows 13% live in houses made of makeshift materials, roughly 48% live in houses using temporary materials, 24% live in houses made of semi-permanent materials, and only 14% use permanent materials. This bare description of housing materials under the general term “temporary” speaks volume of the poverty level of 86% of resident settlers in the said village. Apparently, the big majority were unable to build houses made of strong and solid materials since a bigger chunk of their meagre income is understandably earmarked for their basic needs. The fact that their houses are not attached to the ground, to another structure, or to other utility system in the village points to how vulnerable residents are during unpredictable weather conditions.

Job Classification, Source and Income Level

Roughly 94% are employed and self-employed, respectively while the remaining 6% are unemployed. Data gathered likewise show 59% are receiving salaries and wages, 15% generates income from business agriculture, and 7% are found earning their living by receiving commissions. Additionally, 7% are engaged in service skills, 6% are peddling, while 6% rely on remittances and pensions. Still the same data highlight the imbalance between the number of settlers belonging to the

low income group bracket of roughly 52% and high income group of 48%. Looking back, those belonging to the former are those earning below P8,450 while the latter are those earning higher than the figure just cited. The foregoing data highlight the fact that the majority needs to move around to be able to earn their living from a variety of sources or whatever means just to survive as they begin a new life in a new environment.

Current Skills and How Acquired

The following are the top 5 skills identified from the settlers. 46% possesses skills in cooking, 13% in personal services, 10% in construction, 9% in electronic and automotive servicing, and around 9% in dressmaking and tailoring. 12% from the other five (5) skills were identified coming from beauty care, carpentry, massage therapy, plumbing and house/car painting. The finding reveals that the respondents have varied technical skills hence, they engage in different sources of livelihood, either as employed or self-employed. From the foregoing skills, 56% have been acquired through self-study, 11% observation, 9% from formal schooling, and another 9% through experience. Around 7% went to TESDA for training, 4% for sponsored training, and around 4% learned the skills from apprenticeship.

Skills Training Needs of the Community

From these data just presented, this section now logically brings the spotlight on the skills training needs of the community. Topping the list of skills needed by settlers are food and beverage where 17% wanted to get trained on, 14% wanted baking and pastry making, 13% goes to dressmaking and tailoring, 12% wanted culinary arts, and finally 10% wanted to be trained with automotive servicing. In addition, 8% of settlers also preferred food preservation, 6% for electrical servicing, another 6% for welding, still another 6% goes to beauty care and cosmetology, 4% said they wanted massage therapy, and 3% indicated they want training in ICT. Viewed from a broader scale, the foregoing skills needed by the community can be categorized into three major groups on food preparation comprising 51%, technical skills at 39%, and personal skills at 10%. It is worth noting that some of these skills have already been acquired by the settler-beneficiaries, but these skills need to be enhanced further to prepare them for opportunities that may come their way.

Issues and Concerns in the Formulation, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of Livelihood Development Program

Issues in Formulation

The first discussion point is the formulation of the goals and objectives and outcomes of the program. Participants were unanimous on the importance of clear, simple, realistic, and attainable goals of the project. A participant mentioned that in one of the government livelihood projects she has monitored, she feels that the type of projects and the training programs do not match with nor suit to the needs of the beneficiaries; thus, posing a challenge in the implementation and monitoring. She believed that this concern would not have happened if there was socio-economic profiling and assessment of the recipients during the formulation of the program.

The majority of the participants agreed that beneficiaries would mostly want to participate in the livelihood training program at the start but would eventually stop because of family problems, transfer of residence, or having a job elsewhere. Other participants expressed the same sentiments in the projects they have taken part. Overall, the general sentiment of the beneficiaries toward livelihood projects as dole-outs are affecting the implementation negatively. This situation reflects their lack of seriousness in participating with the project. Also, they believe that the capacities and readiness of the participants are significant concerns. Some beneficiaries are unaware of what is expected from them in terms of outputs or outcomes.

Still another concern of most participants in the formulation of the livelihood program is the source and amount of funding. They mentioned that since budgeting will take place in the formulation stage, and sources of funds and amounts may not be available yet, the allocation of funds is a challenge and may eventually affect the implementation of the project.

