

Best Practices in the Implementation of Livelihood Training Program for Indigenous Peoples

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ABSTRACT

This case study aimed to determine the best practices as well as the challenges and overcoming mechanisms in the implementation of the Livelihood Training Program intended for the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) who enrolled in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in the Province of Davao del Norte (PDDN). Using the purposive sampling technique, seven (7) IMs for the Key Informants Interview (KII) and seven (7) DALSCs for the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were identified. A qualitative research instrument was used to capture all relevant data to explore their best practices, identify the challenges, and overcoming strategies. Thematic analysis by Creswell (2009) was employed to analyze the data. The findings of the study revealed that the best practices in the implementation of the Livelihood Training Program were centered on innovativeness, sustainability, client impact, multiplier effect, and people's participation which contributed to the general welfare of the community in the provision of livelihood and skills for their eventual employment, be it either in the form of regular wage or self-employment. The lack of financial assistance, minimal intensification of product promotion and marketing means, scarcity of resources and facilities, weak stakeholders' partnership, minimal people involvement, and absence of monitoring and evaluation tool were among the challenges encountered in the program implementation. To overcome these challenges, strategies were identified as follows: maintaining and sustaining multi-stakeholder partnerships and establishing a creative approach.

Keywords— livelihood, innovativeness, sustainability, learners, Indigenous People

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Poverty has been recognized as a key development problem in the world over the years. Poverty is a multidimensional social phenomenon. Its causes vary by gender, age, culture, and other social and economic contexts. According to the World Bank [1], malnutrition and hunger is the main cause because the poor lack the resources to grow or purchase the food they need. In fact, the top 10 poorest countries in the world that are suffering extreme hunger are India, China, Nigeria, Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Pakistan, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Kenya, and these cases are prevalent in indigenous communities.

The World Bank conducted a study and enumerated the causes of poverty in the country, such as failure of growth, lack of employment opportunities, income inequality, and high population growth. Poor or degraded resource base was cited by the Philippine Commission to Fight Poverty (PCFP) as one fundamental reason for poverty among indigenous communities. These causes of poverty need immediate actions and interventions from governments and institutions.

According to the Philippine National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) 2006 survey, 28.8 percent of

Filipinos lived on less than \$1.25 per day. That number barely changed in 2009 when poverty levels were reported at 28.6 percent [2]. With a decrease of only 0.7 percent over three years, poverty levels appear to have remained stagnant in the Philippines. The most vulnerable sectors are those living in far-flung areas where government support can hardly reach them. Although it varies by region, the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) stated in their report that poverty remains a problem throughout the Philippines' rural communities [3]. Based on the research, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), which has poverty rates in its provinces ranging from 42 to 47 percent, is the worst national region when it comes to poverty incidence.

In the local setting, as reported by NSCB in 2013, Davao del Norte recorded the highest increase in poverty incidence among the population compared to other provinces in Davao Region. The incidence of the poor population in this province increased to 33.4 percent in 2012 from 32.0 percent in 2009, which corresponds to a 1.4 percentage point increase. The data on NSCB XI also indicated that in the country's list of 20 poorest municipalities, Talaingod, Davao del Norte is one of those municipalities with 78.56 percent poverty having its towns placed as a fifth incidence [4].

Indigenous peoples constitute the poorest population who live in extreme poverty and on the margin of society. Their situation is a persistent reminder of historical wrongdoings that need to be addressed for social justice, good governance, and development.

In support of the world and national poverty alleviation policies and programs, the Livelihood Training Program of Davao del Norte was developed to improve the quality of life for people and the community, to gain skills that are matched to the needs of employers, and to keep businesses sustainable in support of global and national policies and programs to alleviate poverty.

With its aim to assist the indigenous peoples in overcoming their poverty and to contribute to sustainable development, the Provincial Government of Davao del Norte supports interventions in the global and national mandate that is to reduce poverty to its Indigenous People (IP) through its Livelihood and Skills Development Program as part of the ALS-IP Program of DepEd.

