

Participatory Governance and Community Empowerment: The Case of Community Driven Development – KALAH-CIDSS Projects in Camarines Sur, Philippines

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100600263>

Received: 23 May 2026; Accepted: 28 May 2026; Published: 22 June 2026

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the impact of the KALAH-CIDSS program on community empowerment in the Municipality of Ocampo, Camarines Sur, within the Theory of Change framework. The Community Empowerment Activity Cycle (CEAC), through which KALAH-CIDSS operationalizes, enables citizens' participation at every stage—from social preparation to community monitoring. This study employed a qualitative case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the case in a real-life context through focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and document review, exploring how community-driven development (CDD), like the KALAH-CIDSS program, translates active participation into community empowerment. Findings revealed that active participation in KALAH-CIDSS enables ordinary and marginalized citizens to achieve positive outcomes, such as improved technical competence, enhanced leadership capacity, increased communication skills and confidence, increased social capital, and improved community-led transparency and accountability. These outcomes sustain civic engagement, empowering individuals to become active partners in community development. In the same way, the program delivered high-quality, tangible outputs that benefited the community by improving accessibility, reducing flooding and waterlogging, and providing short-term income opportunities for households. Among challenges encountered during implementation were limited resources, administrative hurdles, volunteers' concerns, and technical issues; thus, this study recommends a more focused capacity-building, continuous support from the local government units, sustained volunteerism, and commitment from the community to ensure long-term empowerment. Finally, the KALAH-CIDSS experience in Ocampo, Camarines Sur, demonstrated both responsiveness to urgent needs and fostered a culture of participation, responsibility, and empowerment that stands as a replicable model for other communities.

Keywords: KALAH-CIDSS, CEAC, participatory governance, community-driven development (CDD), community empowerment, transparency, accountability, sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

Governance is derived from the Greek term *kubernan*, meaning “to steer,” and traditionally refers to the structures and processes through which authority is exercised in managing public affairs (Plattner, 2013; Mitlin, 2004). In its conventional form, governance often follows a top-down approach, where decision-making power is concentrated in state institutions and policies are implemented with limited citizen involvement (Krogh, 2017). While this model ensured centralized control, it frequently overlooked the voices of marginalized groups, failed to foster inclusivity and accountability, and was prone to creating ruptures and democratic challenges (Bua & Bussu, 2021; Fukuyama, 2016). Hence, a bottom-up governance approach has been conceived and considered significant to adopt.

Formal citizen participation in Philippine governance commenced in 1986 during the Presidency of Corazon Aquino, where people's involvement was formalized through decentralization (Villegas, 1987). The 1987 Philippine Constitution explicitly mandates the State to encourage the participation of the non-governmental organizations, community-based, and sectoral organizations in promoting national welfare (1987 Constitution,

Art. II, Sec.23.). Article XIII, Section 16 of the 1987 Constitution protects the right of people and groups to meaningful and appropriate involvement in all levels of social, political, and economic decision-making. Hence, participation in governance is crucial in increasing access to and influence over policy-making initiatives (Masagca et al., 2009) and has the potential to bring about positive transformation in every community and enhance the lives of the citizenry (Garcia et al., 2023).

This mandate is further reinforced by the Local Government Code of 1991, which provides mechanisms for people's participation in local governance. This is achieved through expansion of representation in the Local Development Councils (LDCs), as mandated across Local Government Units (LGUs), and the creation of other special bodies which include members from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), People's Organizations (POs), and the private sector.

However, despite these frameworks, persistent issues such as elite capture and clientelism, weak civil society capacity, and uneven LGU commitment continue to hinder meaningful participation (Sulasula et al., 2026; Pasamonte, 2024; Porio, 2017; Del Prado et al., 2015; Orbista, 2012). Gaps in the documentation and evaluation of the outputs and outcomes of citizens' engagement are evident, thus limiting evidence of empowerment and transformation (Galindes & Medina-Guce, 2018). Citizens' engagement with the state remains constrained by deep-rooted issues such as poverty, inequality, elite dominance, patronage politics, institutional weaknesses, and corruption, which perpetuate disenfranchisement and marginalization. This makes genuine citizens' participation and representation difficult to achieve, often relegating meaningful political change to extra-constitutional and collective actions outside formal structures (Djani, 2019).

Over the years, there has been a failure to involve NGOs in planning and basic policy-making processes, and a weak level of involvement in the implementation of programs, projects, and activities. NGOs are supposed to provide checks and balances in decision-making and service delivery, but these have not been realized (Orbista, 2012). Participation failed to clarify the roles and capacities required of community-based civil society groups for meaningful participation in local development councils (Galindes & Medina-Guce, 2018). Participatory budgeting procedural participation often does not translate into meaningful influence over budget outcomes, especially when technical constraints or power imbalances exist (Garcia, 2022).

Similarly, key challenges exist, such as less experienced CSOs needing more capacity building, basic sector groups in barangays requiring better organization and leadership, national agency requirements that should be harmonized, CSOs needing greater resource support, the business sector that should be more engaged, and project prioritization that must focus on wider community needs (Del Prado et al., 2015). Key budget decisions remain central, and citizen input seldom affects major sector allocations.

The study of Sulasula et al. (2026) further finds inconsistent transparency, limited technical capacity among barangay representatives and citizens, and processes that prioritize executive agendas. The Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI) Philippines (2020) report states that the citizens' participatory audit process was constrained by a limited data-collection mechanism and participation from a single stakeholder group. It is recommended that internal audit responsibilities be devolved to communities nationwide (Munoz, 2020).

In response to the systemic issues in participatory governance, a Community-Driven Development (CDD) program – the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan–Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS) was introduced under the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) as a national poverty alleviation program. The KALAHI-CIDSS program aims to empower communities by treating them not as passive recipients of assistance but as partners in development; improve local governance by improving people's engagement and access to their LGUs, thereby making it more democratic and participatory; and reduce poverty by implementing barangay-level projects that respond to the community's felt needs and problems (DSWD, n.d). This initiative aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is anchored on participation, transparency, accountability, and inclusion. Moreover, KALAHI-CIDSS has implemented thousands of sub-projects nationwide, ranging from infrastructure and social services to climate resilience initiatives, while embedding participatory governance through the Community Empowerment Activity Cycle (CEAC) (Aceron, 2022; World Bank, 2013; Asian Development Bank [ADB], 2012).

KALAH-CIDSS operationalizes through CEAC, which is a four-stage community development approach that consists of the stages such as Social Preparation, Community Planning, Community-managed Implementation, and Community Monitoring. Each phase includes processes and activities that encourage public engagement in local development planning and implementation, especially among the impoverished and disenfranchised (DSWD, 2014b). Additionally, CEAC seeks to enhance communication with government representatives and access to information while offering varied groups a range of capacity-building and other priority initiatives (ADB, 2012).

In 2023, the DSWD Bicol completed 1,945 KALAH-CIDSS sub-projects with a total grant allocation of PHP 1,053,090,475.23, benefiting 369,388 households across the six provinces of the region. According to the Philippine News Agency (2024), the largest share was in Camarines Sur (613 projects), followed by Sorsogon (376), Masbate (336), Catanduanes (225), Albay (211), and Camarines Norte (184). Most of the sub-projects completed in 2023 were roads, cash-for-work, footpaths, spillways or overflow bridges, telecommunication equipment or devices, and flood control or river control (DSWD Field Office V, 2023).

KALAH-CIDSS has received numerous international and local recognitions, including being named as World Bank Top 5 best practices in project design in 2023, serving as a learning laboratory for Asian governments and earning a perfect score from 92 civil society organizations due to its engagement approach in 2005. KALAH-CIDSS was also awarded with government citations, including a Presidential Citation for poverty alleviation in 2010, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)'s Good Practice Award in 2010, and Best Public Sector Project from the Regional Council of Western Visayas in 2006. In March 2026, the program was highlighted as distinguished at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Socio-Cultural Community High-Level Forum as a regional model for community empowerment and participatory governance, setting a benchmark for Southeast Asian nations (ASEAN Forum, 2026).

Empirical evidence across the Philippines consistently highlights KALAH-CIDSS as an innovative model in promoting participatory governance and community empowerment. National and regional assessments underscore its significant aid to poverty alleviation, greater accessibility to vital services, and resilience through climate-responsive infrastructure. For instance, Malinao and Embornans (2025) point out how KALAH-CIDSS subprojects conform with SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 13 (Climate Action), reinforcing the significance of collaborative resource generation in ensuring long-term impact. In the same way, Arrobio and Lagura (2025) associate small-scale infrastructure initiatives with SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), pointing out both opportunities and challenges in maintaining water systems. These results highlight KALAH-CIDSS as a benchmark program with worldwide relevance in promoting community-driven development.

