Implementation of Gawad Kalinga Program: The Case of Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia Panabo City

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the implementation of the Gawad Kalinga (GK) program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, Panabo City, to understand its processes, challenges, and outcomes from the beneficiaries' perspectives. Anchored in a qualitative single-case study design, researchers conducted in-depth interviews with eight (8) purposively selected GK beneficiaries who had resided in the community for at least two years. Thematic analysis revealed three major themes: program governance with institutional support, community participation with discipline, and economic empowerment through capacity building. While participants acknowledged the program's positive impact on shelter provision, livelihood access, and value formation, they also highlighted implementation barriers, including resource limitations, policy inefficiencies, and inconsistent beneficiary participation. The findings underscore the importance of strengthening key component programs, particularly community organizing, education, and livelihood, for sustained community transformation. The study contributes to the discourse on participatory governance and poverty alleviation by illustrating how integrating the Capabilities Approach and the Resource-Based View can foster inclusive, sustainable development in marginalized communities.

Keywords: Gawad Kalinga, community-based housing, program implementation, sustainability, adaptive governance, beneficiary perspectives, poverty alleviation

SDG: Goal 1 - No Poverty, Goal 3 - Good Health and Well-being, Goal 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth, Goal 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities, Goal 16 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

INTRODUCTION

Several families are still faced with insecure housing, low earnings, and restricted accessibility to fundamental services. Such issues are particularly prevalent in peri-urban localities that lie between the city and the countryside (Carrilho & Trindade, 2022). In these regions, urban and rural conditions coexist as the population grows, land use is being rearranged, and those who can only find jobs and infrastructure in certain places (Pandey, Brelsford, & Seto, 2025). Peri-urban settlements typically experience unfavorable living conditions with unstable lives. The result is that programs offering shelter and livelihood assistance have gained relevance in helping families lead safer, more secure lives (Reginio & Agcaoili, 2024).

At the United Nations, over 1 billion people currently reside in inappropriate or informal housing, and peri-urban settlements are facing the most significant risks due to rapid land transformations, unstable tenure systems, and uneven service provision (United Nations-Habitat, 2022). At the global level, researchers emphasize that peri-urban areas, that is, zones between rural and urban characteristics, are under particular pressure due to fragmented control, the potential to minimize livelihoods, and an increase in socio-economic vulnerability (Shaw & Prakash, 2020; Simon, 2022). These tendencies confirm that the solutions to poverty in peri-urban areas should be integrated interventions that combine secure shelter with the development of sustainable livelihoods (Romano, 2022).

These global complexities are also reflected in the Philippine situation. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (2023), about 3.9 million Filipino households still lack decent housing, with some of them living in well-developed peri-urban settings, such as those in local governments in Cavite, Bulacan, Davao, and Panabo. According to the National Economic and Development Authority (2023), communities with high urban growth usually do not correspond to increases in infrastructure, employment, or social services. Researchers also reveal that relocation and housing programs fail too often without support of livelihood, community relations, and coordinated governance (Ballesteros, 2021; Porio, 2021). Therefore, shelter-and-livelihood interventions, which have become crucial in the Philippine context, should be used to break the structural cycles of poverty.

The overlaps of problems at the community level are reflected in the Gawad Kalinga (GK) community of Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, Panabo City. The community resides in a peri-urban relocation area and thus shares characteristics such as evolving land use, emerging businesses, poor infrastructure, and shifting livelihoods, as outlined in the GK program resources (Gawad Kalinga Community Development Foundation, 2025). In this study, peri-urban refers to locations at the edge of cities where both rural and urban systems operate, forming hybrid socio-economic and spatial spaces (Shaw & Prakash, 2020; Simon, 2022). In the meantime, the beneficiaries are the households that have received housing and livelihood support from Gawad Kalinga.

The most recognized community-development movement in the Philippines is Gawad Kalinga, which has an integrated model that incorporates the provision of secure shelter (GK Tatag) with livelihood support (Gawad Kabuhayan). GK Tatag provides long-term housing, land development, and tenure security, whereas Gawad Kabuhayan offers livelihood training, business development, and financial literacy. The two pillars represent the overall principle of holism of GK: there is no livelihood near a home, and without a stable home at all, livelihood remains unstable and unsustainable (Gawad Kalinga Community, 2025).

This study is based on the theoretical foundations of the Capabilities Approach and the Resource-Based View (RBV) developed by Amartya Sen. The Capabilities Approach defines development as the expansion of fundamental freedoms and possibilities for people to live lives they appreciate (Sen, 1999). Nussbaum (2011) further explains that appropriate material and social conditions, such as safe housing, mobility, and economic freedom, directly influence human empowerment, dignity, and long-term quality of life.

In addition, the Resource-Based View (RBV) states that communities can become more resilient and better able to support development when their internal resources, such as skills, assets, and social capital, are reinforced (Barney, 1991; Battisti & Salvatore, 2021). Taken together, these theories explain why housing and livelihood cannot be treated as distinct interventions. Having a place to stay and being provided with a livelihood also adds stability and improves their community capacity, autonomy, and adaptive capacity, depending on the situation, particularly in peri-urban environments, which are usually vulnerable.

Recent studies from the Philippines support these global revelations. According to Porio (2021), the development of townships and poverty alleviation are underpinned by coordinated governance, human participation, and programs that incorporate economic and social provision. Recent studies indicate that livelihood insecurity has hindered the long-term success of relocation and housing plans, and that these plans should include a permanent provision of economic sustenance and community capacity-building (Ballesteros, 2021; Asian Development Bank, 2022). Taken together, these publications underscore that consistent incomes, social networks, and institutional coordination are vital pillars of human capability expansion in the peri-urban living environment.

Even though Gawad Kalinga (GK) is a subject of particular studies as an example of social innovations, much of the literature continues to focus on the outward physical effects of programs, specifically the houses that GK challenges have constructed, but not the underlying lives and experiences of beneficiaries and their resiliency over time (Frediani & Cea, 2019; Habaradas, 2010). More recent studies emphasize the need to understand how families living in peri-urban relocation communities adapt to rapid economic changes, unstable livelihoods, and shifting social contexts. These inefficiencies underscore the need to investigate the integrated shelter and livelihood model developed by GK in terms of material outcomes and its long-term consequences for community capacity, social capital, and resilience.

The research paper fills this gap by examining the integrated GK Tatag and Gawad Kabuhayan programs in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia using a qualitative case-study methodology. The site has long-term beneficiaries and a peri-urban environment, which provides insights into the interaction between these two variables (housing and livelihood interventions). Based on the Capabilities Approach and the Resource-Based View, the paper tests the hypothesis that the integrated model developed by GK not only supports beneficiaries materially but also enhances their resilience, autonomy, and long-term ability to pursue feasible, sustainable development. Collectively, the frameworks provide deeper insights into how human development in a peri-urban community is shaped by secure housing, social capital, local governance, and livelihood opportunities.

This research focuses on the implementation of the Gawad Kalinga Program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, Panabo City, Davao del Norte, through the beneficiaries' experiences, specifically addressing critical questions such as: (1) How was the Gawad Kalinga program implemented in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, Panabo City? (2) What challenges do beneficiaries face in the Gawad Kalinga program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia? and (3) What insights and lessons can be learned from beneficiaries' experiences to improve the Gawad Kalinga program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, Panabo City? By answering these questions, the study aims to provide practical and policy-related recommendations that enhance GK's effectiveness and support sustainable community development.

This study has significant global and local importance because it enhances the knowledge on community-based development and poverty reduction by incorporating housing and livelihood programs. It draws on the Capabilities Approach of Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2011) and the Resource-Based View to provide empirical evidence of how tangible and intangible resources can enhance community resilience. It emphasizes that mutual partnerships among stakeholders are likely to yield more efficient results in reducing poverty. It supports the vision of creating resilient, self-reliant, and values-driven communities in the Philippines.

While comprehensive in scope, this study has some limitations and delimitations that have to be noted. The first limitation is the use of a qualitative single-case study design. The information obtained through in-depth interviews and observations is subject to participants' recall and perception, which can introduce bias or subjectivity. In addition, the respondents are relatively small in number, which, though sufficient to conduct the analysis, does not provide the variety of views that such studies could yield when performed on a large scale. Thematic analysis, as the primary method of data interpretation, also depends on the researcher's judgment, and despite using validation techniques such as member checking and peer debriefing, interpretive bias cannot be entirely ruled out. As for delimitations, the research is conducted in the geographical area of Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, Panabo City, a peri-urban GK site, and focuses on the implementation of the GK Tatag (housing) and Gawad Kabuhayan (livelihood) components. Only beneficiaries and local stakeholders who have a direct interest in the program were also included in the study.