Moreover, the Alternative Learning System (ALS) fast-tracks the introduction of methodologies to incorporate basic and functional literacy skills development in existing community development programs of various partners. To strongly support the ALS Program, the Provincial Government formulated a policy embodied in Executive Order No. 003, series of 2008, known as "An Order Organizing the Indigenous Peoples Non-formal Education and Entrepreneurship Council of the Province of Davao del Norte [5]. In line with that EO, an ordinance was created called Provincial Ordinance No. 2004-020. Series of 2004, otherwise known as the "Non-Formal Education Ordinance for the Indigenous Peoples with Operational Livelihood component of the Province of Davao del Norte," was enacted to promote non-formal education among the indigenous people with due respect to their customs and traditions, beliefs, and idealism, and to provide them livelihood and income-generating program by learning the concept of the entrepreneurial undertaking.

One has to understand that the Livelihood Program of the province of Davao del Norte for the IPs enrolled in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) improves the lives of beneficiaries economically and socially. Knowing the practices in implementation as well as challenges and overcoming mechanisms paves the way as an input for policy enhancement of the ordinance. The study can trigger agenda setting and helps the implementer acquire relevant information for considerations in framing programs and strategies. After that, this study will evaluate the current best practices of the livelihood program, strengthen the positive areas and enhance the areas where it is weak in the implementation.

Research Question

Generally, this study was conducted to explore the best practices of the program as the basis of intervention for the Livelihood Training Program of Davao del Norte. More specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the best practices in implementing the livelihood training program for the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) enrolled in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in the Province of Davao del Norte (PDDN)?
2. What are the challenges encountered in implementing the livelihood training program?
3. What strategies were employed to overcome the challenges?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study focused only on the operational Livelihood component of the Non-formal Education or ALS of the IPs in the province, as cited in Provincial Ordinance No. 2004-020. s. 2004. Thus, it was limited to the livelihood training activities of the ALS IP learners subsidized by the province with the learning centers located in Sitio Cabadiangan, Brgy. Sto. Ni?o, Talaingod, New Santiago, Asuncion, Brgy. Sabangan, San Isidro, Sitio Pandolian, Mabantao, Kapalong, Brgy. Suaon, New Corella, Brgy. Saug, New Corella, and Brgy. Tibulao, Carmen, where the IPs enrolled in ALS, was considered as the target beneficiaries of this study. The researcher selected the barangays mentioned above because they have a large range of IPs on them. They do not yet have ALS Education Program intended for IPs.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative using case study approach. Creswell (2007) stated that when the research is intended to closely examine the data of a group ascribed to social problems, a case study is best suited since it will help to investigate contemporary real-life phenomena through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events.

The data collection was conducted in the province of, specifically, the Municipality of Talaingod since this municipality is identified as the home of many indigenous groups in Davao del Norte. Most of them are Lumads and Aetas. The province comprises eight municipalities, three cities, and 223 barangays. Its component municipalities are Asuncion, Braulio E. Dujali, Carment, Kapalong, New Corella, San Isidro, and Sto. Tomas and Talaingod, while its component cities are Panabo, Samal, and Tagum.



Figure 1. Shows the map of Davao del Norte locating the specific research site: Talaingod, San Isidro, Asuncion, New Corella, Carmen, and Kapalong. These municipalities constituted ALS's 7 Community Learning Centers (CLC) for IP learners

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of research participants. First, the informants were identified through their inclusion criteria which can be measured through their length of service and experiences. According to Creswell [6], it is important that the informants and participants have a prior experience regarding the phenomenon. The key informants were all 7 Instructional Managers (IMs) or the so-called teachers for the IP learners. These IMs are the learning implementers with the IP learners from their day-to-day functional literacy. They are the first-hand facilitators of the government livelihood program for these learners. One IM is assigned to every Community Learning Center (CLC) in Talaingod, Kapalong, Asuncion, New Corella, San Isidro, and Sto. Tomas. Another set of 7 was chosen for the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), which is the DALSC. These DALSC are under the command of the Department of Education, supervising, monitoring, and evaluating the literacy and livelihood activities of the IMs with their learners.

The IMs as informants were properly and clearly instructed and guided in answering the questions to get more or less reliable raw data that could readily be used and be made available in the discussion and analysis. Audio recording and note-taking were the means of obtaining appropriate data from the participants. Data obtained from the interview were transcribed and listed down, after which all significant statements were grouped into clustered themes. Finally, these clustered themes were regrouped into emerging themes.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

Presented in this chapter are interpreted findings generated in the result of the study, which was supplemented by the researcher’s perspective and substantiated with the findings from related studies and literature.