At the local setting, researches by Namoc and Robles (2024) and Pontual and Guillena (2023) confirm that KALAH-CIDSS is viewed as a driver for good governance and better quality of life, with participants of both research strongly attesting to its advantages. Additionally, Acheron (2022) and Cerna (2021) emphasize the institutional dynamics of the program, demonstrating how repeated engagement cycles integrate participatory planning into local governance while introducing safeguards against elite capture. These changes shift decision-making authority, which reinforces inclusivity and transparency. In post-disaster contexts, Cabiles and Permejo (2021) stress how KALAH-CIDSS assisted recovery after Typhoon Haiyan, with its demand-responsive design ensuring that strategies reflected community priorities. This adaptability highlights the program's resilience and relevance in crisis governance. Complementing this, Beatty et al. (2018) and Poe et al. (2018) argue that the program fosters civic engagement and collective efficacy, which may be attributed to psychological factors such as norms and attitudes that shape volunteer participation.

In Camarines Sur, localized studies further provide positive perspectives. Cerna (2021) highlights how sustained engagement integrated participatory planning and transparency. Gender inclusion also drives community involvement. Delfino (2017) emphasizes poverty alleviation, trust-building, and empowerment, but notes challenges in sustainability and uneven participation. Gumba (2016) also concludes that KALAH-CIDSS strengthens community empowerment, establishes participatory decision-making in the barangay, and fosters a strong sense of ownership.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While participatory governance frameworks in the Philippines have been extensively studied, documenting and measuring the impact on community empowerment of CDD programs remains largely unexamined. Although studies on KALAH-CIDSS validate the program's broad impacts, evaluations such as those by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) (2012) and the World Bank (2013) were conducted in a national setting and often stop at project outputs rather than at empowerment impacts. Localized studies, such as those by Gumba (2016), Delfino (2017), and Cerna (2021), focus on poverty alleviation, socio-economic outcomes, and community development but did not fully assess empowerment dimensions. Hence, this study addresses that gap by focusing on the impact on community empowerment – one of the program's main goals: to empower communities through participatory approaches that regard them as stakeholders in development rather than passive aid recipients. With contributions to the advances of the SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 9 (Innovation and Infrastructure), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 16 (Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnership for Goals), the researcher conducted a qualitative study exploring the impact of KALAH-CIDSS projects on community empowerment.

By situating the research in Ocampo, Camarines Sur, a municipality recognized in 2023 as a top-performing area in KALAH-CIDSS implementation, this study aims to provide an understanding of how empowerment is sustained at the grassroots level. Generally, this study asks: How do KALAH-CIDSS projects in Ocampo, Camarines Sur, foster community empowerment?

Participants of the study from the Barangays of La Purisima Nuevo, Pinit, and Villaflorida, were community volunteers who were selected based on their experience with the completed sub-projects and being the team head of each role in the implementation of the project, regardless of their age, education, gender, and sectoral representation. The study's results will benefit all community leaders, policymakers, and the academe by explaining why the KALAH-CIDSS program matters for participatory governance, thereby enabling an empowered community to participate in local governance priority programs and activities.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to determine the impact of KALAH-CIDSS implementation on community empowerment in the Municipality of Ocampo, Camarines Sur.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Describe the governance structure, role, and responsibilities of the implementers of the KALAH-CIDSS at the Barangay Level
2. Discuss the actual impact pathways of KALAH-CIDSS projects.
3. Determine the impact of KALAH-CIDSS on community empowerment.
4. Discuss the challenges and lessons learned from the implementation of the KALAH-CIDSS.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will provide necessary baseline data for the Philippine government agencies, particularly the DSWD, in continuously evaluating the KALAH-CIDSS program's impact on community empowerment, guiding improvements in outputs, encouraging stronger community engagement, and reinforcing its poverty alleviation goal. Local partners such as local government units and stakeholders will gain an understanding of their roles and responsibilities, highlighting collaboration across agencies and extending participatory practices beyond KALAH-CIDSS programs. Community members and volunteers' diverse experiences will highlight successes, identify areas for improvement, and ensure responsiveness to community needs.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, the Theory of Change (ToC) serves as the guiding theoretical framework in exploring the impact of KALAH-CIDSS projects on community empowerment in Ocampo, Camarines Sur. Asian Development

Bank (2012) uses this framework to evaluate KALAH-CIDSS projects. The theory of change framework, as applied to the program, focuses on the importance of effective participation of the community members in the CEAC; hence, it guarantees that the initiatives chosen by the communities are closely aligned with their specific needs and priorities. This ensures that the solutions implemented address real challenges in community empowerment and in the improvement of tangible outputs.

According to Weis (1995), the Theory of Change is a framework that explains the rationale behind how and why an initiative achieved its intended results. Weiss (1995) introduced the term to highlight the connection of the program activities to outcomes and the progressions leading to the long-term goal. ToC provides a structured lens in examining how program activities lead to long-term social transformation. He further emphasized that ToC requires making explicit the causal pathways that connect activities to desired impacts. In the context of KALAH-CIDSS, as shown in Figure 1, the long-term goal is community empowerment. Intervention which focuses on the CEAC as the embedded participatory approach is designed to produce immediate tangible outputs, wherein one is the completed infrastructure sub-projects. These outputs contribute to outcomes such as meaningful community participation and other related immediate outcomes, which serve as dimensions of community empowerment impacts.

Figure 1. Theory of Change Framework (Weiss, 1995)

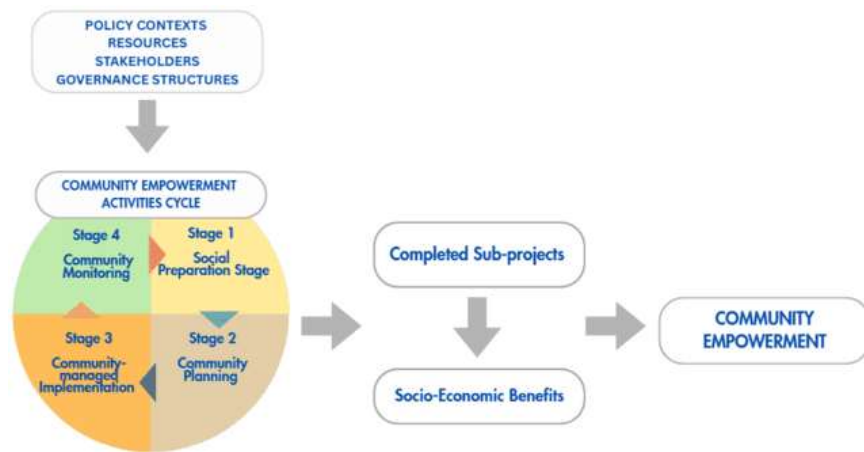


CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study is anchored on the Theory of Change (Weiss, 1995), which explains how specific interventions lead to desired long-term outcomes through a series of causal linkages. In the context of KALAH-CIDSS, the framework illustrates how program inputs and activities generate outputs that progressively lead to empowerment outcomes. Figure 2 illustrates this framework, showing how the ToC baseline connects program interventions to their intended outcomes and long-term impacts.

The inputs include program resources, community volunteers, and enabling policy contexts which integrates governance structures and defined responsibilities. These feed into activities under CEAC which involves the social preparation, community planning and proposal development, community-managed implementation, and community monitoring, where residents actively engage in decision-making and project management. The resulting outputs, where completed sub-projects is one, serve as tangible output of active participation to CEAC.

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework



These outputs then contribute to outcomes which ultimately translate to being the dimensions of the community empowerment impacts which is one of the three primary goals of the KALAH-CIDSS program. The framework also recognizes the challenges (e.g., resource limitations, compliances and other implementation issues) that were encountered during the implementation of the project. This conceptual mapping provides a clear visualization of how participatory governance mechanisms translate into empowerment within the KALAH-CIDSS program in Ocampo, Camarines Sur.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

This study complied with the ethical considerations mandated in the American Psychological Association (APA) Ethics Code (2003). The researcher secured the necessary permits to conduct the study in the selected Municipality and barangays. During the conception of the study proposal, the researcher coordinated first with the Department of Social and Development Welfare – KALAH-CIDSS Office in Municipality of Ocampo, Camarines Sur, then with the Municipal Mayor and the Punong Barangays. A formal request letter stating the purpose of the study, the procedures, and the duration to keep everything clear and transparent. The participants of focus group discussion (FGD) and key informant interview (KII), they had signed their informed consent before the scheduled date of interviews. They were oriented on the procedures of the interviews and FGDs, informed of the length and their rights. The researcher assures every participant of their protection for their identity and privacy by using pseudonyms when needed. The researcher reminded the participants of their right to raise concerns, their right to join and withdraw from the discussion at any time they wished to, without being asked for their reasons. They were also informed that any information collected may be withdrawn if they wish not to participate anymore. All information collected will be treated with the utmost professionalism and kept confidential.