METHOD

Study Participants

The study involved eight (8) participants who are confirmed beneficiaries of the GK program and had been residing in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia for a minimum of two (2) years. This duration ensured they had substantial experience with both the initial implementation and the program's long-term implications. Their extended involvement provided valuable insights into how the initiative influenced their daily lives and community development over time.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to identify information-rich cases relevant to the research problem (Palinkas, 2015; Patton, 2015). The specific inclusion criteria were: (1) a confirmed GK housing beneficiary; (2) a permanent resident of the community for at least 2 years; and (3) at least 18 years of age. These criteria guaranteed that participants could provide reliable, comprehensive, and longitudinal insights into the program's effectiveness, the challenges encountered, and their adaptive strategies (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

The study was conducted in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, Panabo City, a recognized GK resettlement community. This site was purposely selected for its strategic relevance. As a peri-urban area, it embodies the hybrid socio-economic characteristics of urban and rural features, evolving land use, and fluctuating livelihood opportunities that are central to this inquiry (Shaw & Prakash, 2020; Simon, 2022). Its status as a long-established GK community ensured that participants had sustained exposure to the program, making it an ideal context for examining long-term implementation and sustainability.

The socio-economic conditions of the barangay, including fluctuating employment levels and limited access to stable livelihoods, reflect the challenges faced by many GK communities nationwide. This made the locale particularly useful for analyzing the program's strengths and limitations in practice. In addition, the diversity of participants' experiences, from those who managed to achieve stable livelihoods to those who continued to face obstacles in accessing education, healthcare, and basic services, enabled the researchers to generate a balanced and nuanced understanding of program implementation (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

MATERIALS AND INSTRUMENTS

The primary instrument for data collection was a semi-structured interview guide specifically developed for this study. This format was selected as it provides a balanced approach, ensuring consistent coverage of key thematic areas related to the research questions while granting participants the flexibility to elaborate on their unique experiences in their own words, a method praised for generating rich, narrative data (Patton, 2015). The guide was structured into three parts: (1) an informed consent form to uphold ethical standards, (2) a demographic profile sheet to contextualize participant narratives (Creswell & Poth, 2018), and (3) a set of open-ended questions with probing prompts designed to elicit detailed accounts of the implementation of the program.

The instrument's development was a rigorous process, beginning with a comprehensive literature review to ensure grounding in existing knowledge (Babbie, 2020). Subsequently, the draft underwent expert validation by three specialists in community development, qualitative methods, and the implementation of GK programs. This process, essential for establishing content validity was conducted to ensure the instrument’s reliability and practical efficacy. Furthermore, a dry run was performed. This dry run, a critical step for identifying ambiguities and assessing interview flow, confirmed the guide’s ability to elicit meaningful responses and informed final refinements to wording and sequence, thereby strengthening the trustworthiness of the data collection process (Nowell, 2017).

Design and Procedure

This study utilized a qualitative single case study design, a research method focused on understanding a single, bounded case in depth through rich, descriptive data rather than numerical measurement (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This approach was deemed most appropriate as it allows for an in-depth exploration of a complex social phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2018). The bounded case for this study is the GK community in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, which serves as a representative example of a peri-urban resettlement site implementing both the GK Tatag (shelter) and Gawad Kabuhayan (livelihood) components. The case study design facilitates a holistic understanding of how the program is implemented, the interplay between its housing and livelihood pillars, and the subsequent challenges and outcomes as perceived by the beneficiaries (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This aligns with the research objective of uncovering nuanced, experiential knowledge that quantitative methods might overlook.

The data collection procedure was meticulously designed to ensure methodological rigor and ethical integrity. The process spanned three weeks and was initiated only after formal clearance was secured from Barangay officials and local GK leaders, ensuring community entry was legitimate and cooperative (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Participants who met the pre-defined inclusion criteria were recruited and provided with a comprehensive briefing on the study’s objectives, procedures, and their ethical rights. This included guarantees of confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to withdraw without penalty, in accordance with established protocols for ethical qualitative research (Flick, 2018; Guillemin & Gillam, 2015).

All participants subsequently provided written informed consent. Primary data were collected through in-depth, face-to-face interviews (IDIs), each lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Consistent with best practices in qualitative interviewing, the sessions were conducted in settings chosen by the participants to foster comfort, privacy, and emotional safety, thereby encouraging candid and reflective responses (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The semi-structured format was adhered to, allowing the researcher to maintain thematic focus while remaining responsive to the participants' narratives, using probes to explore emerging topics in greater depth (Patton, 2015).

Throughout the interviews, the researcher assumed the role of a facilitative listener, a stance recommended for building rapport and trust (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). This study observed ethical principles to ensure both methodological rigor and the protection of participants. In line with contemporary qualitative research frameworks, the trustworthiness of the research was evaluated through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Nowell, 2017). These dimensions were applied not only as methodological standards but also as ethical commitments that upheld the integrity of the study (Given, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents the results of the research study that examined the implementation of the Gawad Kalinga program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, Panabo City, from the perspective of its beneficiaries. The study used a qualitative single-case study design and conducted in-depth interviews with eight (8) purposively selected GK beneficiaries who had lived in the community for at least two years. As a result, this combines the knowledge produced during data collection to provide practical recommendations to refine GK operational frameworks, enhancing long-term impact and sustainability.

This study engaged eight (8) individuals who are current beneficiaries of the Gawad Kalinga resettlement program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, Panabo City. The selection of participants was purposive, targeting those who had lived in the GK community for at least 5 years to ensure the richness and depth of experiential insights. The participants varied in age, gender, occupation, and household responsibilities. Still, they were unified by their direct, sustained involvement in the GK program and their intimate knowledge of its implementation.

The participants' ages ranged from 22 to 67 years, reflecting a cross-section of younger and more mature community members. Some were employed as laborers, vendors, or transport operators, while others managed small businesses or tended to household affairs. A few participants had multiple roles, such as combining employment with leadership positions in community-based associations or acting as primary

caregivers. This diversity allowed for a broad understanding of how the program's strengths and gaps intersect with different social and economic realities.

Table 1. Participant's Information

Code	Age	Gender	Years of Occupancy in the Gawad Kalinga Resettlement	Occupation
IDI 1	67	Male	12 years	Carpenter
IDI 2	48	Female	6 years	Chairwoman
IDI 3	39	Female	6 years	Housewife
IDI 4	34	Female	11 years	Housewife
IDI 5	22	Female	5 years	Housewife
IDI 6	22	Female	5 years	Government Employee

IDI 7	40	Male	5 years	Security Guard
IDI 8	24	Male	12 years	SK Chairman

To ensure ethical integrity and privacy, all participants were assigned pseudonyms. Each of them voluntarily consented to participate in the research, with the assurance that their identities and responses would be kept strictly confidential. Their willingness to share their lived experiences, personal struggles, and reflections on the implementation of Gawad Kalinga provided the core foundation for this qualitative inquiry.

The selection process followed the inclusion criteria set out by the researchers: participants had to (1) be legal adult residents of the GK housing site, (2) have lived in the housing community for not less than two years, and (3) have been direct recipients of housing or related support from the GK initiative. Exclusion criteria included residents who had recently moved in, indirect or non-beneficiaries, and those unwilling to participate fully in the interview process. Thus, interviews were conducted at venues that were convenient and comfortable for the participants, typically in their homes or in common community spaces. Each conversation lasted 45 to 60 minutes and was conducted using a validated semi-structured interview guide, which allowed for both consistency and flexibility in eliciting responses.

Implementation of Gawad Kalinga in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, Panabo City

As shown in Table 2, the implementation of the Gawad Kalinga (GK) Program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia reflects a multidimensional community development approach, characterized by governance coordination, active community participation, and targeted capacity-building efforts. Through thematic analysis of the in-depth interviews, three major themes were generated to capture the lived experiences of GK beneficiaries: (1) Program Governance with Institutional Support, (2) Community Participation with Discipline in Program Implementation, and (3) Economic Empowerment through Capacity Building.