Issues in Implementation

The great majority of the participants agree that the process of selecting the right beneficiaries was challenging to them, considering the varied circumstances surrounding the prospective recipients and the project that are considered for implementation. Participants were on the consensus that scheduling is already a challenging factor since some of the beneficiaries have work. Others have a family to take care of at home and many other constraints, which often lead to their unwillingness to continue. Some participants also mentioned instances where trainings are rescheduled to the inconvenience of many, if not all of them.

To most of the participants, the amount and availability of funds to procure training materials and tools delayed the conduct of training. This derailed the implementation in terms of timetable as well as the achievement of the goals of the project. What is more interesting to participants is the prospect, remote as it is, of being provided with food instead of materials and equipment while on training.

Other concerns include the leadership and management skills and capability of the implementer or implementing agencies. Participants expressed the necessity of government logistical, technical, and financial support in the implementation of livelihood programs. They also see the indispensable role of *Purok* and *Barangay* Officials and project coordinators and facilitators in the implementation of the project.

Issues in Monitoring

According to the participants, monitoring of the program requires time. One of them has traveled a lot because of the distance of the project. They were also faced with required documentation and data gathering to be able to measure and analyze the accomplishments of the beneficiaries and the program based on their desired outcomes. It is during monitoring the records that the bookkeeping and accounting skills of the project officer is much needed to be able to determine the accuracy and reliability of available data.

Participants experienced some problems in the monitoring of outputs or outcomes in terms of acquired skills. How skills were used in income generation are also a difficulty, according to the participants. Whether the timetable has been met is also a concern in monitoring. The participants stressed that contingency measures are discussed with the participants when the project does not work as expected, and funding needed for monitoring is an essential component of the process itself. The majority of the participants have observed that projects which were closely monitored by a trained project officer have been implemented as planned. In addition, almost all of the participants agree that monitoring will generally take more than two years to be able to assess whether program beneficiaries have stabilized with their livelihood activities and become self-governing.

Issues in Evaluation

The general consensus among the participants is that measuring the impact of the livelihood project is difficult to determine especially when data on outcomes are insufficient. According to them, when goals or outcomes and criteria for evaluating the outcomes are not clear from the start during the formulation stage, project evaluators will have a hard time doing their jobs. It is also important, according to the participants, that the beneficiaries know what is expected from them in terms of output or outcomes so that they will be guided as to what their contribution should be to make the training plan work well.

In the evaluation of the projects, the participants have common idea that beneficiaries are evaluated in terms of immediate outcome, that is, they were able to acquire the livelihood skills through their expected output or whether they are already gainfully employed. Furthermore, they expanded the evaluation into intermediate outcome where beneficiaries should already be engaged in livelihood activities, become self-governing, and eventually become entrepreneurs themselves.

Training Design

The majority of the participants shared their experiences in designing the training program for their respective projects. They identified a variety of considerations that are expected to affect or influence the outcome of the various training courses/modules. According to most of them, factors that they have considered in designing teaching and learning of the various skills include the current knowledge of the beneficiaries on the technical aspects of a specific training need, availability of logistical and material resources, time frames and evaluation techniques such as practical examination and testing the sales potential of a product or service. Most of them agreed that the use of ICT tools helped a lot in the delivery of instruction, and learning of the participants is enhanced because the use of ICT materials made the presentation interesting and encouraging.

Recommendations to Ensure the Success of this Sustainable Livelihood Development Program

There were a number of recommendations intimated by chosen participants during the focus group discussion (FGD). Firstly, participants reiterated that for the livelihood program to succeed there should be clear, realistic, measurable goals and

objective that is grounded on the needs of the beneficiaries and in their locality. They also believed that the quality and the commitment of the beneficiaries to make the program work is a crucial factor in the success of the training projects in particular and the livelihood program in general. Periodic monitoring and evaluation by a competent and dedicated team to ensure that the project is an implementation based on the plans and who can easily devise strategies when there are challenging areas are among the participants' priorities. Financial, technical, and logistical support funding from local government units (LGUs) and non-government organizations (NGOs) is a great factor for the sustainability of the livelihood development program. Finally, the involvement and coordination with *Barangay* and *Purok* Leaders in the selection of beneficiaries as well as the formulation, monitoring, and evaluation of the training program, were recommended by the participants.

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