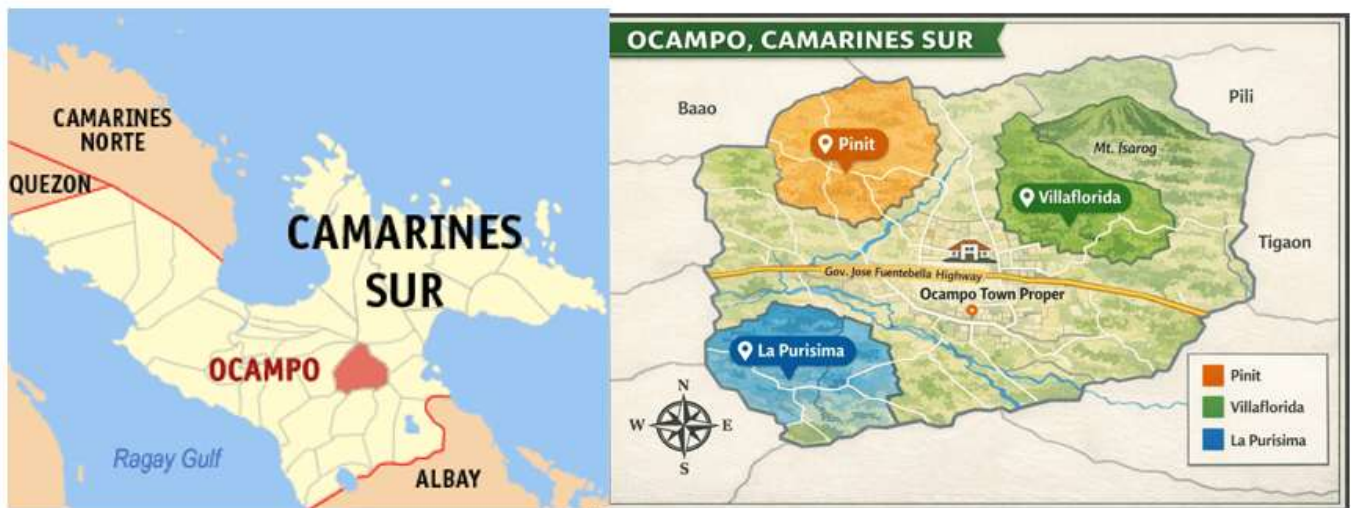
METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative case design to gain an understanding of the depth of the case in a real-life context. It provides valuable insights into social issues, fostering human experience, providing significant insights, and is flexible to societal demands. In a world that is becoming ever more complex, qualitative research is essential (Lim, 2024). This study employed purposive sampling of information-rich participants with direct involvement in KALAH-CIDSS, focusing on community volunteers from selected barangays in Ocampo, Camarines Sur, chosen based on criteria such as leadership roles, residency, grassroots experience, and willingness to participate, while excluding sub-committee members. Four implementers, including the Municipal Mayor and the three Punong Barangays, were included for a governance perspective. Data gathering techniques consisted of FGD with five (5) to eight (8) participants using open-ended questions; KII with the Mayor and Punong Barangay guided by open-ended interview items; document review of policy frameworks, manuals, ordinances, proposals, agreements, completion, financial and audit records, and field observation to visit project sites and volunteers' locale to triangulate findings.

Locale of the study

Ocampo is a third-class municipality in the 3rd district of Camarines Sur, Philippines. (Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], 2025). It is situated at the foothills of Mount Isarog, bordered by the towns of Pili, Baao, and Tigaon (Department of the Interior and Local Government [DILG], 2024). As of July 1, 2024, the total population is about 49,535. It is composed of twenty-five (25) barangays, which include the target focus of study, namely: La Purisima Nuevo, Pinit, and Villa Florida (PSA, 2025). These barangays were purposively selected as research sites because they represent diverse socio-economic and geographic contexts within Ocampo, providing a balanced view of KALAH-CIDSS implementation (Galindes & Medina-Guce, 2018). These barangays are beneficiaries of KALAH-CIDSS subprojects in the municipality (DSWD,2024). In 2023, the completed subproject in each barangay is the concreting of access roads with drainage canals (Pinit); concreting of pathway (Villa Florida) and construction of barangay roads with reinforced concrete pipe culverts (La Purisima Nuevo) (DSWD,2024). The accompanying map in Figure 3 illustrates their geographic locations within Ocampo, Camarines Sur.

Figure 3. Map of Ocampo, Camarines Sur (Gonzalez, 2005)



Ocampo is primarily an agricultural community known for its strong civic participation and engagement in community-driven development programs such as KALAH-CIDSS (Medina-Guce, 2011). Barangay Pinit, which is located along the Gov. Jose T. Fuentebella Highway, is a semi-urban barangay characterized by active community organizations and accessible infrastructure. It has been a consistent participant in KALAH-CIDSS sub-projects focusing on road improvement and livelihood support (DSWD,2024). Barangay Villaflorida - situated northeast of the town proper- is predominantly agricultural, with strong volunteer participation in community planning and project monitoring. Its residents have been involved in capacity-building initiatives under KALAH-CIDSS (Galindes & Medina-Guce, 2018). Barangay La Purisima Nuevo can be found in the southwest of the municipal center. La Purisima Nuevo is a rural barangay known for its cohesive community leadership and inclusive decision-making processes. It has implemented sub-projects related to water systems and community facilities (DSWD, 2024). These barangays were chosen to reflect varying degrees of community participation, governance engagement, and empowerment outcomes under the KALAH-CIDSS framework (Weiss, 1995; Panga, 2024).

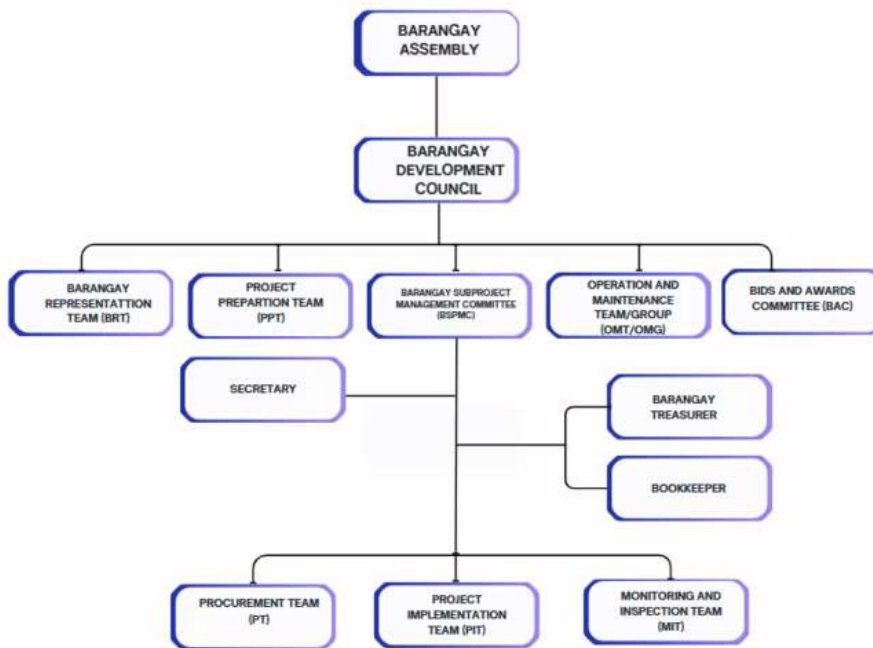
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered in this research study. It addresses specific objectives such as the governance structures, the role, and responsibilities of the community volunteers involved. This section also discussed the impact pathway of the KALAH-CIDSS from completed tangible output producing outcome, which translated into community empowerment as the impact. In the last part of the study, this chapter, it enumerated challenges encountered and lessons learned during the implementation of the projects.

Governance structure

Based on the document review of the KALAH-CIDSS Manual, it revealed that the governance structure (see Figure 4) of the KALAH-CIDSS at the barangay level makes everyone a contributing agent to the successful community-driven development initiatives. The governance structure is the venue for exercising their individual roles and responsibilities to achieve quality output, and at the same time, empowering them to be active participants in this community-driven development. The governance structure involves the Barangay Assembly serving as the core decision-making body.

Figure 4. Barangay Sub-project Organizational Structure (Community Finance Manual, 2016)



Roles and Responsibilities of Community Volunteers

Clear delineation of roles and systematic checks and balances are central to any governance structure, including KALAH-CIDSS. The structure guarantees that diverse voices are represented and heard. By explicitly defining volunteer roles and committee responsibilities, KALAH-CIDSS operationalizes participatory governance throughout the project cycle—from planning and procurement to monitoring, grievance redress, and sustainability. This structure not only upholds the CEAC framework’s principles but also directly supports the Theory of Change by building empowered, cohesive, and resilient communities through transparent, accountable, and inclusive governance.

The following committees, composed of community volunteers, are actively involved. Table 1 enumerates the roles and responsibilities of each position. These roles are excerpted from various KALAH-CIDSS Manuals such as the Community-Based Finance Manual, Grievance Redress System, CEAC Manual, and Infrastructure Manual Volume 1.