Table 2. Implementation of Gawad Kalinga in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, Panabo City

Major Themes	Description	Core Ideas
Program Governance with Institutional Support	This theme concerns how the LGU and partnerships with NGOs, volunteers, and technical agencies mobilized the financial, human, and technical resources needed for Gawad Kalinga's effective implementation.	LGU-led implementation of Gawad Kalinga for community housing support.
		Multi-stakeholder collaboration helps address homelessness.
		Inter-agency collaboration enabled housing and livelihood support.
		Partnership-driven housing efforts help vulnerable renters.
		The program grants permanent housing to homeless families.
Community Participation with Discipline in Program Implementation	This theme highlights beneficiaries participation in the program through the following rules; Purok level leadership, regular assemblies, and peer monitoring systems, which foster collective	Rule-following and unity foster program success.
		Leadership structures are necessary for program orders.
		Orientation and the point system reinforce values and hard work.

	accountability and sustained program integrity.	Proper relocation includes information dissemination.
		Effective communication build understanding and stakeholder unity.
Economic Empowerment through Capacity Building	This theme focuses on how integrated skills training, livelihood projects, and basic social services equipped beneficiaries with the competencies and resilience needed to transition from dependency to sustainable self reliance.	Supplemental services, such as feeding, strengthen GK support.
		Housing and livelihood jointly address poverty.
		Educational advancement enables economic mobility.
		Financial literacy training.
		Skills training promotes livelihood empowerment.

Program Governance with Institutional Support

Participants described the implementation of the Gawad Kalinga (GK) program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia as deeply rooted in strong institutional collaboration and local government leadership. Central to this governance structure was the role of the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Panabo City, which served as the program's primary facilitator, coordinating key stakeholders and ensuring the delivery of essential services. Participants consistently emphasized that the LGU's proactive engagement was pivotal in mobilizing financial, technical, and human resources, particularly in addressing homelessness and integrating housing with livelihood support.

"Ang Gawad Kalinga gi-implementar sa Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia pinaagi sa LGU aron matabangan ang mga benepisyaryo." -IDI1
Gawad Kalinga was implemented in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia by the LGU to help beneficiaries.

This sentiment was echoed by other participants, who cited the collaboration among the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), the City Engineering Office (CEO), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as instrumental in building homes and delivering complementary social services. Such multi-sectoral involvement reflects a collaborative governance model, wherein institutional partnerships go beyond bureaucratic structures to actively engage civil society and development actors in co-producing public goods.

"Ang Gawad Kalinga nagpakita sa espiritu sa Bayanihan pinaagi sa pagtinabangay sa gobyerno, pribadong sektor, ug mga boluntaryo aron matabangan ang mga kabus nga walay balay." -IDI 8
Gawad Kalinga embodies the spirit of Bayanihan by uniting the government, private sector, and volunteers to help low-income families without homes through cooperation.

This governance approach is conceptually supported by the Resource-Based View (RBV) of development (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984), which posits that the strategic use of available resources, whether institutional, financial, or social, can create sustainable value and competitive advantage. In the context of GK, the LGU's

leadership functioned as a resource integrator, enhancing implementation outcomes by bridging resource gaps commonly observed in relocation projects.

In addition, the program's beneficiary targeting focused on particularly vulnerable populations, including informal settlers and families displaced from high-risk or disaster-prone areas. Beneficiaries perceived this targeting mechanism not only as offering access to physical housing but also as restoring a sense of dignity, safety, and social belonging.

"Gi hatagan og oportunidad ang mga homeless nga makapuyo sa permanenteng balay, layo sa katalagman ug squatter areas." -IDI 4
People experiencing homelessness were allowed to live in permanent homes, away from dangers and squatter areas.

This empowerment dimension aligns with Amartya Sen's (1999) Capabilities Approach, which emphasizes expanding individuals' freedoms and opportunities to lead lives they have reason to value. In this case, secure housing became a foundational capability, enabling beneficiaries to pursue other dimensions of well-being, including employment, education, and community participation (Conchada & Estabillo, 2020; Ocampo, 2015).

The theme reflects that GK's implementation in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia is grounded in a governance model where the LGU leads a coordinated, multi-stakeholder system that mobilizes resources across government agencies, NGOs, and community groups. This mirrors broader findings in the Philippine local governance literature, which show that LGU-centered, partnership-driven housing programs enhance coordination, reduce fragmentation, and improve service delivery outcomes (Alegado, 2020; Ortega, 2022). By acting as a resource integrator, the LGU leverages institutional, technical, and financial resources in ways consistent with contemporary applications of the Resource-Based View in community development (Conchada & Estabillo, 2020). Targeted assistance to informal settlers and disaster-displaced families also aligns with evidence showing that secure, well-supported housing expands people's capabilities, improving safety, dignity, and opportunities for livelihood and community participation (Ocampo, 2015; UN-Habitat, 2022).

Moreover, the program's emphasis on volunteerism and collaborative action echoes analyses of Bayanihan as a cultural driver of collective problem-solving in Filipino communities (Garrido, 2019). Taken together, these factors demonstrate how value-driven leadership and culturally grounded collective action contribute to sustainable material and psychosocial upliftment in community housing initiatives (Dizon & Dator-Bercilla, 2021).

Community Participation with Discipline in Program Implementation

An emergent theme in the implementation of the Gawad Kalinga (GK) program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia centers on beneficiaries' participation, discipline, and collective responsibility for sustaining the program. Participants emphasized that the success of the community development initiative was not solely dependent on external support or institutional partnerships but equally hinged on the internal commitment and discipline of the community members themselves. This highlights the critical interplay between governance structures and grassroots agency.

"Ang pagsunod sa mga balaod ug panaghiusa sa komunidad importante aron magmalampuson ang Gawad Kalinga, nga usa ka dakong tabang sa mga walay kaugalingon nga panimalay" -IDI 1
Following the rules and maintaining unity in the community are essential for the success of Gawad Kalinga, which significantly helps those without a home.

This statement exemplifies the community's understanding that the program's long-term sustainability depends on adherence to clearly established rules and a shared commitment to social cohesion. A defining feature of this theme was the presence of micro-level leadership structures, particularly within puroks (sub-

village units), which functioned as frontline governance mechanisms. These structures enabled efficient monitoring, conflict resolution, and mobilization of beneficiaries during collective undertakings.

"Aron ma-monitor ang mga tawo, kinahanglan adunay lider sa matag purok. Kung walay lider, magka-gubot ang barangay ug maglisod sa pagpatuman sa mga programa ug polisiya" -IDI 2
To monitor the people, there must be a leader in each purok. Without a leader, the barangay will face chaos and struggle to implement programs and policies.

Participants further described the use of a point system and orientation process as a unique innovation within GK. This system rewarded discipline and contribution to community tasks and was seen as more than administrative; it was a value-forming mechanism that fostered responsibility, accountability, and perseverance.

"Ingon benepisyaryo sa Gawad Kalinga, ang orientation ug sistema sa puntos nakatabang namo sa pagsabot sa mga balaod ug sa kahinungdanon sa pag paningkamot aron makadawat og libre nga balay, nga nakahatag og kalinaw ug kalipay." -IDI 2
The orientation and point system helped us understand the rules and the importance of hard work in receiving a free house, which has dramatically improved our peace and happiness.

These practices contributed to the cultivation of a self-regulating community, in which governance was not externally imposed but embedded in daily interactions and reinforced through peer accountability. This procedural framework ensured fairness in housing allocation and encouraged civic-mindedness, an essential quality for sustainable community governance (Santos, 2020).

Moreover, the program is built on a high level of transparency. Participants described a well-structured flow of information through orientations, general assemblies, and localized forums. These engagements were instrumental in clarifying program expectations, diffusing misunderstandings, and fostering collective ownership of community goals.

"Ang programa epektibong nagpahibalo sa iyang mga tumong pinaagi sa pormal nga mga miting, konsultasyon, ug forum sa komunidad, aron masiguro ang klarong pagsabot ug kusog nga kolaborasyon sa tanang mga residente ug stakeholders."-IDI 3
The program effectively communicated its goals through formal meetings, consultations, and community forums, ensuring a clear understanding and strong collaboration among all residents and stakeholders.

This participatory orientation aligns with the principles of community-based development, wherein local stakeholders are not passive recipients but co-creators of solutions. As highlighted by Del Rosario and Manuel (2021) and Frediani and Cea (2019), transparent communication and inclusive participation are central to building collective agency and ensuring the legitimacy of community initiatives.

In the case of Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, the GK implementation strategy demonstrated that discipline and participation are mutually reinforcing (Ortega, 2022). When communities are given not only a voice but also a structure through which to exercise that voice, such as leadership roles, feedback forums, and incentive systems, they move beyond compliance toward meaningful engagement (Habaradas & Aquino, 2019). This case affirms that community discipline, when coupled with inclusive governance and transparent communication, becomes a critical pillar of transformative, sustainable development at the grassroots level (Ortega, 2022).