The major themes were presented in the order based on the research questions as follows: (1) What are the best practices in implementing the livelihood training program for the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) enrolled in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in the Province of Davao del Norte (PDDN)?; (2) What are the challenges encountered in implementing the livelihood training program?; and (3) What overcoming strategies they employ to overcome the challenges?

Best practices in the implementation of a livelihood training program for the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) for the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in the Province of Davao del Norte (PDDN)

From the personal perspective of informants and participants, five themes are generated, as presented in table 1. These themes are as follows: (i) Innovativeness, (ii) Sustainability, (iii) Client Impact, (iv) Multiplier Effect, and (v) People’s Participation. The mentioned themes enabled the researcher to report the core ideas which detailed the program’s best practices.

Table 1 Best practices in the implementation of the livelihood training program for the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) for the Alternative Learning System (ALS) in the Province of Davao del Norte (PDDN)

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Innovativeness	The livelihood program contributes to the general welfare of the indigenous peoples because they were able to innovate ways to promote their products and create a new income stream.
	The program promoted a symbiotic relationship between beneficiaries and government sectors.
	The implementers introduced upgraded livelihood skills training that guarantees the effective and sustainable provision of livelihood/employment services to the IP beneficiaries.

1

	The livelihood responds to the varying needs of the niche markets inside and outside the community, particularly of the ALS beneficiaries.
	The program implementers have provided responsible and sustainable solutions to the multifaceted livelihood/employment-related issues of the IP community, which likewise offers an emphasis on the needs of vulnerable sectors such as youth and ALS students.
Sustainability	The program promotes social equity and appropriately responds to the constantly changing needs of the community while promoting green practices in the area of public service.
	The program shows potential for continuous implementation as manifested by developing a manual or guide, such as the Constitution and By-Laws (CBL) of the registered associations under the DOLE.
	With the proper implementation and monitoring, the resources can be maximized and used efficiently to sustain the livelihood program.
Client Impact	They delivered their products on time without putting any additional charges for the transportation.
	Some of the customers can suggest their preferences when it comes to the designs and functions of the product to the beneficiaries, which makes them more satisfied.
	Clients are starting to patronize and support local products because of their uniqueness and durability.
Multiplier Effect	The livelihood program is currently being replicated by other neighboring communities.
	Aside from IPs, other groups in the rural sector, such as out-of-school youth, Persons with Disabilities (PWD), senior citizens, solo parents, and unemployed parents, are now encouraged to participate in the livelihood training program.
	The IP community continually seeks wider, stronger convergence with other stakeholders for financial, technical, and marketing support.
People's Participation	The livelihood program creates a visible impression on IPs, particularly on ALS beneficiaries, as manifested by the continuous increase of individuals actively participating in the said program.
	The program implementers have successfully tapped and involved other partners, both national and local agencies, to encourage others to participate.
	Many households in the IP community are participating.

Innovativeness

It was clearly spelled out in the Provincial Ordinance No.020, series of 2004, that livelihood is a component of the Basic Literacy Program of IPs. Anchored on this ordinance, the livelihood training program for the IPs enrolled in ALS for BLP has become the provincial government's top priority. It was programmed to offer livelihood training based on the simple training needs survey conducted in the community.

As argued by Piven and Cloward [7], the role of government has expanded on those domestic matters called social welfare, and the existence of relief arrangements is based on the economic and social order of one country. Undeniably, the family income of IP learners has also increased to defray basic needs such as rice, groceries, and their children's basic education. These livelihood training opportunities eventually lead to innovative livelihood enterprises giving emphasis on IP areas. It is pronounced that the program promotes a symbiotic relationship between them and other sectors through open-line communications.

Out of this fact, IP learners were able to innovate new food products such as special bokayo, putotak-tak, banana/cassava chips, sardines, vegetable pickles, fish sauce, and among others are unfading and timelessly marketable and saleable inside and outside the community. On the other hand, handicrafts are considered a necessity but secondary to the people's basic needs. But they make efforts to ensure that their product is still demand-driven in the market. A few samples of their product innovations are handicrafts made of rattan or "uway," a very durable material known for its nativity. Its by-products are the plate, tray, winnower, backpack, and bag, which can also be used for decoration purposes.