Table 1. Roles and Responsibilities of Community Volunteers

COMMITTEE	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Barangay Assembly	The decision-making body that actively participates in assemblies, planning, budgeting, and monitoring activities. Ensures inclusive involvement of women, youth, the elderly, and indigenous peoples. Monitor transparency in procurement, material use, and construction; Report issues to BSPMC, ACT, or DSWD Grievance Unit if lapses occur; Contribute resources like land, labor, or materials to support implementation

Participatory Situational Analysis (PSA) / Community-Based Monitoring Team (CMT)	Identify key activities and outputs from the BAP or List of Prioritized Needs. Prepare the Monitoring Plan and Work Plan. Collect and analyze data based on the Community Monitoring (CM) Plan; Review and organize gathered information according to the CM Plan; Compare data from various sources and present findings mid-cycle and end-of-cycle
Grievance and Redress Team (GRS)	Responsible for addressing issues, queries, inquiries, feedback, and other concerns; Coordinates with Lupong Tagapamayapa and other grievance bodies to harmonize systems; Documents grievances raised during assemblies or submitted via grievance boxes
Barangay Representation Team (BRT)	Ensures that the voices of the community are heard and reflected throughout the project cycle; represents their barangay in inter-barangay forums and municipal-level discussions, advocating for their community's prioritized needs and proposed sub-projects. They take part in selecting and endorsing sub-projects during the Municipal Inter-Barangay Forum (MIBF), ensuring that decisions are democratic and inclusive.; BRTs help relay updates, guidelines, and decisions from municipal-level meetings back to their barangay, keeping residents informed and engaged. By participating in public forums and budget reviews, BRTs help uphold transparency and community oversight throughout implementation
Project Preparation Team (PPT)	Draft detailed sub-project proposals, including timelines, budgets, and sustainability plans; Engage with barangay residents to ensure projects reflect community priorities and address service gaps; and participate in the preparation of documents for the request for fund release (RFR)
Barangay Subproject Management Committee (BSPMC) Chairperson	As head of all the committees created to implement the subproject, he is responsible for approving the Program of Work (POW), Community Procurement Plan (CPP), signing contracts and purchase orders, issues change orders, suspension orders and other requirements related to procurement and contract implementation in accordance with the procedures outlined in the specific manuals for this purpose, among others, and imposes the necessary administrative sanctions on errant members of the PIT, MIT, BAC, PT and service providers in accordance with appropriate rules and regulations
Secretary	Documents meetings by recording minutes, attendance, and action points; Maintains organized records of all project-related documents and communications; Serves as a communication link between BSPMC, volunteers, and external stakeholders; Coordinates meetings, prepares agendas, and tracks follow-up tasks; Posts public documents to ensure transparency and community access
Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)	Ensures that the BSPMC follows proper procurement procedures in the procurement process; Conducts all procurement activities such as pre-procurement, pre-bid conferences, posting bid invitations, screening bidder eligibility, and evaluation of bids; undertakes post-qualification of bidders and recommends contract awards to the BSPMC chair

Audit and Inventory Team (AIT)	Perform internal audit functions in all KALAH-CIDSS funds handled by the Treasurer and all financial records and reports of the assigned Bookkeeper
Procurement Team (PT)	Prepares procurement documents and acts as a canvasser; acts as secretariat of BAC; responsible for all activities which are needing laborers, supplies, materials, equipment, suppliers, or contractors
Project Implementation Team (PIT)	Oversees implementation and management of the subproject; Prepares key documents such as construction logbooks, accomplishment reports, and statement of works; Reviews and signs time sheets, employment records, and approved petty cash requests from BSPMC Chairperson
Monitoring and Inspection Team (MIT)	Ensures proper use of supplies, materials, and equipment; Monitors procurement activities and construction progress; documents issues and reports findings to the BSPMC
Barangay Treasurer	Acts as co-signatory and custodian of project funds and properties; Prepares financial documents, maintains records of all financial transactions, and updates the checkbooks regularly. Report financial status to the community during Barangay assemblies
Bookkeeper	Responsible for the safekeeping and updating of the book of accounts, prepares monthly reports, bank reconciliation, cash receipts, and fund usage; Ensures financial records are updated and accurate
Operation and Maintenance Team (O&M)	Start sustainability planning early to outline how subprojects will be maintained over time. Responsible for the ongoing care and management of the completed projects turned over to the local group; Conduct regular inspections, document issues, and coordinate repairs with support from LGUs to preserve infrastructure quality

Election through the barangay assembly. Communities play a direct role in implementing key subproject activities at the community and municipal levels. Community volunteers, who are members of the community, are popularly elected during the Barangay Assembly to lead and implement project planning and implementation. As per FGD and KII, community volunteers narrated that they were nominated and elected through the Barangay Assembly.

Capacity building after the election. Once elected, they were sent to a seminar and oriented. Then, they performed what was expected of them based on their assigned responsibilities. Through their individual role, many other stories had transpired as discussed further in the next sections. Their stories were all manifestations of their passion for taking the challenge, which later brings impact not only to their personal growth and their family but also to the whole community.

The Impact Pathway of the KALAH-CIDSS

The KALAH-CIDSS impact pathway, as shown in Table 2, presents the CEAC of KALAH-CIDSS, organized into four stages that illustrate how participatory governance unfolds at the barangay level. Each stage highlights the activities, the outputs produced, and the broader outcomes achieved. Taken together, the table demonstrates how KALAH-CIDSS transforms community participation into structured empowerment, ensuring that development projects are not only implemented but also sustained through active citizen engagement and adapted governance practices.

Table 2. Impact Pathway of the KALAH-CIDSS

Stages →	Activities →	Outputs →	Outcomes
Stage 1 Social Preparation Stage	Pre-entry Municipal orientation social investigation 1st barangay assembly: barangay orientation PSA workshop 2nd barangay assembly PSA results presentation	Three (3) Community profile and analysis of the conditions in the assigned area One (1) Signed MOA between the Municipal and DSWD and PSA results Two Barangay Assemblies held Three (3) CVs each team of PSA and GRS were elected each barangay One (1) MFW conducted	Increased awareness of local issues, mobilization of volunteers, and strengthened LGU-DSWD partnership
Stage 2 Community Planning and Project Proposal Development	PSA BAP/BDP Integration Criteria setting workshop Project development MIBF-Participatory Resource Allocation 4TH BA: Final community approval of proposal MDC meeting for integration to multiyear MDP	Community-approved project concepts based on the integrated BAP/BDP Three (3) CVs each team of BRT and PPT were formed each barangay One (1) Project proposal per barangay approved	Transparent prioritization of needs; collective ownership of project ideas Empowered volunteers to lead planning Strengthened organizational capacity Enhanced technical competence, readiness for implementation Strengthened planning capacity
Stage 3 Community Managed Project Implementation	Consultation and action planning Community-managed project implementation and completion	Three (3) Completed projects Special groups participated in the community project implementation (see Tables 8 and 9) Three (3) Capacity-building /training sessions conducted per barangay One (1) BSPMC formed to implement the community projects per barangay One (1) Formed community-based organizations to operate, manage, and maintain community projects per barangay	Enhanced mobility and accessibility Enhanced mobility and accessibility Economic and Livelihood Opportunities Inclusion of marginalized sectors, Strengthened social cohesion Increased Communication Skills and Confidence. Improved skills and leadership, and technical competence Strengthened accountability,
Stage 4 Community Monitoring	Barangay and municipal accountability reporting Functionality and sustainability	One Community-based monitoring and evaluation (CBME) report per barangay One (1) Community assessment report	Evidence-based decision-making, Fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility, Community-led transparency and accountability