Economic Empowerment through Capacity Building

Beyond providing physical housing, the Gawad Kalinga (GK) program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia actively promoted economic empowerment through capacity-building interventions, with programs designed

to develop people's skills, knowledge, and abilities, making them more self-reliant and improving their quality of life. A key insight that emerged from the interviews was the GK integrated development strategy, which combined livelihood support, social services, and values formation elements, collectively building both material capacity and psychosocial resilience among beneficiaries.

Participants consistently emphasized that access to skills training, income-generating activities, and developmental services positioned them to move beyond dependency and toward long-term economic self-sufficiency. These efforts were viewed as transformative, especially among formerly vulnerable households that now possessed the tools to redefine their futures.

"Ang Gawad Kalinga nagtumong sa pagtabang sa mga kabus pinaagi sa paghatag og training nga nagpalambo sa ilang kahibalo ug kahanas aron makab-ot ang mas maayong panginabuhi ug dili na magpabiling pobre." -IDI 7
Gawad Kalinga aims to help the poor by providing training that enhances their knowledge and skills, enabling them to improve their livelihoods and break free from poverty.

The training programs, which are skills training, financial literacy programs, livelihood assistance, and workshops or seminars, were continuously reinforced by complementary social services, feeding programs, and basic healthcare, which buffered families through their transition periods. The collaborative delivery of these services, often through partnerships with the LGU and NGOs, was perceived as a hallmark of GK's holistic and participatory approach.

"Pinaagi sa LGU sa Panabo nga naghatag ug pabahay sa kabos, nag-apply mi ug nakadawat ug kaugalingon nga kapuy-an, uban sa tabang sa NGO ug uban pang kauban nga nagpatuman sab ug mga pangkabuhayan ug proyekto." -IDI 5
Through the partnership with LGU Panabo, we received Feeding and Livelihood Programs.
"Naa sila'y Bayanihan, Feeding Program, ug Community Service, ug ang mga boluntaryo usab naghatag ug mga kinahanglanong gamit, dili lang mga ahensya sa gobyerno ang nag-apil." -IDI 4
Volunteers also contributed essential items, not just government agencies.

The Capabilities Approach (CA) by Sen (1999) and Nussbaum (2011) provides a helpful framework for interpreting these findings. Capabilities Approach (CA) emphasizes the expansion of individual freedoms and functional abilities, the real opportunities people have to lead the lives they value. In this context, GK interventions not only satisfied immediate needs but also enhanced beneficiaries' human capital, agency, and dignity, enabling them to make meaningful life choices and participate productively in their communities.

Simultaneously, the Resource-Based View (RBV) (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984) reinforces the analytical understanding of GK effectiveness. The program's success in leveraging strategic yet often scarce resources, such as inter-agency collaboration, volunteer engagement, and public-private partnerships, demonstrates its capacity to generate long-term value for marginalized populations through non-traditional resource pools. The integration of these models explains how GK could institutionalize a development approach that is both cost-effective and community-driven.

This thematic narrative also validates prior scholarship emphasizing the dual necessity of structural governance and community adaptability to ensure sustainable program outcomes (Santos & Cruz, 2021; Gonzales, 2021). The collaboration between external actors, LGU, NGOs, and internal stakeholders, residents, community leaders, and volunteers created a resilient implementation ecosystem in which people experiencing poverty were not treated as passive beneficiaries but as active co-creators of their economic future.

Thus, the implementation of GK in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia reveals that economic empowerment is not a by-product but a central pillar of community transformation. (Del Rosario & Manuel, 2021). Through intentional capacity-building efforts, GK fostered individual capability, institutional coordination, and communal solidarity, key ingredients for a development model grounded in both social justice and practical sustainability.

Challenges in the Implementation of the Gawad Kalinga Program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, Panabo City

As presented in Table 3, despite the considerable successes of the Gawad Kalinga (GK) program in promoting community-based housing and empowerment, the 18 study identified significant implementation challenges that affect its efficiency, consistency, and long-term sustainability.

Through rigorous thematic analysis, three major themes emerged: (1) Resource Limitations, (2) Policy Inefficiency, and (3) Low Beneficiary Participation. These themes reflect the complexity of delivering holistic poverty-alleviation programs in resource-constrained settings.

Table 3. Challenges in the Implementation of the Gawad Kalinga Program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, Panabo City

Major Themes	Description	Core Ideas
Resource Limitations	This theme highlights inadequate funding, material shortages, and delayed donations, which disrupt program activities and weaken both community participation and beneficiary engagement..	Resource scarcity undermines program delivery.
		Complex and lengthy policy processes delay implementation.
		High transportation and survival costs burden beneficiaries.
		Donation delays obstruct project goals.
		Funding gaps hinder community initiatives.
Policy Inefficiency	This theme focuses on gaps in program rules and implementation, including rigid point-system policies, inconsistent enforcement, and insufficient livelihood support, which reduce the program's effectiveness.	Inconsistent policy implementation weakens efficiency
		The rigid point system undermines dignity and access.
		Limited livelihood support affects stability.
		Poor coordination among stakeholders disrupts management
		Policy implementation inconsistencies hinder program efficiency.
	This theme reflects the limited and inconsistent involvement of	Active participation is necessary for understanding the program.

Inconsistent Beneficiary Participation	beneficiaries. Non-compliance with rules, conflicting personal priorities, poor policy communication, and distance constraints weaken collective accountability and program integrity.	Non-compliance obstructs implementation.
		Conflicting priorities limit engagement.
		Communication gaps reduce awareness.
		Long-distance participation lowers commitment.

Resource Limitations

The Gawad Kalinga (GK) program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia has made visible progress in housing construction and community development; however, resource limitations continue to threaten its long-term viability. The narratives consistently revealed that funding shortages, reliance on donations, logistical challenges, and lack of access to basic utilities constrain the program's implementation. This aligns with development literature highlighting how externally dependent initiatives often experience funding instability, which in turn disrupts service delivery and undermines beneficiary confidence.

A recurring theme was GK's dependence on external donors and stakeholders to sustain core services, including housing construction, feeding programs, and livelihood training. Beneficiaries reported that delays in donation inflows and shortages of building materials led to program interruptions and discouraged consistent participation. This is consistent with Tendler (1997) observation that donor-driven models often create cycles of unpredictability, weakening the continuity of community-based programs. The problem was not only structural but also experiential, as participants described frustration with the inconsistent delivery of promised support.

"Ang kalisdanan sa Gawad Kalinga mao ang kakulangan sa pondo ug materyales, tungod kay nagasalig kini sa mga donasyon ug suporta gikan sa mga stakeholders." _IDI 1

The challenge for Gawad Kalinga is a lack of funds and materials, as it relies on donations and support from stakeholders.

At the household level, financial constraints further hindered participation in the program. Many participants reported that transportation expenses and the rigid point system imposed disproportionate burdens on families already struggling with subsistence. Such findings resonate with Chambers (2005) assertion that poverty creates a double burden, where poor households are expected to engage in development projects while simultaneously grappling with survival needs.

Beyond financial strain, infrastructural limitations, particularly irregular water and electricity supply, hampered both daily life and income-generating activities in the resettlement area. Access to

reliable utilities is widely recognized as a foundation for sustainable livelihoods and social well-being and its absence significantly reduced the program's developmental potential, as one participant explained.

"Ang limitado nga access sa tubig ug kuryente sa bag-ong natukod nga mga komunidad nakaapekto sa adlaw-adlaw nga panginahanglan ug panginabuhi." _IDI 8

The limited access to water and electricity in the newly established communities affects daily needs and livelihoods.

These findings emphasize that GK implementation remains vulnerable to resource volatility, procedural complexity, and infrastructural deficits. Programs built primarily on external support face inherent instability, a point also stressed by Edwards and Hulme (1996), who argue that donor dependency can

compromise sustainability and local ownership. Thus, ensuring GK resilience requires institutionalized funding streams, reliable infrastructure, and clear communication systems that can withstand fluctuations in external support (Gawad Kalinga Builders Institute, 2023; Gawad Kalinga Community Development Center Support, 2023).

Policy Inefficiency

The Gawad Kalinga (GK) program has successfully provided housing stability and fostered a sense of community solidarity. However, the participants underscored several inefficiencies in governance and policy implementation that constrained the program's long-term effectiveness. These inefficiencies were not isolated incidents but systemic concerns, evident in livelihood gaps, weak coordination mechanisms, rigid program processes, and insufficient technical support from external stakeholders. Such challenges point to the tension between the program's idealized vision of holistic development and the realities of implementation at the community level.