Sustainability

Most livelihoods rely on natural resources, at least to some extent. To avoid a shortage of these natural resources, the IP beneficiaries started to replant the raw materials of their livelihood, such as Romblon, rattan, wild bamboo, coconut, and other forms of trees to promote green practices and prevent natural disasters such as a flood. Sustainable raw materials management plays a vital role in our future [8].

The results of the study revealed that learners maximized the use of the existing resources in their communities for their livelihood. Value-added products were produced from the waste of the used parts of the existing natural resources.

Such a situation was akin to the study of Tauli-Corpuz, Alcorn, Molnar, Healy, and Barrow [9] as they acclaimed that the participation of IPs helped to conserve nature and realize the management of resources. Some of these products become means of their livelihood, and the learners continue to produce and sell to their neighbors, schools, the Pasalubong Center of Davao del Norte, and even outside of the province. They continued to seek wider and stronger convergence with other stakeholders for financial, technical, and marketing aspects. Thus, policies are very significant for the management of the sustainable program.

Client Impact

Prior to the implementation of the program, IP learners were hesitant to associate with other people, especially in urban areas. Today, indigenous peoples have gradually engaged themselves with many decentralized approaches to livelihoods that offer opportunities [10]. Hence, when learners started to produce their products, the program also allowed them to acquire the necessary training to sell and market their products to various types of people. They earn and learn at the same time. They also started to feel comfortable building rapport with their customers. Thus, the beneficiaries benefited both financially and socially.

The livelihood program produces reliable products resulting in client satisfaction. The achievement of customer satisfaction leads to loyalty and product repurchasing. There are some indicators to measure clients' satisfaction; it might be satisfaction with the quality of a particular product or service, satisfaction with an ongoing business relationship, satisfaction with the price-performance ratio of a product or service, and satisfaction because a product/service met or exceeded the customer's expectations.

Multiplier Effect

Aside from IPs, the result also revealed that the other most vulnerable groups in the rural sector are out-of-school youth, Persons with Disabilities (PWD), senior citizens, solo parents, and unemployed parents also benefited from this livelihood training program. Because of this, the IP community is continually seeking a wider network to establish a partnership with other stakeholders for financial, technical, and marketing support to sustain the program and cater to more beneficiaries in the long run.

Ansari, Munir, & Gregg [11] cited a similar experience with a group of women who have been venturing

into entrepreneurship in line with their entrepreneurial program. This kind of opportunity may provide a sustainable solution to empower some of the most vulnerable sectors in the community. Shaw and Kristjanston [12] argued that social learning is a promising way to develop any livelihood programs and concluded that these adapted development strategies would become more relevant in the future if sustained and consistently practiced by households.

People’s Participation

Aside from being the beneficiaries, IP learners have been greatly involved in the program by identifying which livelihood training they should acquire. Program implementers used a tool called a training needs survey. This assessment framework serves as a diagnostic tool for determining what livelihood training is to be conducted in the community.

Prior to the actual livelihood training activities, the participants of the training were profiled, identified their training needs, and were provided with training kits, tools/equipment, venue, and food. The province has used this survey process and is usually conducted during the class session with the learners to ensure that their attendance is tracked. The result of the survey determined the kind of livelihood training that should be conducted in the group or association.

As a result, the livelihood training was participated by many IP learners. According to the beneficiaries, the program creates a visible impression on IPs, particularly ALS learners, about its positive impact on the community, as manifested by the continuous increase of individuals actively participating in the said program. Thus, it is very significant for the program to successfully tap and involve other partners (such as schools, non-government organizations, and key industries inside and outside the barangay/municipality) who contribute to the effective, progressive, and sustainable delivery of livelihood or employment related services to the clientele or beneficiaries.

According to Oino, Towett, Kirui, and Luvega [13], stakeholder participation is increasingly a key factor in sustaining a program. Program implementers need to build relationships with different stakeholders (shareholders, employees, beneficiaries, society, etc.), act more transparently, be accountable and provide opportunities for dialogue and involvement or participation. On this note, the Livelihood Training Program of this province converges and linkages with other agencies as partners in its implementation. Its further outputs for convergence are the following: Sustained stakeholders’ participation (to include GOs, NGOs, Pos, and academe), strengthened communication and information relations, and facilitated the market introduction (launching) or promotion of locally-made products of assisted clients (individual and group).