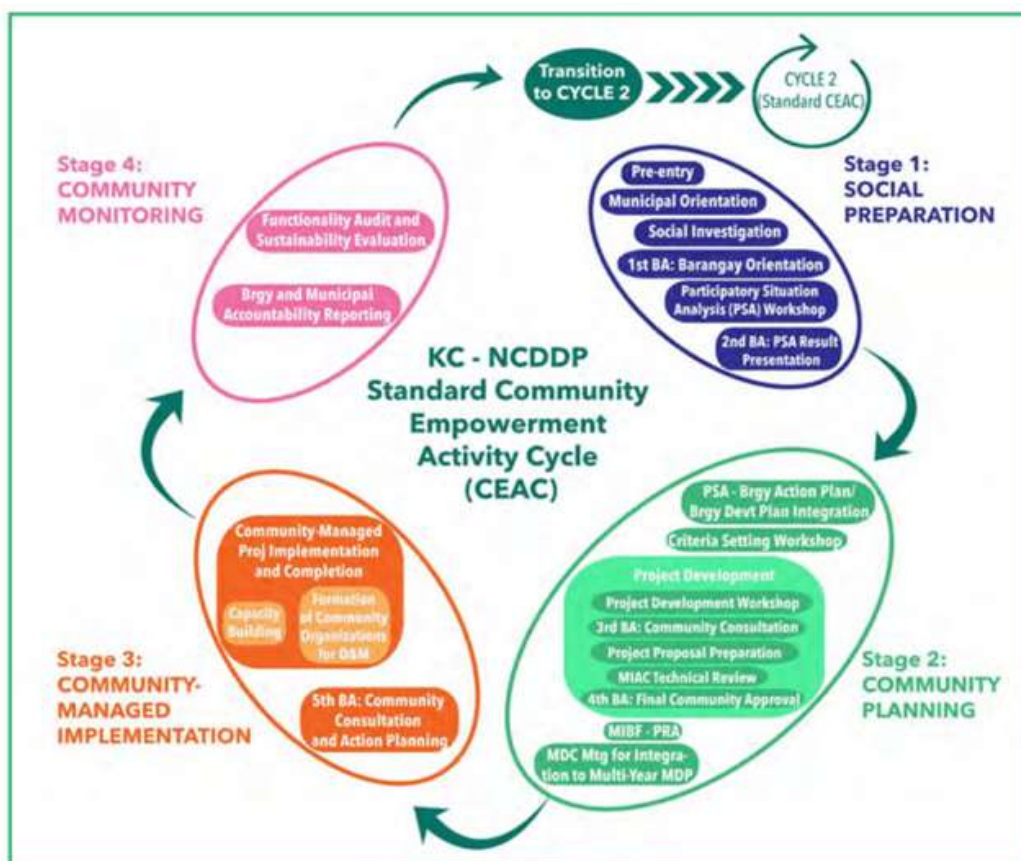
The Activities

The Community Empowerment Activity Cycle (CEAC), as presented in Figure 5, serves as the foundational framework of the KALAHI-CIDSS program and operates as its primary instrument for advancing participatory development. CEAC is not merely a procedural routine; it represents a holistic approach that places communities at the forefront of governance, enabling citizens to take an active role in identifying local priorities, crafting solutions, and managing resources. Each stage is intentionally designed to uphold principles of transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness while simultaneously empowering volunteers and local leaders.

Based on the KII and FGD, the participants narrated how the community was involved throughout the CEAC process.

Social preparation stage. During the social preparation stage, the communities are involved in selecting the sub-projects. The selection of the PSA volunteers who will help assess community needs begins. Participants claimed that PSA volunteers were elected from the Barangay assembly. They attended the workshop wherein they had to list various projects. In Barangay Villaflorida, among community needs listed were the installation of solar panels, the provision of comfort rooms, the construction of the evacuation centers, the concreting of pathways and the construction of the covered courts. Of the presented projects, the concreting of pathways was prioritized. The reason is that the locations cover Zone 4 and 7, wherein 113 families are dwelling, and during the rainy seasons, the residents had trouble accessing the main road. Students had to walk on the muddy, sticky area to reach the national road. The worst is when the heavy rains pour, the water rises and floods occur.

Figure 5. Community Empowerment Activities Cycle (CEAC Manual 101)



In Barangay Pinit, the three projects listed were evacuation center, the barangay road and the access road with drainage canal. However, the access road with drainage canal in Zone 2 was the one requiring an immediate solution because the water continuously flowed in the national highway, making it difficult to be accessed by any vehicle. The slope accessing the zone was elevated which concerned the students walking only going to the school which they still need to cross the national highway because their school is in Zone 3.

In Barangay La Purisima Nuevo, during the project selection, among urgent community concerns was the need of the pathway, drainage canal and the barangay road. The concreting of the Barangay Road was prioritized. Based on the document reviews, the current barangay road was not safe for the transportation of 405 male and 350 female residents when it is wet or during the rainy season. There are 98 families who rely on agricultural livelihoods such as rice and vegetable production which is overspent on the delivery of agricultural products to the market due to the lack of concrete roads. Residents are also concerned about the delayed travel time in case of emergency and rescue because there are 12 pregnant women who are in dire need of medical and health services for childbirth and pre-natal check-up. The lack of access or mobility of 175 households to essential facilities and services was causing insufficient assistance for the community to cope with the effects of COVID 19. Through Participatory Situational Analysis, the community proposed a concrete road to improve residents' safety and security. This road not only help improve their access and transportation but also provide development in other aspects that make up their community, such as education, health, economy, and environment.

At KALAH-CIDSS, it gives emphasis on the participation of the people as the instrument of change who will continue the activities of the KALAH-CIDSS, that's why one of the very important activities is the Barangay Assembly or the community consultation that includes the following: (1) KALAH-CIDSS Program orientation, (2) election of PSA volunteers, and (3) passing resolution accepting CDD as approach. (See appendix D. for the copy of the resolution). These activities require 80% of the total household participation, giving priority and importance to the women's and other marginalized groups.

Community planning and project proposal development stage. Community volunteers, particularly the Project Preparation Team (PPT) and Barangay Representation Team (BRT) with three (3) members each, work on the preparation of the project proposals and present the sub-projects in the MIBF. The PPT learned how to prepare project proposals and adapt to the pressing time of frequent revision until submission. The engine driving this planning phase is a dedicated corps of community volunteers, including the BRT. These volunteers are not passive observers; they are residents elected to shoulder the "laborious" but empowering technical work of project development. These volunteers undergo extensive training to bridge the gap between the council and the community, handling complex tasks such as site selection and the negotiation of rights-of-way with private landowners. This requires a high level of social mediation and diplomacy, effectively professionalizing the volunteer role. The LGU supports this synergy by providing data and allocating "counterpart" funds, but the volunteers remain the primary architect of the proposal, ensuring it meets rigorous technical standards before it is presented for funding.

The MIBF is also characterized as a venue for capacity building and transparency. It forces barangay leaders and volunteers to improve their presentation skills and to be meticulous with their data, as they must justify the necessity of their project to their peers. The transcripts indicate that this process can be challenging and sometimes disappointing for leaders if their projects are not "prioritized," but it is ultimately respected as a democratic way to allocate limited resources. By requiring representatives to engage in this inter-barangay dialogue, the MIBF fosters a broader understanding of municipal needs and ensures that the selection process is based on collective agreement rather than political favoritism.

Community-managed implementation stage. In this stage, the community volunteers who will be in-charge of the implementation of the funded sub-projects were elected by the Barangay Assembly. The volunteers composed the Barangay Sub-Project Management Committee (BSPMC). Among roles are overseeing community procurement, community finance, project development and management, and organization formation and Development. All of them were trained through a seminar-workshop or orientation. They were oriented of the processes involving procurement, financial management, and project construction, monitoring, inspection, and other related functions, as outlined in the community learning and development manual. Hence, volunteers gained skills in documentation, accounting, basic construction, and facilitation. PIT oversees the project's implementation. PT gained experience in procurements and the evaluation of suppliers. MIT inspected all the construction materials carefully to ensure they met the proper specifications and monitored the progress of the projects. AIT reviews transactions and disbursements as well as funds and resources. Their narratives of the execution of their roles, which became their acquired skills, were discussed under enhanced technical competence.

The implementation of KALAH-CIDSS has fundamentally reshaped barangay governance by institutionalizing community-led monitoring and evaluation (M&E), thereby effectively shifting responsibility for project oversight from local officials to residents. This participatory model relies on dedicated volunteer teams, such as the PIT, who manage daily supervision, material inventories, and adherence to technical standards. Driven by a sense of ownership as direct beneficiaries, these volunteers enforce strict financial controls—such as meticulous documentation and tranche-based fund releases that require multi-party verification. This system ensures that resources are utilized transparently and that infrastructure projects, ranging from pathways to health centers, meet the community's rigorous quality standards.

In this stage, accountability in terms of fund management is being directed to the ordinary citizen like the BSPMC chairman. Being one of the three signatories for check disbursement ensures that an ordinary citizen like the heads was empowered and directly responsible and accountable on disbursement. The volunteer ensures that the projects reflect the community needs and communities feel confident that their decisions matter.

Community monitoring stage. During this stage, an organized set of volunteers from the O&M group during the planning stage (stage 2), took part in managing the sustainability of the sub-projects. The completed subprojects were turned over to the community organizations. In La Purísima Nuevo, the barangay road was turned over to the La Purísima Women's Planters Association (LAWPA), wherein twelve (12) women composed the structure. The barangay units made sure that even after the turnover of the completed subproject and the equipment procured and used, they are properly maintained. The barangay allocated funds for the maintenance. The "Kalinisan" activities in La Purísima Nuevo and even in Villaflorida, is a weekly community event wherein every Saturday, the Barangay Council, appointees, and 4Ps beneficiaries gather to clean and maintain infrastructure. When volunteer gaps occur, barangay officials personally step in to perform maintenance tasks, such as spreading soil or spraying weeds and other maintenance activities.

In Pinit, the access road was turned over to the Pinit Irrigators Association, Inc., wherein there were fourteen (14) O&M members composed of ten (10) women and four (4) men. The pathway in Villaflorida was turned over to the Fiber Industry Development Authority (FIDA) with eight (8) O&M members, with four (4) men and four (4) women. Community volunteers and implementers were present during the turnover ceremony. They also engaged in the evaluation sessions conducted by the DSWD and other external parties. The Sustainability Evaluation Test (SET) is conducted by KALAH-CIDSS every six (6) months. This external pressure acts as a disciplinary mechanism, preventing the infrastructure from being neglected. The success of these sustainability efforts was validated by a World Bank evaluation visit to Pinit and Villaflorida, serving as a badge of honor and proof that the projects met the required standards.