An emerging theme was the gaps in coordination among GK implementers, local government units (LGUs), and partner organizations**.** Participants observed that the lack of a coherent, unified plan often led to overlapping roles, miscommunication, and delays in decision-making. This issue of collaboration weakened the program's ability to respond to evolving community needs and undermined its capacity to scale up best practices.

"Ang mga isyu sa koordinasyon tali sa Gawad Kalinga, lokal nga gobyerno, ug mga stakeholders nga naka-apekto sa programa tungod sa kakulang sa klarong plano ug direksyon." _IDI 5

The coordination among Gawad Kalinga, the local government, and the stakeholders has been affected by a lack of a clear plan and direction.

In addition, beneficiaries highlighted the rigidity of the GK point system**,** which was designed to encourage accountability, discipline, and active participation. The point system is a structured way to track each household's participation, compliance, and contributions to community activities and responsibilities. Beneficiaries earn or lose points based on their actions. These points then affect their standing in the community and sometimes their access to specific GK opportunities. At the same time, this mechanism successfully instilled responsibility among some households, families with limited labor capacity, such as single parents, elderly members, or those in unstable employment, who found it challenging to meet the system's demanding physical and time requirements. This not only placed them

at a disadvantage in accessing benefits but also reinforced perceptions of exclusion within the community.

"Ang sistema sa puntos lisod, walay allowance o snacks, kinahanglan lang maka-survive. Lisod siya, pero kinahanglan tumanon aron makadawat og balay." _IDI 2

The point system is complex, with no allowance or snacks, and one has to endure. It is hard, but it must be followed to receive a house.

Despite these governance challenges, participants acknowledged that visible government involvement enhanced compliance and legitimacy of GK rules and policies. When initiatives were endorsed or monitored by government actors, beneficiaries felt a greater obligation to adhere to community regulations, underscoring the importance of institutional authority in grassroots development.

"So far, wala na problema kay gikan man kini sa gobyerno, mao nga kinahanglan ang mga tawo magtuman jud sa mga gipahigayon nga polisiya." _IDI 5

So far, there have been no problems since this comes from the government, which is why people really need to comply with the implemented policies.

The policy inefficiencies observed in the implementation of the Gawad Kalinga (GK) program stem from a combination of structural, administrative, and contextual constraints that shape how community-based initiatives operate at the local level. A major factor is the persistent disparity in local government capacity, where decentralized responsibilities are not matched with adequate technical, financial, or administrative resources, causing inconsistency and delays in coordination with program implementers (Kim & Yoo, 2015). This aligns with national evidence showing that multisector programs often struggle when LGUs and partner organizations lack unified planning mechanisms and clear operational roles, resulting in overlapping duties and communication gaps (Kim & Yoo, 2015).

The rigidity experienced by beneficiaries under the GK point system also reflects broader challenges found in conditional social programs where compliance requirements may unintentionally disadvantage vulnerable households such as single parents, elderly individuals, and those in unstable work arrangements (Abrigo, 2022; Kim & Yoo, 2015). These burdens create a system where adherence becomes more about surviving conditionalities than fostering empowerment, reinforcing perceptions of exclusion within the community. Compounding these issues is the limited livelihood support embedded in the program's implementation; studies show that many Philippine housing and poverty-alleviation initiatives provide short-term or insufficient economic interventions that fail to sustain long-term income generation, leaving families vulnerable despite improvements in physical housing conditions (Orbeta, 2020).

Moreover, weak technical assistance and inconsistent monitoring further hinder adaptive learning and responsive policy adjustments, causing inefficient processes such as rigid scoring systems or unclear coordination chains to persist unaddressed. Political-administrative pressures also shape program delivery, as shifting local priorities

and variable government involvement influence how rules are enforced and how consistently support is provided to communities (Abrigo, 2022). Overall, these structural and governance barriers explain why the GK program's vision of holistic development faces implementation challenges on the ground, as ideal program frameworks confront the realities of limited local capacity, fragmented coordination, and inadequate livelihood support.

Inconsistent Beneficiary Participation

Community participation lies in Gawad Kalinga (GK) philosophy, as the program envisions empowered citizens co-creating sustainable communities. However, the findings reveal that participation among some of the beneficiaries were inconsistent with attending orientations and assemblies. While collective action, bayanihan, and compliance with community rules were consistently promoted by local leaders, not all households engaged with equal commitment. This unevenness reflects a broader challenge in participatory development, where empowerment is often mediated by individual capacities, social structures, and contextual barriers (Del Rosario & Manuel, 2021).

"Panagsa, naay mga meeting ug orientation nga dili tanan benepisyaryo mo attend, ug as chairman, naga-awhag ko og meeting aron ipasabot nila ang mga balaod ug importansya sa kooperasyon sa Gawad Kalinga."_IDI 1

Sometimes, there are meetings and orientations where not all beneficiaries attend, and as chairman, I call for meetings to explain the rules and the importance of cooperation in Gawad Kalinga.

These mechanisms, several beneficiaries expressed behavioral resistance and inconsistent compliance**,** which disrupted program cohesion. Respondents linked these patterns to personal attitudes, lack of intrinsic motivation, or competing responsibilities in livelihood and household management. In such cases, participation was seen not as an opportunity for empowerment but as an obligation that competed with other pressing demands.

"Usa ka kalisdanan sa Gawad Kalinga ang dili pagsunod sa mga polisiya sa uban, tungod sa ilang mga kinaiya nga maglisod sa pagsunod, nga usahay magdala og problema."_IDI 2

One difficulty in Gawad Kalinga is the non-compliance of some individuals with the policies, due to their attitudes that make it hard for them to follow, which sometimes causes problems.

The participation was also constrained by structural barriers such as distance from program sites, time costs, and financial limitations. Travel expenses and opportunity costs of attending meetings discouraged some households from consistent involvement. However, the accounts also reveal resilience and perseverance from those who valued participation despite these obstacles.

"Bisan pa sa kalayo, moapil gihapon mi sa mga required nga programa sama sa Gawad Kalinga aron masuportahan ug matabangan ang komunidad." _IDI 6

Despite the distance, we still participate in the required programs such as Gawad Kalinga in order to support and help the community.

These experiences highlight a fundamental tension within the GK participatory model. On the other hand, inclusivity and collective empowerment are emphasized, on the other, accountability and discipline are strictly required to maintain program integrity. When individual capacities to engage are uneven, participation risks being reduced to procedural compliance rather than meaningful involvement. As Habaradas and Aquino (2019) caution, participation without parallel investments in capacity-

building, incentives, and supportive structures often becomes insincere, failing to transform beneficiaries into active agents of change.

Inconsistent beneficiary participation in the GK community can be understood as the outcome of intersecting individual, structural, and program-related factors. At the individual level, differences in motivation, personal attitudes, and competing livelihood responsibilities shape whether beneficiaries consistently attend meetings or comply with program expectations. Studies show that low intrinsic motivation, limited understanding

of program value, and the pressures of daily survival often reduce the likelihood of sustained engagement, especially among low-income households whose time and energy are stretched across multiple responsibilities (Hadlos, 2021). These dynamics mirror broader development literature indicating that participation becomes uneven when individuals perceive meetings as obligations rather than empowering opportunities.

Structural barriers also contribute heavily to inconsistent participation. Travel distance, transportation costs, and the opportunity cost of missing work discourage regular involvement among households with limited resources, patterns well documented in recent studies highlighting how mobility constraints reduce participation in community and social programs. Additionally, unequal levels of social capital within communities shape beneficiaries' willingness to engage those embedded in strong, trust-based networks tend to participate more consistently, while those with weaker ties feel less compelled or supported to join collective activities (Chen, 2023). Program design factors, such as participation framed primarily as compliance rather than shared decision-making, further reinforce inconsistency, as beneficiaries may view involvement as rule-following rather than meaningful empowerment (Zhorzholiani, 2024). Together, these factors explain why participation varies across households despite leaders' efforts to institutionalize collective action.

Key Insights and Lessons to Improve the Implementation of the Gawad Kalinga Program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, Panabo City

As illustrated in Table 4, while the Gawad Kalinga (GK) program has demonstrated success in community-based housing and empowerment, continuous improvement remains essential to enhance its effectiveness, sustainability, and long-term impact. Through thematic analysis of the beneficiaries' narratives, three major themes emerged that offer valuable lessons for program refinement: (1) Adaptive Program Governance for Effective Implementation, (2) Empowering Community Participation for Accountable Program Implementation,

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and (3) Effective Program Implementation through Sustainable Community Transformation. These themes reflect the beneficiaries lived experiences and provide actionable insights for strengthening program delivery.