Challenges Encountered During the Implementation of the Livelihood Training Program

Based on the personal perspective of informants and participants, there are five themes generated that exemplify the challenges they encountered during the implementation of the livelihood program: (i) Lack of financial assistance, (ii) Minimal intensification of promotion and marketing means, (iii) Minimal peoples’ involvement, (iv) Scarcity of resources and facilities, and (v) Absence of monitoring and evaluation tools and activity. These core ideas under the preceding themes are presented in the table below.

Table 2 Challenges Encountered by the IP Learners During the Implementation of the Livelihood Training Program

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Lack of Financial Assistance	This kind of livelihood is not yet a permanent source of income for IP learners because it lacks financial support to expand their business.
	They cannot produce in bulk because they lack the fund to purchase additional raw materials.

	<p>The beneficiaries are trying to find means for additional financial assistance for the continuity of livelihood and extend it to those who are interested in joining.</p> <p>Due to an insufficient budget, the program isn't growing.</p>
Minimal Intensification of Promotion and Marketing Means	<p>There is no promo-collateral and tri-media presence of IP products</p> <p>We don't have networks or sponsors who can help us promote IP products.</p> <p>Many beneficiaries don't have stalls where they can display their products.</p> <p>We observed that after the livelihood training, many beneficiaries could not continue to produce the bulk of their products because they do not have a regular market.</p>
Minimal Peoples' Involvement	<p>They have negative impressions of their livelihood. Many of them said that the program was not going to be sustainable and it was only good from the start, but there would be no follow-up intervention.</p> <p>They're not yet a registered organization in the DOLE due to minimal cooperation from the members, that's why they couldn't ask for more support from the agency.</p> <p>Unfortunately, attendance was declining mainly because many beneficiaries were from distant locations. Usually, it's only the officers and the trainers of the products attend the meeting.</p> <p>They don't have the time to attend seminars and programs because they are busy making a living.</p> <p>They don't have an established constitution and by-laws yet.</p> <p>Many beneficiaries are very passive about the program</p>
Scarcity of resources and facilities	<p>This is not yet a steady livelihood since the source of the materials, such as rattan, is hard to sustain.</p> <p>We can't produce in bulk orders because we don't have the machinery to do that. We only do manual labor in production.</p> <p>Romblon is the main raw material to produce, but due to the shortage in supply, we can hardly continue with the training.</p> <p>We find it difficult to sell the products because of the lack of accessible transportation.</p>
Absence of Monitoring and evaluation tools and activity	<p>I noticed and observed that the association has difficulty being self-reliant</p> <p>The livelihood training program has no proper monitoring and evaluation systems for IP learners. So, we don't know if they will still continue making efforts to enhance their skills.</p> <p>In my own observation, this program will surely last if they only receive support and guidance for the continuity of their skills training. They should include in the activity plans the visitation and monitoring schedules.</p>

Lack of Financial Assistance

The result from the key informants' interview revealed that one of the livelihood-related challenges encountered by the IP learners in implementing the program is the lack of financial assistance. Any program

has a likelihood of failure without a sustainable financial source. According to Mansuri and Rao [14], many programs and projects fail to attain their most important goal – not because of the lack of participants but due to the lack of strong working money to successfully run the operation. In relation to that, working capital is indeed an essential requirement for a livelihood program to be successful. This might be human resources, equipment, commodities, and money.

According to the informants, the learned skills should be practiced immediately, right after the training. But because of the meager financial assistance, they cannot make the enterprise right away. If they can produce products in bulk or mass production, this will surely help augment their income to suffice their basic needs. However, it can only be made possible provided that there is sustainable financial assistance until the becomes self-sufficient.

Minimal Intensification of Promotion and Marketing Means

Conventional markets aim to provide an environment for products to gain attention from the target customers. However, another predicament encountered in implementing the program, as shared by IMs, is that the program beneficiaries have minimal ways of promoting and marketing their products. Though some IPs have access to the Pasalubong Center of the province, that is not enough market to accommodate all of their products. Having said this, their livelihood products are not known to the customers, and fewer markets mean fewer sales.