The Outputs

Among the outputs previously enumerated in Table 1, the completed subprojects are one of the tangible outputs produced responding to the urgent needs of the barangays. Based on the DSWD-KALAH-CIDSS Individual Subprojects completion report in 2023, the infrastructure projects were completed in 2023 and benefiting various households or families of the selected barangays. See Table 3 and Figure 6.

Table 3. Status of KALAH-CIDSS Sub-projects in Ocampo, Camarines Sur

Barangays	Name of Subprojects	Actual Physical Accomplishment	Total No. of Household Served	Total Actual Cost	Status
La Purísima Nuevo	Concreting of Barangay Road with Grouted Riprap	0.069 km	175	618,287	Completed
Pinit	Concreting of Access Road with Drainage Canal	0.117 km	91	1,129,396	Completed
Villaflorida	Concreting of Pathway with Concrete Pipe Culvert	0.210 km	279	524,909	Completed

In La Purisima Nuevo, the concreting of barangay road with grouted riprap, with an actual 0.069 kilometers serving a total of 175 households equivalent to 199 families or 755 of the population, with an actual cost of P 618, 287.00 were 100% completed on August 29, 2023. In Pinit, the concreting of access road with drainage canal with 0.117 kilometers serving a total of 91 households equivalent to 113 families or 264 of the population with actual cost of P 1,129, 396.00 were 100% completed on October 13, 2023. In Villaflorida, the concreting of pathway with concrete pipe culvert with 0.210 kilometers serving a total of 279 households equivalent to 279 families or 353 of the population with actual cost of P 524, 919.00 were 100% completed on August 24, 2023.

With the given data, it shows that the objectives of the project to empower communities as active partners of developments through the community completion of the projects within the prescribed time frame and cost have somehow been realized. Furthermore, through the continuous implementation of the KALAHÍ-CIDSS project in these barangays after the cycle, it created more opportunities for the community to identify their needs, manage implementation, and, after turnover, monitor and maintain its utility to the barangays. During the researcher's field visits, these completed projects remain functional, well maintained, and continue to serve the community.

Figure 6. The Completed Subprojects



Sources: KALAHÍ-CIDSS Final Inspection Report 2023, Google Map with GPS, 2026

The Outcomes

Focusing on the tangible output, which are the completed projects, among the immediate outcomes of the program are (1) enhanced mobility and accessibility, (2) reduced flooding and waterlogging, and (3) economic and livelihood opportunities.

Enhanced mobility and accessibility. The concreting of the barangay road, access road, and pathway in La Purisima Nuevo, Pinit, and Villaflorida addressed the persistent issues of the residents, including muddy and flood-prone routes to the schools, markets, and neighboring barangays. This positive impact on accessibility is due to the investments in small infrastructure, especially roads (Aceron, 2022). The participants shared that prior to the KALAHÍ-CIDSS projects, children faced difficulties in everyday life, especially when it rains, going to school. Frequently, they arrived at their schools with muddy shoes, dirty, and late due to limited access to vehicles in the area. With the improved roads, residents were able to access health services in their barangay (Namoc and Robles, 2024). On the other hand, health services, such as in the case of Villa Florida and Pinit, are now easier to reach remote areas because Barangay health workers can now make household visits without hurdles in access. Participants from Villa Florida shared:

“Dakulaon po ang tabang na tinao kang KALAHÍ ta ito pong mga aki sa Zone 6 Zone 4 may tinampo na po sinda na aagihan, dati kaya malaboy. Pag may sulot sindang mga sapatos bago mag-abot sa sentro, malaboy na. Ito pong nagkaigwa ng pathway hali sa KALAHÍ, yun po ang pinakadakulang tabang sa mga beneficiaries.” [That is the great help from KALAHÍ provided. Children in Zone 6 and Zone 4 now have a pathway to walk on. Before, it was muddy, and their shoes would get dirty before reaching the center. With the pathway built by KALAHÍ, it became the greatest help for the beneficiaries.]

Like Villaflorida, the concreting of barangay roads in La Purisima Nuevo was a great help to the community. It resolved issues like for students going to school with muddy shoes and limited access to the motorcycles, now it is passable to destinations. According to the Punong Barangay, the road also serves as a gateway to the neighboring barangays like Cagmanaba, Ayugan, and San Vicente, and even residents from the adjacent municipality of Baao. The SK Chairman of the barangay likewise shared that the improved road is a big aid

during calamities, allowing rescue vehicles to reach interior zones easily when other roads are affected or impassable. The road also eases access during the delivery of relief goods to the affected households. Like Pinit and Villa Florida, the access roads provide residents with convenient access to nearby hospitals when needed for emergency cases. An FGD participant shared:

“...dakulaon po ang naging impact [tabang] sa mga tao, lalong-lalo na po duman sa home lot [Farmers Village] kasi previous years, itong mga barangay roads, lubak-lubak, as in pagtag-uran, malaboyon itong sa may eskwelahan, ito. Ngunyan, puro na бага concrete.” [The impact was great; it helps people, especially those in the home lot [now Farmers Village], previous years, those roads were full of potholes, during the rainy season, they were muddy [near the school]. But now, they are all concrete.]

With these improved roads, children's schooling has become more manageable, connecting households within the barangays to receive essential services and creating essential links to neighboring barangays and municipalities, thereby promoting inclusive growth and reducing the isolation of the communities.

Reduced flooding and waterlogging. The concreting of the pathway in Villaflorida included a concrete pipe culvert, which mitigates flooding during heavy rains. Participants shared that previously, when the water level rises, it leads to flooding, and people cannot easily cross the roads or pass by. This poses danger to the children crossing, and even with the vehicle passing by.

“pag may bagyo biglang halangkaw ang tubig, dae talaga makakabaralyo ang mga tawo pero ngonyan ma'am paghalangkaw ang tubig nakakaya pa ninda ma'am ta so tinampo ngani ma'am ang nagiging [solusyon].” [When there is a typhoon, the water suddenly rises, and people cannot cross, but now even when the water rises, they can still pass because of the pathway; that's what became their solution.] Volunteer, Villaflorida

The newly constructed pathway with a reinforced concrete pipe culvert prevented the flood water from reaching the road level, giving comfort to the residents and even the children going to school.

This situation was similar to the experiences of constituents in Zone 2 and in affected areas in Pinit. During heavy rains or typhoons, the water is likened to rivers flowing directly onto national roads, causing difficulties for all who pass through the areas and severely affecting students going to school and residents going to their destinations. The water, which seemed to be coming from Mount Isarog, caused frequent flooding in the area, including the rice fields. This flooding resulted in damaged crops and other agricultural products in the area. The drainage system prevents water from accumulating in certain areas and prevents it from overflowing onto the national highways and houses alongside the roads. With the built drainage system, water flows freely to the canal leading to the rivers at the bridges of Pinit, providing comfort not only to the communities but also to those accessing the Zone from other barangays on motorcycles.

Economic and livelihood opportunities: FGD participants from the study areas pointed out the ease of transporting agricultural products, such as palay, abaca, and copra, from their areas to the marketplace. One participant shared that in the previous years, farmers had to manually haul sacks of paroy (unhusked rice) over muddy terrain. With improved roads, hauling has been reduced because farmers can simply stack their harvested palay on the roadside, where any transport can easily load it. This shift is a significant reduction in the physical burden of farming and an improvement in local livelihoods because it reduces labor costs paid to haulers. In Villaflorida, the constructed pathway likewise expedites the transport of abaca and copra to markets in Ocampo or Naga City. Therefore, this improvement directly benefits the farmers reducing the manual labor and labor costs, while increasing productivity and household income due to savings and supporting local agricultural livelihoods.

“Pag mapaani ka diyan, siging hakot ka mga paroy baktot pero ngonyan okay na. itatambak muna lang ang paroy sa gilid kang tinampo, mapondo sa auto, makarga, okay na...Kaya salamat sa kalahi ta saro ito sa nakatabang samuya...” [Before, farmers had to carry heavy sacks of rice. Now, they simply stack along the roadside where vehicles can load it easily. We are grateful to KALAHÍ because this has greatly helped us.] – Punong Barangay, La Purisima Nuevo

The improved logistics enabled by better roads expedite the transport of the agricultural products to the market with reduced physical strain and lower labor cost, thus cutting costs to the farmers and creating savings and increasing their income to uplift their economic conditions. In addition, during the implementation of the KALAH-CIDSS sub-projects, it created short-term employment opportunities for households hired as laborers, masons, and other labor-based roles. Residents worked as laborers and received daily wages (Gumba, 2016). This program proved to alleviate financial constraints, as it provided jobs to the poor residents of the community, though usually at minimum wage for subsistence (Delfino, 2017). In the same way, elected volunteers were also allowed to perform activities such as hauling materials, construction, and site preparation—to earn income while contributing to community development.