Table 4. Key insights and lessons to improve the implementation of the Gawad Kalinga Program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia, Panabo City

Major Themes	Description	Core Ideas
Adaptive Program Governance for Effective Implementation	This theme underscores the importance of responsive, empathetic leadership and multi-stakeholder coordination where government officials, GK coordinators, NGOs, and private partners actively engage to address evolving community needs, maintain trust, and align resource distribution with anti-poverty objectives.	Gratitude for responsive officials addressing local needs
		Reliable government response sustains community trust
		Strong coordination improves program reach and outcomes
		Distribution of support should be aligned with anti-poverty goals
		Ongoing effort needed to maintain peace and home quality
Empowering Community Participation for Accountable Program Implementation	This theme highlights that sustainable empowerment arises when beneficiaries receive education and skills training, participate in livelihood and engagement activities, and benefit from clear leadership communication fostering unity, personal responsibility, and ongoing support that uphold program integrity.	Education and skills improve livelihood readiness
		Livelihood and engagement improve beneficiaries' lives
		Education and ongoing support sustain program success
		Leadership communication helps avoid rule-related problems
		Active involvement builds unity and personal responsibility.
Effective Program Implementation through Sustainable Community Transformation	This theme focuses on how holistic planning, adequate resource allocation, utility access, and integration of psychosocial supports including spiritual growth drive long-term positive outcomes transforming shelter provision into broader social, economic, and psychological well-being for the community.	Planning and resources prevent housing delays.
		Utility access enables daily stability
		Spiritual growth reinforces community resilience
		Effective aid creates long-term positive outcomes.
		Gawad Kalinga contributes to community development and growth.

Adaptive Program Governance for Effective Implementation

A prominent insight that emerged pertains to the value of responsive and adaptive governance as a cornerstone of program effectiveness. Participants consistently expressed appreciation for the attentiveness and accessibility of both government officials and GK coordinators who remained actively engaged in addressing the community's evolving needs.

"Para sa akoa, dako kaayo ang tabang sa Gawad Kalinga, ilabi na ang mga opisyales nga naningkamot aron matubag ang mga panginahanglan sa mga tawo." -IDI 2
For me, Gawad Kalinga has been a great help, especially the officials who worked hard to address the needs of the people.

This form of empathetic and on-the-ground leadership fostered strong community trust and enhanced beneficiaries' sense of safety and belonging to an essential psychological and social dimension of resettlement success. Participants described how government responsiveness ensured stability in service delivery, particularly when emergent needs arose. As another beneficiary note:

"Ang suporta gikan sa gobyerno nga ilang gihatag dinhi, kung naa mi pangayo, ila kini gina-provide isip nga nagpuyo mi diri sa Gawad Kalinga." -IDI 5
The support from the government they provide here, whenever we ask for something, is given as we live here in Gawad Kalinga.

This sense of reliability and prompt attention to needs not only strengthened residents' confidence in the program but also created a culture of mutual respect and cooperation.

Moreover, inter-agency coordination was highlighted as a critical factor contributing to effective implementation. Participants consistently pointed to the synergistic roles of GK, the local government, NGOs, and the private sector in streamlining efforts and maximizing resources. These collaborative dynamics enabled more comprehensive service delivery, livelihood integration, and household-level support.

"Ang koordinasyon sa Gawad Kalinga, lokal nga gobyerno, NGOs, ug private sector makatabang sa mas epektibo nga pagpatuman sa programa ug mas daghang matabangan sa komunidad." -IDI 6
Coordination among Gawad Kalinga, local government, NGOs, and the private sector strengthens program implementation and ensures broader community support and impact.

Such multi-stakeholder governance exemplifies the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984), wherein programs optimize existing institutional and social capital to meet implementation demands while remaining adaptive to external changes. Participants further stressed that adaptive governance must be reinforced by consistent and just policy enforcement to maintain equity and sustainability. Policy fidelity not only ensured the legitimacy of rules but also promoted program continuity and social order within the GK community.

"Maayo ang pagdala karon, ug ang pag-padayon ug pag-tuman sa polisiya importante aron daghang maka-benepisyo sa programa gikan sa gobyerno" -IDI 6
The management is good, and continuing to follow the policies is important so that others can benefit from the government's program.

This perspective highlights that governance adaptability must coexist with institutional discipline, striking a balance between flexibility and rule consistency to uphold program outcomes. Equally important is the acknowledgment of shared responsibility between the state and its citizens. Beneficiaries understood that sustaining the peace, cleanliness, and dignity of their homes required personal effort and community vigilance.

"Parehas ra sa pagtrabaho, kinahanglan gyud nga maghago ka aron mapadayon ang kalinaw ug katahum sa imong balay." -IDI 3

You really have to put in effort to maintain your home so that it stays peaceful and beautiful.

This co-production of development aligns with the participatory governance ideals espoused by Frediani and Cea (2019), wherein communities are not passive recipients but active agents in sustaining progress. Thus, this theme illuminates the significance of adaptive governance frameworks that are citizen-responsive, policy-consistent, and inter-institutionally coordinated. (Habaradas & Aquino, 2019). Gawad Kalinga's ability to adjust to local needs, institutional realities, and beneficiary feedback illustrates a governance model that is both grounded and flexible, capable of sustaining inclusive development outcomes over time. (Habaradas & Aquino, 2019).

Empowering Community Participation for Accountable Program Implementation

The second major theme underscores the centrality of community participation, discipline, and personal responsibility in sustaining the program's transformative impact. Beneficiaries expressed that true empowerment is not merely achieved through material provision but through the enhancement of their human capital, agency, and ethical commitment to community living.

Participants emphasized that education, livelihood training, and sustained engagement are indispensable components of long-term development. These were not considered peripheral benefits but core enablers of empowerment and self-sufficiency. As one beneficiary remarked:

"Ang pagpalambo sa edukasyon ug skills development makatabang sa trabaho ug sa responsableng pagpuyo sa balay ug komunidad." -IDI 5
Improving education and skills development helps with employment and responsible living in the home and community.

The participant explained that when people have stable means of income, they are more motivated and empowered to take part in community initiatives and fulfill shared responsibilities. This sentiment was echoed by another respondent who emphasized the synergistic role of livelihood and civic engagement:

"Ang sustainable livelihood ug aktibong partisipasyon sa komunidad mao ang susi sa pagpalambo sa kinabuhi sa mga benepisyaryo." -IDI 7
Sustainable livelihood and active community participation are key to improving the lives of the beneficiaries.

These reflections affirm the Capabilities Approach (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011), which emphasizes expanding individuals' real freedoms and functional capacities as the foundation of genuine development. Here, GK's model does not merely deliver welfare but builds the conditions for beneficiaries to live meaningful, autonomous lives.

Additionally, respondents recognized the need for continuous education and programmatic support to sustain community transformation. Beneficiaries viewed development as an ongoing, evolving process that requires both institutional commitment and personal resilience:

"Ang padayon nga edukasyon ug suporta sa mga benepisyaryo mao ang susi aron magmalampuson ug magpadayon ang Gawad Kalinga sa paghatag og tinuod nga kausaban sa komunidad." -IDI 8
Continuous education and support for beneficiaries are key to Gawad Kalinga's success in creating lasting change in the community.

A crucial operational element identified in the study was leadership communication. Clear and consistent dialogue between community leaders and beneficiaries was essential in reinforcing understanding, promoting rule compliance, and preventing conflict:

"Ingon chairman, kinahanglan mag-meeting ug ipasabot ang mga polisiya sa mga bag-ong benepisyaryo aron malikayan ang problema, ug magtrabaho aron makakuha og puntos para sa pabahay." -IDI 1
It is necessary to hold meetings and explain the policies to new beneficiaries to avoid problems.

Such efforts strengthen program governance by embedding shared understanding and transparent decision-making, a key tenet of participatory development (Del Rosario & Manuel, 2021; Frediani & Cea, 2019). Beneficiaries who are well-informed are more likely to take ownership of the program's goals and adhere to community norms. Moreover, active involvement in program activities was widely recognized as a mechanism for fostering social cohesion and personal accountability:

"Ang matag benepisyaryo kinahanglan mag-apil sa mga kalihokan sa programa aron mapalig-on ang panaghiusa ug responsibilidad alang sa ilang kaayohan." -IDI 1
Each beneficiary must participate in the program's activities to strengthen unity and responsibility for their well-being.