According to Lockrey [15], you must begin developing your marketing campaign while in the stage of the product development process. Creating a product would be pointless unless you know your target market, how it will appeal to that market, and how it will differ from other products. If the beneficiaries can link what their customers need and want to their understanding of their products, their strengths, and their usefulness, they are more likely to find a good market. Thus, they must know the most-important selling points of their product and how it will make its way to the target market.

Minimal Peoples' Involvement

As can be noted from the previous findings that the lack of marketing strategies is one of the top problems in the implementation; it is also important to note that this problem is rooted in the weak participation of some of the involved stakeholders. Based on the response of the participants, they observed that there is minimal involvement of the people during the conduct of livelihood training and even during association's meetings. When asked about their reasons, some of them refused to attend because they were busy trying to find other means of income for their family. It was also found that there were also associations that had not been registered with the Dept. of Labor and Employment (DOLE). This is one of the reasons that the program implementation is weak. Hence, some may not be able to get any funds since they have no elected officers and no articulated constitutions and By-laws.

Furthermore, the time constraint is not the only problem that the beneficiaries have to deal with, also the distance of the training center from where they live.

Scarcity of resources and facilities

One factor that hinders the implementation of the livelihood program for the IPs is the insufficiency of resources and facilities to continually run the livelihood program. Albeit how eager they are to produce more products to sell in the market, they do not have sufficient resources to procure materials and finance for other expenses. They can't produce in bulk orders because they don't have the machinery to do that.

According to Hau and Ouyang [16], financial scarcity will continue to play a major factor in production.

When the financial resource is insufficient, entrepreneurs have to deal with financial shortfalls, labor shortages, supply-chain disruptions, and declining consumer demand. On the other hand, a lack of facilities may cause business owners a delay in response to competition. Thus, in order for start-ups to generate meaningful sales, they must invest in equipment and facilities.

Absence of Monitoring and evaluation tools and activity

The program monitoring and evaluation of the livelihood training are supported by Executive Order (EO.) No. 003, series of 2008: “an order organizing the IPs non-formal education and entrepreneurship council of the province of Davao del Norte. Section I says that this council shall be organized to monitor the implementation of the program in close coordination with DepEd and NCIP, which shall also be composed of the executive and legislative bodies of the province. Unfortunately, the said section was missed, and the Technical Working Group (TWG), which was supposed to carry out the roles, was not created. Consequently, the livelihood undertakings were not regularly monitored because of the absence of an appropriate M&E tool. This tool is supposedly formulated by various partner agencies. Its absence is potentially one of the main reasons why some IPs involved in the livelihood program did not persist and sustain their learned livelihood skill.

Highlighted by the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) Applied Knowledge Services as cited in the study of Karki [17], Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is an area of growing importance for livelihood and skills development. It allows those involved in development activities to learn from experience, achieve better results, and be more accountable. Monitoring and evaluation processes allow those involved to assess the impact of a livelihood activity, determine how it could be done better, and show what action is being taken by different stakeholders. This should translate into a more effective and efficient way of working.

Employed Strategies to Overcome the Challenges during the Implementation of the Livelihood Training Program

Based on the personal perspective of informants and participants, there are three themes generated that demonstrate the employed strategies to overcome the challenges they encountered during the implementation of the livelihood program: (i) Initiate Communication with the Beneficiaries, (ii) Sustaining Multi-stakeholder partnership, and (iii) Continually Look for Market Opportunities. These core ideas under the preceding themes are presented in the table below.

Table 3 Strategies that were Employed to Overcome the Challenges

Major Themes	Core Ideas
Initiate Communication with the Beneficiaries	We do on-site visits to the IP communities, especially to the IP learners.
	We bring food, clothing, and other necessities whenever we visit communities.
	It’s important that we initiate to have open communication with them. By that, we’ll be able to know their circumstance, understand what prevents them from participating and find solutions to resolve their issues.
Sustaining Multi-stakeholder partnership	We hope to sustain an open communication line between stakeholders where IP learners can easily access program implementers if they need assistance.
	We tapped our partners from the LGU, such as the PESO (Public Employment Service Office), to inform us if there will be livelihood fairs.
	We encourage IP learners to show up every time we have skills enhancement. They must be reminded to participate.