Volunteers from Villaflorida and Pinit, shared that their children or spouses were able to work as laborers during project implementation, helping ease household financial needs. Women from Villaflorida also shared that their child or husband was able to work with pay on the project. In Pinit, women who were volunteers at the same time became laborers. They were being paid on a daily rate basis. Based on the subproject completion reports of the three barangays, the foreman has a daily pay rate of six hundred fifty pesos (P650.00), skilled workers usually get around five hundred fifty pesos (P550.00), and unskilled workers are paid four hundred pesos (P400.00).

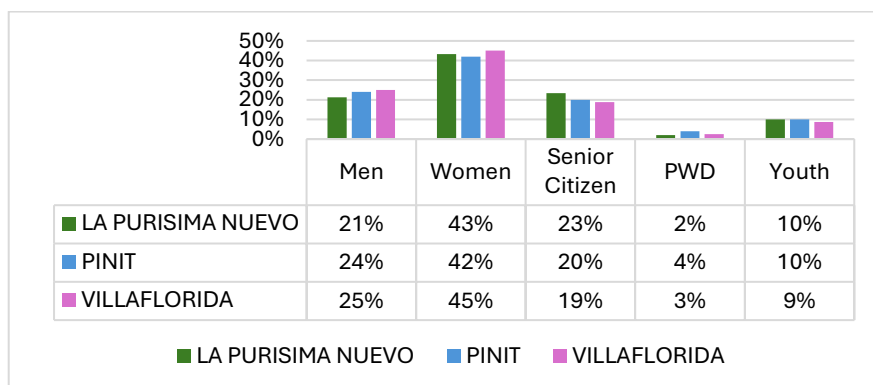
The Impact of KALAH-CIDSS Projects on Community Empowerment

The KALAH-CIDSS program empowers volunteers in participatory governance from planning, implementation, to monitoring. KII and FGD participants shared that, by participating in the program as volunteers and active partners in community development, they were empowered to drive their own community initiatives. They had the voice, the authority, and the capacity to implement the subproject. Based on FGD and KII, significant themes related to the dimension of community empowerment induced by community meaningful and active participation were revealed. These include (1) sustained inclusive participation of marginalized groups (2) improved technical competence, (3) enhanced leadership capacities, (4) increased communication skills and confidence, (5) strengthened volunteerism and community commitment, (6) increased social capital, (7) sustained civic engagement (8) fostered sense of ownership and responsibility; and (9) community-led transparency and accountability.

Theme 1: Sustained Inclusive Participation of Marginalized Groups

Constituents' involvement. The KALAH-CIDSS program is an avenue for citizens' active engagement, not a mere beneficiary, but an active partners of community development. These are revealed through participation in barangay governance activities such as assemblies, meetings, training, and seminars (Pontual and Guillena, 2023). This is the same with the constituents of the three barangays, which showed an active engagement with the CEAC. The KALAH-CIDSS ensured that all sectors of the community were represented, as embodied in CEAC, which requires at least 80% attendance at barangay assemblies. This participation is illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Participation of Constituents per Group (BA Attendance Sheet, 2023)



Participants of the KII and FGD attested to the presence of women, men, and special groups participating in all barangay activities. KALAH-CIDSS uses participatory processes – the CEAC to ensure broad, inclusive

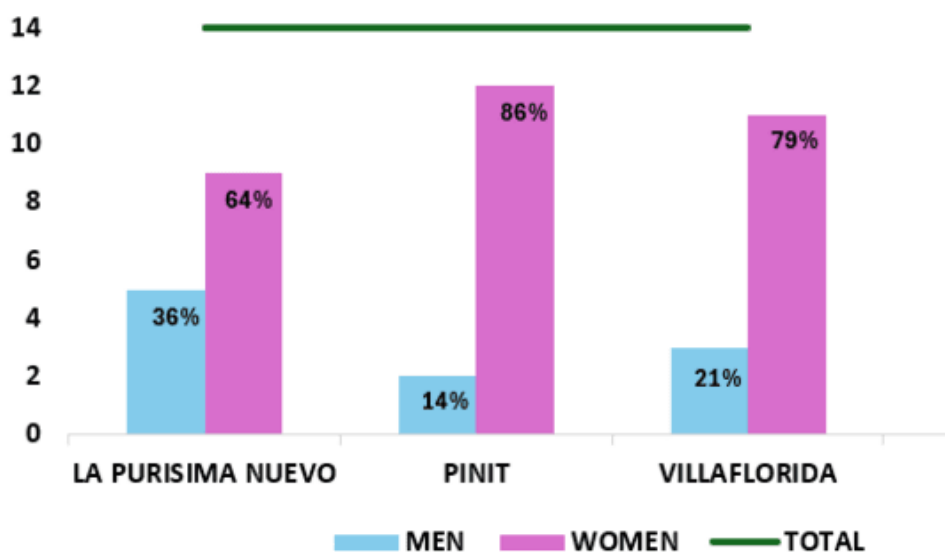
involvement. Minimum attendance targets and transparent selection fostered wide engagement, enabling marginalized voices to be part of decision-making.

Community volunteers. Community volunteers composed the governance structure at the barangay, and they played different roles at each stage. During the social preparation and community consultation stage, volunteers lead in identifying local needs, help plan and carry out activities, and encourage community participation to ensure the process is inclusive and transparent. They lead consultations and collect data. During the community planning and proposal preparation stage, they participate in project design and completion of the community proposal. They monitor progress toward meeting community goals outlined in the community monitoring plan. They act as a bridge between the community and the government, communicating priorities and feedback. Community volunteers oversee the project implementation, procurement, bids and awards committee, monitoring and inspection, finance officers, secretary, treasurer, and more.

Document reviews indicated that women and indigenous groups had taken part in the selection, preparation, implementation, and monitoring of the subprojects.

Women's participation. Based on the subproject completion report and as shown in Figure 8, women's participation was evident through their roles as community volunteers on various teams and committees. The figure shows that women who were part of the volunteers outnumbered the men. In Lapurisma Nuevo, there are 64%, Pinit had 76%, and Villaflorida had 79% of women who became heads of their respective committees. These women served as the BSPMC Chairman, AIT, PIT, MIT, BAC, PPT, GRS, and others. Some served as secretary, bookkeeper, treasurer, and heads of O&M community-based organization. Women learned various technical skills, such as monitoring and inspection of construction materials, and experienced being laborers.

Figure 8 . Participation of Community Volunteers by Gender

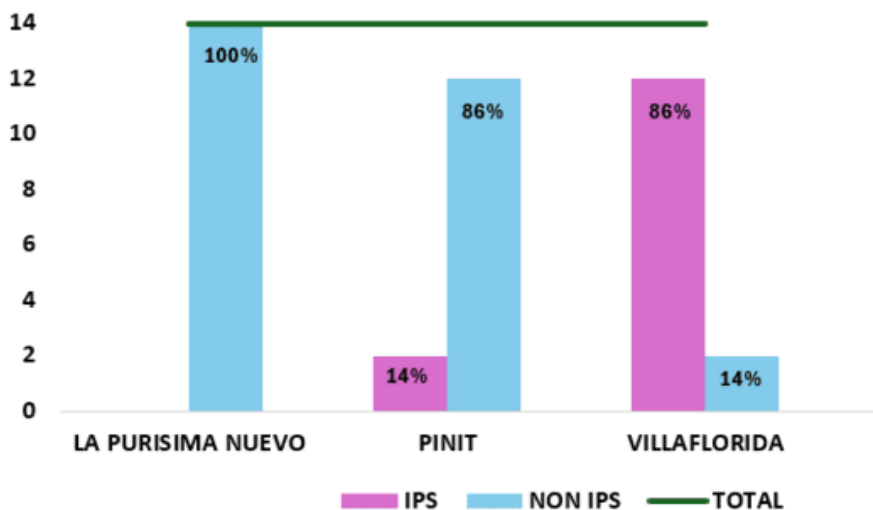


Source: KALAH-CIDSS Sub-project Completion Report, 2023

Indigenous people's representation. Of the three assessed barangays, Barangay Villaflorida in Ocampo, Camarines Sur, is an upland settlement where indigenous people (IPs) form most of the population. Roughly seventy percent (70%) of its population belongs to IP communities who live close to their ancestral lands, and they continue to face vulnerabilities in education, livelihood, and access to essential services. Initiatives such as KALAH-CIDSS strengthen their participation in development. Among the achievements of the KALAH-CIDSS are the empowerment of volunteers who experienced various roles in financial management, sub-project implementation, and the sustainability of the sub-projects. As shown in Figure 9, twelve (12) or 86% of the total fourteen (14) volunteers who are members of IPs and had shown remarkable contributions during the implementation until completion of the pathway.

In Pinit, Ocampo, Camarines Sur, the Agta-Tabangnon tribal community is settled alongside other residents in the area. Although only two (2) or 14% were elected, they had represented their community in all aspects of local governance. In KALAHCI CIDSS, the notable accomplishment was the representation of the two (2) IPs as KALAHCI-CIDSS volunteers. One of them served as the BSPMC Chairman, and the other was the head of the O&M Team. Their contributions in the implementation and sustainability of the project played a significant role in community development. The former IPMR head, the BSPMC Chairman, shared that she was voted to lead the team because the barangay assembly has trust in her being an active resident of the barangay.