This resonates with Gonzales (2021) argument that collective responsibility and solidarity are prerequisites for the sustainability of housing programs rooted in community ownership. Meanwhile, discipline and moral responsibility were also noted as non-negotiable values that preserve the program's gains and uphold social order. Participants viewed rule adherence not merely as compliance but as an ethical duty that sustains fairness and community harmony:

"Dapat magtuman ta sa mga balaod ug magpakita ug respeto, kay kung mag-abusar ta, mawala ang mga benepisyo." -IDI 3
We should follow the rules and show respect, because if we abuse it, the benefits will be lost.

Lastly, beneficiaries emphasized the importance of cooperation and humility. They noted that these values are essential in fostering a peaceful and progressive living environment:

"Hinaut magtinabangay ta uban ang pagkahiusa ug pagpaubos aron molambo ang atong komunidad." -IDI 6

We must work together with unity and humility so that our community can progress.

These insights highlight that empowering participation requires an ecosystem of education, communication, accountability, and shared vision. GK's experience in Datu Abdul Dadia suggests that community empowerment is most effective when institutional support is matched by individual commitment and collective agency, consistent with both the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984) and the Capabilities Approach.

Empowerment in the GK community emerges when participation is paired with ongoing capacity-building, transparent communication from leadership, and clearly defined responsibilities. Beneficiaries perceive empowerment not simply as material assistance but as the expansion of their knowledge, skills, and agency, which aligns with contemporary research showing that community programs become transformative when participation is accompanied by human capital enhancement and opportunities for meaningful involvement (Frediani & Cea, 2019). This is consistent with recent studies demonstrating that access to education, livelihood training, and civic engagement fosters more substantial ownership of community initiatives, improves self-efficacy, and increases the likelihood of long-term program adherence (Lombardini, 2017). Such findings reinforce that empowerment is a developmental process requiring continuous scaffolding, rather than a one-time intervention.

Additionally, the emphasis on discipline, accountability, and shared responsibility aligns with broader literature asserting that transparent communication, participatory governance, and collective norms are

critical to sustaining community-based housing and development programs. Research shows that when leaders communicate policies clearly and encourage collaborative decision-making, beneficiaries develop stronger trust in program governance and demonstrate higher compliance with community rules (Del Rosario & Manuel, 2021; Rocha Menocal, 2020). Similarly, studies on community-driven housing initiatives highlight that solidarity, cooperation, and ethical responsibility are foundational to maintaining social order and preserving program gains over time (Gonzales, 2021). Thus, the GK experience illustrates that empowerment and accountability are mutually reinforcing when communities internalize shared norms and capacities; they are more likely to sustain collective action and ensure the long-term success of development programs.

Effective Program Implementation through Sustainable Community Transformation

The final theme underscores the program's broader developmental vision, the pursuit of sustainable community transformation beyond housing provision. Participants consistently emphasized that the impact of GK extended to tangible improvements in the community's social, economic, and psychological well-being. As one respondent observed:

"Ang Gawad Kalinga naghatag ug dako nga tabang sa pag-pauswag sa among komunidad, nga nagdala ug daghang kalambuan ug oportunidad alang sa mas maayong kaugmaon." -IDI 5
Gawad Kalinga has provided significant help in advancing our community, bringing numerous developments and opportunities for a better future.

Such reflections on the broader aspirations of community-based housing programs, which aim not only to deliver shelter but also to enable holistic development outcomes (Habaradas & Aquino, 2019; Santos, 2020). The GK model, as implemented in this community, provides a clear example of how integrated governance and community-driven development can produce sustainable and empowering change.

Crucially, the success of GK's interventions was attributed to proactive program planning and adequate resource allocation. Beneficiaries highlighted that delays in housing construction often stemmed from resource constraints or unclear operational processes. Timely and efficient execution, on the other hand, was associated with transparent planning and steady funding:

"Ang klaro nga pagplano ug igo nga pondo mao ang susi aron malikayan ang paglangan sa pagtukod sa balay." -IDI 8

Precise planning and sufficient funding are key to avoiding delays in house construction.

These insights reinforce the Resource-Based View (RBV), particularly the importance of effectively mobilizing and coordinating tangible (e.g., funding, materials) and intangible (e.g., leadership, collaboration) resources for project scalability and consistency (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). Importantly, participants emphasized that transformative assistance must result in long-term improvements rather than temporary relief. The sustainability of community development initiatives like GK was perceived to hinge on their ability to foster lasting capability enhancement:

"Tabang sa komunidad mahimong mas epektibo ug sustainable kung magpadayon ang tinuod nga kausaban sa kinabuhi sa mga benepisyaryo." -IDI 8

Assistance to communities becomes more effective and sustainable when it brings about lasting change in beneficiaries' lives.

The finding aligns with Amartya Sen's Capabilities Approach (1999), which argues that real poverty alleviation is achieved not through short-term aid but through the expansion of substantive freedoms such as access to education, employment, and social inclusion that allow individuals to shape their lives

meaningfully. GK's support must produce long-term improvements rather than temporary relief, aligning closely with the Capability Approach. Housing and material assistance only become genuine development when they expand people's fundamental freedoms to do and be what they value. Community-level studies emphasize that psychosocial support, social capital, and transparent leadership are critical conversion factors that shape whether beneficiaries actually gain freedoms (Shinn, 2015; Horbachevska, 2024).

In this community, beneficiaries' emphasis on education, livelihood training, communication, and sustained engagement reveals the necessary "conversion factors" that turn resources into valuable functions. Research on housing through a capabilities lens argues that shelter is an enabling condition, not an end in itself, and that policy must address social, personal, and environmental conversion factors to sustain outcomes (Coates, 2015; Kimhur, 2020).

Moreover, participants linked this transformation to an interplay of discipline, livelihood, and active participation. These components were seen not only as outputs of the program but as drivers of community resilience and economic independence. As stated:

"Ang tinuod nga kausaban sa komunidad makita pinaagi sa panaghiusa, disiplina, ug edukasyon sa mga benepisyaryo aron malikayan ang pagsalig sa hinabang ug mapalambo ang ilang kaugalingon nga kapasidad sa pag-panginabuhi." -IDI 7
Actual community change is achieved through unity, discipline, and education of beneficiaries to prevent dependence on aid and to develop their own livelihood capacity.

This perspective demonstrates that while external support is necessary, the development of individual and collective agency is essential to building self-reliant communities, once again affirming the Capabilities Approach (CA) (Nussbaum, 2011). The beneficiaries' narratives in this case study thus affirm the complementary relevance of both RBV and CA. While RBV explains how GK leverages inter-agency coordination, stable funding, and resource planning for program implementation (Barney, 1991), CA explains the empowerment outcomes, such as enhanced skills, discipline, and reduced aid dependence that GK beneficiaries experience as a result of active participation and continuous capability expansion (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011).

These findings support the arguments of World Bank (2024), Pulhin (2024), and Valdecañas (2023), who assert that sustained community transformation requires the coordinated interplay of responsive governance, meaningful stakeholder engagement, and deliberate human-capital investments: governance that enables co-production and transparent decision-making helps align resources and expectations, stakeholder engagement builds local ownership and accountability, and education/skills programs increase beneficiaries' capabilities to convert resources into lasting well-being.

Implication and Concluding Remark

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study have significant implications for the practice of community development, social housing, and public administration. Primarily, the study highlights the value of adaptive and inclusive governance in ensuring the effective implementation of community-based housing programs such as Gawad Kalinga (GK) 36 (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2008). The research affirms that institutional synergy between local government units, non-governmental organizations, and civil society actors is essential to delivering holistic, timely, and sustainable services. Thus, policy implementers and local government units must institutionalize multi-stakeholder coordination platforms to improve resource mobilization, transparency, and responsiveness in addressing the multifaceted needs of vulnerable populations (Del Rosario & Manuel, 2021; Santos & Cruz, 2021).

Moreover, the study underscores the critical role of beneficiary discipline and grassroots participation in sustaining the program. Public administrators and community organizers should strengthen civic education, leadership development, and participatory mechanisms to foster accountability and self-reliance among

recipients of housing (Frediani & Cea, 2019; Santos & Cruz, 2021). This calls for the reinforcement of GK's core component programs: First, the study reinforced the significance of GK Tatag (shelter and site development) as foundational to establishing security, dignity, and stability among marginalized families. Local government units must continuously support this component through policy integration into land-use planning and post-construction maintenance. Second, Gawad Kalusugan (community health) emerged as an underutilized yet essential element, especially during health crises. Its implementation must be enhanced through systematic health education, barangay-based medical partnerships, and wellness promotion programs tailored to poor communities.