	Having regular convergence is essential to strengthening our partnership with other stakeholders. So we make sure to conduct meetings with partner agencies such as the Local Government, Dept of Trade and Industry, TESDA, DOLE, DepEd, NCIP, PHO, and the Provincial Agriculture Office.
Continually Look for Market Opportunities	We extend efforts to help them find access to Market Opportunities.
	Social media promotion is important if they want their products to be noticed in the marketplace. We help them with that by posting their products on our social media platforms.
	We recommend IP products to our friends and acquaintances.
	Our initial action was to help them put-up a product labels. Once their products are noticed, it would be easier for them to find more market opportunities.

Initiate Communication with the Beneficiaries

Undeniably, the family income of IP learners has increased to defray basic needs such as rice, groceries, and basic education. These livelihood training opportunities eventually led to the creation of livelihood enterprises emphasizing IP areas. It is pronounced that the program promotes a symbiotic relationship between them and other sectors. Hence, the IMs are working towards strengthening open lines of communication with the IP learners. In this way, program implementers will be able to know their circumstances, understand what prevents them from participating and find solutions to resolve their issues.

Parallel to the actions taken by the program implementers, Olkkonen, Tikkanen, and Alajoutsijärvi [18] stated that effective communication among stakeholders is key to running a successful program. An open line of communication allows beneficiaries to understand the big-picture goals of the livelihood program and how it can help them. In the same way, the program implementers will also know the issues and concerns about the program from the side of the IP learners, and the device means to address them.

Sustaining Multi-stakeholder partnership

A successful livelihood program requires a strong partnership of all the involved stakeholders. The IMs recognize the need for a sustainable multi-stakeholder partnership. There must be a strong network with the government, community, and program implementers for continuous support and follow-up training on product enhancement, such as labeling, packaging, and bottling, to ensure the quality of the products. Partner agencies in the implementation of the programs have a great part in the economic and social development; thus, need to strengthen the LGU-based Provincial Employment Service Office (PESO) Managers and Community Training and Employment Coordinators (CTECs) in the establishment of training cum production initiative in coordination with TESDA.

According to Bäckstrand [19], multi-stakeholder partnerships are seen as an innovative form of governance that fills the deficits of local politics by bringing together key actors of civil groups, governments, and businesses. Strong networks and partnerships offer opportunities to tap other agencies for the program's sustainability and maintain the long-term production of natural resources for raw materials in the IP livelihood activities.

Continually Look for Market Opportunities

Without the proper market, livelihood training will be hard to sustain. Thus, the program implementers help to find more market opportunities for IP products. One of their ways to do that is to converge and link with National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP) to form IP associations and eventually facilitate the registration of their products under the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). Legitimizing IP products and creating their own branding will make it easier for them to grow and expand their market.

Moreover, creating an Organizational Development and sustenance scheme through training, meeting, consultation, and installation of feedback mechanisms is also important for product enhancement. Aside from the regular livelihood training conducted for the IP communities, the conduct of further customized skills training focusing on IP entrepreneurs should be incorporated. One short training course in Small Business Management. This is to equip the IPs with entrepreneurial traits and provide them with basic managerial knowledge and skills, enabling them to handle or run a small business. With all these dynamics readily set up, IP products will likely yield customer satisfaction and eventually find bigger markets in the long run.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The issuance of Provincial Ordinance No. 2004-020, series of 2004, has called the province for a commitment to provide resources needed to implement and sustain the livelihood training program for ALS learners from the IP community. Pursuant to this mandate, the province intensified this program, which subsequently resulted in best practices in livelihood training implementation. This study found best practices in terms of innovativeness, sustainability, client impact, multiplier effect, and people's participation. Likewise, its livelihood outcomes include creating more income opportunities, increased and enhanced skills, improved well-being, reduced vulnerability, improved food security, more sustainable use of existing natural resources, established a stronger partnership, and encouraged the involvement of the people in the planning process.

Second, key informants' interviews and focus group discussions revealed that the livelihood intervention could potentially decrease the discrimination of IPs by providing them with a means of economic and social integration until they become more self-reliant. The findings of this study also revealed that IP learners were also confronted with significant challenges during the implementation of the livelihood training program. These challenges include the lack of financial assistance, minimal intensification of promotion and marketing means, scarcity of resources and facilities, minimal people's involvement, and absence of monitoring and evaluation tools.