Second, the education and youth development initiative needs to be further institutionalized through partnerships with DepEd and TESDA to ensure that early childhood learning, psychosocial support, and leadership development are sustained and aligned with national standards, while simultaneously strengthening Gawad Kabuhayan (productivity and livelihood) by expanding livelihood support through capacity-building in entrepreneurship, access to micro-financing, and mentorship programs as an integrated approach that combines human-capital development with economic empowerment to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

Third, Kapitbahayan (community organizing and empowerment) and Mabuhay (cultural and tourism revitalization) should be implemented as complementary 37 strategies; Kapitbahayan's training in participatory governance, project management, and conflict resolution provides the social infrastructure needed for community ownership and sustainability, while Mabuhay builds local identity and inclusive tourism through cultural mapping and heritage-based micro-enterprises; integrating these approaches via community-led tourism planning and skills development will strengthen social cohesion, preserve culture, and create sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Finally, Green Kalinga (environmental sustainability) must be institutionalized through climate-adaptive infrastructure, community-based solid waste management, and green livelihood initiatives. Local governments should adopt policies that integrate ecological planning with housing and social development.

The challenges identified, such as donor dependency, unclear policy communication, and limited livelihood support, imply a need for policy reforms that promote institutional continuity, simplified operational mechanisms, and resource diversification strategies. Embedding the principles of the Capabilities Approach and Resource-Based View into public housing policies can help recalibrate existing standards to prioritize not only physical shelter but also empowerment, resilience, and sustained well-being.

Implications for Policy

The findings from this single-case study of Gawad Kalinga (GK) in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia point to several policy priorities that local and national policymakers should adopt to sustain housing gains and convert shelter provision into durable human development.

First, policy frameworks for community-based housing must move beyond short-term project cycles and explicitly institutionalize multi-stakeholder governance arrangements that secure continuity in funding, technical support, and coordination among LGUs, NGOs, and private partners (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2008; Del Rosario & Manuel, 2021). Institutionalization can be achieved by integrating GK component programs (e.g., GK Tatag, Gawad Kabuhayan, Gawad Kalusugan) into municipal development and land use plans, and by formalizing memoranda of agreement that define roles, funding streams, and performance indicators.

Second, policy must prioritize financial sustainability and risk management for community housing. The study shows that donor dependency and irregular resource inflows delay implementation and weaken beneficiary trust; therefore, governments should develop blended financing arrangements that combine municipal allocations, conditional grants, community co-funding mechanisms, and scheduled private-sector contributions (Barney, 1991). Establishing a small contingency/resilience fund at the city or barangay level to cover shortfall periods (seeded through a portion of annual development budgets or matched private contributions) will reduce stoppages in construction, feeding, and skills programs that currently interrupt beneficiary progress.

Third, national and local policy should mainstream livelihood and human capital interventions as core, not ancillary, components of housing programs. As the results show, shelter without stable livelihood opportunities prolongs dependency (Sen, 1999; Nussbaum, 2011). Policies should therefore mandate linkage of housing projects to formal livelihood pathways: (a) local government partnerships with TESDA and DepEd for certified skills training and youth programs; (b) easy access to microfinance and enterprise development support for beneficiaries; and (c) inclusion of business-mentoring and market-linkage plans as part of project approval. Embedding livelihood milestones into project monitoring encourages a shift from provision to capability expansion.

Fourth, policy must simplify program rules and strengthen social protection measures so that the most vulnerable are not excluded by labour-intensive mechanisms (e.g., rigid point systems). The point system's strengths (promoting accountability and discipline) must be balanced with exemptions, earned-credit alternatives, or in-kind support (transport allowances, caregiving credits) for households constrained by health conditions, caregiving burdens, or extreme poverty. Clear statutory guidance and standardized but flexible operational protocols will reduce arbitrariness and improve equity in beneficiary selection and participation.

Fifth, strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive policy loops. Policymakers should require standardized M&E frameworks that track not only housing delivery but medium-term outcomes (household income, school attendance, health indicators, social cohesion). Regular, participatory feedback sessions with beneficiary representatives (purok chairs, SK leaders) should feed into municipal policy reviews to enable real-

time adjustments, an approach consistent with adaptive governance and co-production principles highlighted in this study (Frediani & Cea, 2019).

Sixth, prioritize basic infrastructure and service integration through inter-agency policy instruments. The inability to access reliable water, electricity, and transport undermines the developmental value of shelter. National housing policy and LGU ordinances should require pre-development assessments for utilities and include enforceable timelines and funding commitments for utility provision before occupancy. Such integration reduces friction in livelihoods and supports sustainable household transitions.

Finally, embed capability building and community organizing into formal policy. The Capabilities Approach and Resource-Based View used in this study suggest that policies should explicitly fund community organizing (Kapitbahayan), psychosocial supports, and civic education as eligible, budgeted line items in housing programs. Formal recognition of volunteer engagement and a policy for volunteer coordination (training, small stipends, or tax incentives for private donors) will help sustain the social capital that underpins GK's success.

Together, these policy measures institutionalized governance, diversified and resilient financing, livelihood mainstreaming, simplified inclusive rules, robust M&E, utility integration, and formalized capability building will help convert housing provision into long-term poverty reduction and community transformation, as evidenced by the experiences of beneficiaries in Datu Abdul Dadia. (Brillantes & Fernández, 2008; Sen, 1999; Barney, 1991; Frediani & Cea, 2019).

Implications for Future Research

The results of this study pave the way for several avenues of future research. Given the single-case study design and localized context, subsequent investigations could employ comparative multi-site case studies or mixed-methods designs to examine variations in program implementation across different GK communities nationwide (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This would enhance the generalizability of findings and identify context-specific enablers or inhibitors to program success.

Future researchers may also explore longitudinal impacts of the Gawad Kalinga program, focusing on intergenerational mobility, changes in household income, education attainment, and social capital formation (Sen, 1999). Such studies would help determine the durability of GK's empowerment model over time and assess whether beneficiaries eventually transition from dependency to full economic autonomy.

Furthermore, alternative methodological approaches, such as participatory action research (PAR) or developmental evaluation, could deepen understanding of community agency and co-production in program refinement (Frediani & Cea, 2019). Investigations into specific component programs, such as Gawad Kalusugan (community health) or Green Kalinga (environmental sustainability), are also warranted to assess their standalone effectiveness and contribution to the holistic transformation envisioned by GK.

Lastly, research could examine the governance architecture that supports community-based housing initiatives, particularly how institutional leadership, policy integration, and administrative innovations can overcome resource constraints and procedural inefficiencies (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2008). These insights can help public administrators and development actors co-create inclusive, scalable, and context-sensitive models for poverty alleviation and sustainable community transformation.

Concluding Remarks

Conducting this case study on the implementation of the Gawad Kalinga (GK) program in Barangay Datu Abdul Dadia has been both an enlightening academic journey and a deeply personal learning experience. Moreover, witnessing the transformation of a once-marginalized community into a thriving and empowered neighborhood reaffirmed the researchers' belief in the power of collaborative, grassroots-driven development. The narratives of hope, resilience, and active citizen participation that emerged from the in-depth interviews underscored that genuine progress is achievable when the people themselves are positioned at the heart of development processes.

This study taught the researchers that while infrastructure and material resources are crucial, it is the shared vision, discipline, and collective action of a community that sustain long-term change. It was realized that development is not simply a technical process of delivering services Nussbaum (2011); Sen (1999), but a moral and social commitment to dignity, inclusion, and equity. The Gawad Kalinga model serves as a potent reminder that public administration must not lose sight of its human face rooted in compassion, volunteerism, and solidarity.

Most importantly, research is not only about documenting results but about amplifying voices (Del Rosario & Manuel, 2021), especially those from underserved sectors. The stories and insights shared by the beneficiaries deepened the researchers' commitment to advocating for policies and programs that are context-sensitive, inclusive, and empowering. As future public administrators and development practitioners, the researchers carry the responsibility to craft and support initiatives that do not merely provide shelter or temporary relief but actively promote long-term empowerment, resilience, and systemic change by centering community leadership, ensuring policy continuity, and integrating social, economic, and environmental dimensions thereby advancing development that is dignified, inclusive, and sustainable for all.

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