Furthermore, the result of this study may bring light to the governing agencies to revisit the policies to ensure that local government and other partners have adequate resources and capacities to effectively implement the livelihood training program for the IP communities. Furthermore, the Provincial government sought to address the identified challenges by strengthening and sustaining multi-stakeholder partnerships and maintaining a creative approach, thereby maintaining a close and healthy relationship between the government and the stakeholders.

Additionally, Müller-Böker, Geiger, Geiser, Kansakar, Kollmair, Molesworth, & Schertenleib [20] clearly explains that through intensification and strong will to link and network with partners, both national and local help mitigate negative impacts while supporting positive effects. Moreover, it is also one way of tapping other agencies for the sustainability of the program and enhancing the long-term productivity of natural resources to be used as raw materials in the IP livelihood activities.

Implication for Practice

This study was anchored mainly on the program policies of the province. Its results and findings were utilized to further enhance, frame up, amend or revisit the existing policies. To back up the livelihood training program for the Indigenous Peoples, two program policies were formulated, signed, and approved by both the legislative and executive bodies of the Provincial Government of Davao del Norte. The execution of the Provincial Ordinance No. 2004-020, series of 2004 or known as “Establishing Non-Formal Education for the Indigenous Peoples of the Province of Davao del Norte with Operational Livelihood Component and Providing Funds Thereof” was strongly supported by organizing a body through the issuance of the Executive Order No. 003, series of 2008 known as “Indigenous Peoples Non-Formal Education and Entrepreneurship Council of the Province of Davao del Norte.”

This study was able to determine the best practices as well as the challenges and their overcoming mechanisms in the implementation of the livelihood training program for IP learners. In fact, this program is one of the reinforcements in the operational livelihood component of the non-formal education of the IPs as stipulated in the provincial ordinance. According to the findings of the study and becomes part of the recommendation, Article IV section 5 in the Provincial Ordinance No. 2004-020 and section 1 of Executive Order No.030, the functions and tasks of the monitoring group of the entrepreneurial council in the implementation of the program which includes DepEd and NCIP were not clearly executed may be due to the absence of approved Monitoring and Evaluation M/E tool.

The regular convergence of the body for the said purpose was also missed out. Besides, baseline data were not established to determine the full document of the future impact of the program. An expansion of the Technical Working Group (TWD) for the M/E was also recommended as part of the enhancement of the policy. Section 3. e of the Provincial Ordinance No. 2004-002 really demanded the provincial government and its partner components to really work as a team and intensify their support to the program to attain its ultimate goal, “poverty alleviation.” One good thing about this study was the documentation of the best practices in the implementation of the program in the provincial government that may influence its component cities and municipalities for replication.

This proposal can only be materialized through the creation of a policy, be it through a provincial ordinance or an executive order. In addition, the suggested intervening mechanisms can be implemented immediately upon approval of the concerned agencies, and a Memorandum of Agreement may be formulated for the task and responsibilities of the involved parties. Eventually, the program objectives may be attained successfully, considering that the policies are polished, enhanced, amended, and fully implemented.

Recommendation

Generally, the livelihood program encourages coming out of the conventional type that is often limited to identifying a problem and finding short-period solutions. Also, this encourages the implementers to look at the framework and situation so that the activities to be undertaken are double-checked. Besides, identified best practices can be replicated in other LGUs of various sectors. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended enhancing the Provincial policy of the Livelihood Training program. This study leads to strengthening the positive areas and dealing with those challenges. It was then suggested the formulation of a monitoring and evaluation tool and the creation of its Technical Working Group (TWG) through planning workshops with partner agencies. Creation and installation of a banking data system or Management Information System (MIS) for livelihood training programs may also be initiated.

Given that DepEd is also a strong partner in the implementation, it is also suggested that its Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) will be further increased to support the programs of the province. Formulation of the intervention plan and program design to be adopted by the legislative and executive

bodies is also recommended. Giving awards and recognition to deserving stakeholders or organizations is a motivational scheme for a stronger and more sustainable partnership. Lastly, the suggestive interventions below substantiated the recommendation of the researcher.

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