Figure 9. Participation of Community Volunteers by Ethnicity



Source: KALAHCI-CIDSS Sub-project Completion Report, 2023

Youth participation. KALAHCI-CIDSS creates space for diverse voices in community development. In Villaflorida, a third-year education student in 2023 was elected as PPT Head. During the KII, she shared how young people were chosen to lead. She also reflected on responsibility being entrusted with the role despite being one of the younger members of the community, and yet, she showed willingness to step up despite initial hesitation. She also realized how volunteering complemented her education though learning new skills while helping in the community development.

Inclusive participation of marginalized groups is a direct impact of community empowerment because it fundamentally alters the way communities govern themselves and sustain development. When those who are often excluded, such as women, youth, indigenous peoples, or the poorest households, are actively engaged in decision-making, like in the KALAHCI-CIDSS program, the community gains diversity of perspectives and ensures that priorities reflect real needs rather than elite interests. This inclusion builds confidence and agency among marginalized members, enabling them to move from passive recipients to active shapers of development. The impact is empowerment itself, wherein communities become more resilient, self-reliant, and capable of sustaining projects and governance practices because all voices, especially those historically silenced, are recognized in collective action.

Theme 2: Improved Technical Competence

FINDINGS revealed that KALAHCI-CIDSS played a significant role in building competence among community members by equipping them with practical skills and knowledge that were once limited to the ranks of government professionals and contractors. As per FGD, volunteers became capable in various capacities such as financial management, procurement, monitoring, and auditing – core functions essential to effective project implementation, management, and local governance.

Bids and Awards Committee. Volunteers who acted as BAC had attended series orientations and seminars to learn the complex processes of biddings and awarding contracts to winning suppliers. As per FGD, participants shared that they had no prior experience on these roles and through KALAHCI-CIDSS, they were able to learn by

themselves how to perform bid evaluation, canvassing suppliers, checking the bid documents, and even liquidation of cash advances made due to their roles. These competencies were frequently adapted for personal use. BAC volunteers from the selected barangays showed how KALAH-CIDSS opened its doors for them in terms of confidence and experience with community governance activities. They took on responsibilities they were not yet familiar with at BAC; they learned to open bid envelopes and participated in the procurement process. For others, despite years of volunteering and in public service, these new roles were introduced to them through orientations and seminars, which expanded their understanding. These experiences had benefited the volunteers on a personal level, like what one volunteer in Pinit shared, who said her knowledge of BAC shaped her everyday choices as a mother, teaching her to prioritize quality over the lowest price when purchasing commodities.

“Iyo po grabe ang nakakanood... kung sain-sain nagseseminar, nakakabisto sa ibang barangay... Pasuruseminar, Nakanood ako [sa]BAC...[Bilang] saro man na nanay, naiapplay ko an lalo na sa pag saraod saod, kaipo mamimili sa mga tindahan, mahapot hapot kang price, duman ko nanudan sa BAC na kaipo duman so pinakahababa na presyo pero ang quality maray pa din.” [Yes, I really learned a lot... attending seminars everywhere, meeting people from other barangays. Through the seminars, I learned about BAC works. Since I am a mother, I apply it when I go market [grocery shopping]—I must choose between stores and ask around for prices. I learned that from the BAC: you need to look for the lowest price, but the quality must still be good.] – BAC, Pinit

Procurement. KALAH-CIDSS opened opportunities for the volunteers to learn new government skills, such as procurement. The volunteer from Pinit and La Purisima Nuevo who served as the team head of the procurement committee shared their experience in canvassing for government projects. In La Purisima Nuevo, the volunteer stressed the use of a request for quotations to be brought to the supplier to canvass. The volunteer from Pinit highlighted that she learned the tedious part of procurement, such as searching for suppliers. The volunteer also narrated her learnings in liquidating cash advances for expenses incurred while serving as a procurement agent.

“Igwa pong naitabang sako. Nakanood akong magliquidate kang cash advance o kang mga ginastusan, nakanood akong magcanvass, duman ngani ki [supplier] dawa pabalik balik ako...” [...But it did help me. I learned how to liquidate cash advances or expenses, I learned how to canvass—even their [supplier], even if I had to keep going back and forth...]-PT, Pinit

Monitoring and inspection. Monitoring and inspection emerged as another essential area of competence. Volunteers were responsible for verifying that all materials delivered to project sites met specified requirements, and they received training to check, count, and return substandard items. As described by a volunteer in Pinit:

“Nag monitoring po ako kan mga deliveries sa Zone 2 tapos Zone 5, sako gabos nagbabagsak ang mga materyales tapos igdi po sa barangay hall tigbabagsak ang mga deliveries. Tigcheck ko po saro saro ta kung tama base sa listahan. kung, may kulang o may damage inuuli mi an. Nag seminar po kaya kami kaito sa mga tungkol duman sa mga sukat kang ano itong mga bakal kaya naaraman ko ang tamang mga sukat saka klase. Sinasaro saro mi talaga an kaya masakiton po бага.” [I monitored the deliveries in Zone 2 and Zone 5; all the materials were delivered and were dropped off there in at the Barangay Hall. I checked them one by one to see if they matched the list... for example, if something was missing or damaged, we returned it. We attended a seminar back then regarding the measurements of the steel bars, that’s why I learned the correct sizes and types. We really inspected them one by one, which is why it was actually very difficult.] MIT, Pinit

These community volunteers, who served as MIT heads, oversaw deliveries across different zones (on the project sites) and carefully inspected each material to ensure it was complete and correct. As mere volunteers, they learned proper procedures, such as returning materials to the supplier in case of shortages or damage to deliveries. This means that the value of the resources is given top priority to avoid waste in government resources. The program’s hands-on approach also encompassed basic carpentry and construction. Volunteers engaged in field-based learning, which enabled them to acquire troubleshooting skills and practical knowledge applicable to both community projects and personal contexts. As a volunteer from Pinit shared she learned about the specifications

of construction materials, all their kinds and composition, how it is used in construction, and she was able to apply it during the construction of her house.

Audit and financial tracking. As per FGD, KALAH-CIDSS cultivated a strong culture of audit and accountability. Volunteers had developed the ability to track cash flows, reconcile accounts, and ensure proper documentation of all financial transactions. These practices enhanced community accountability and benefited volunteers in personal aspects, such as managing a small business. As an AIT volunteer from Villaflorida, she noted the learnings of the simple accounting of cash in and cash out, which she applied when she started her business. Another volunteer from Pinit emphasized the importance of accountability in auditing, ensuring that deliveries were complete and materials met proper specifications and quality.

With these new skills developed from the community roles, it becomes a powerful driver of community empowerment because it transforms individuals' growth into collective capacity. When volunteers acquire technical skills such as financial management, proper documentation, procurement processes, and various roles and responsibilities, they can ensure that subprojects are completed based on the expected outputs and can be sustained afterwards. With the competences they learned, they become expert on each given assignment, which allows them to exercise greater independence in decision-making and implement projects on their own. In effect, volunteers can move with cohesion. Technical competencies in relation to financial management advocate for transparency and accountability. Volunteers become fully aware of the processes so they can easily monitor financial transactions, detect irregularities, and demand good governance. This capacity builds trust within the community and reinforces democratic practices at the barangay level. These skills acquired from roles they were elected to perform ensure the continuity of community empowerment.

Theme 3: Enhanced leadership capacity

A BSPMC Chairperson in Villaflorida reflected on how KALAH-CIDSS helped her growth as a team leader through participatory learning. Through seminars she participated in, she was able to lead the team, share ideas, and actively participate in the workshop. At first, she was challenged by the complexity of the activities, but as the chairman, she eventually gained understanding and confidence in leading the team in the sub-project implementation. According to her, leadership in KALAH-CIDSS was not about giving instructions, but it requires initiative, close supervision, and hands-on management of the ongoing activities. As a leader, the Chairman also took the initiative by visiting the construction sites to supervise the ongoing project activities and guide the labor force. She took time to oversee and become fully aware of what needed to be done and instructed the team on what should be the expected output. The Chairman described his daily presence at the project, just guiding the laborers and ensuring the quality of work. This immersion fostered a deeper understanding of project management, resource allocation, and the importance of seeing tasks through completion. As she proudly shared,

“Bilang Chairman, tighihiling ko talaga ang patrabaho, pirmi ako nagbibisita sa site aro aldaw. Tinutukdooan ki sinda kong pano ini oiyan. Nagduduman ako ta hilingon ko ang mga gibo kang trabador. Bilang Chairman, ako man talaga ang masupervise sainda ta habo ko na may masabi sinda na na mili ngaya chairman dae na mahiro, Ako ang chairman, ako ang pirming nanginginutan.” [As the Chairman, I supervise the construction. I always visit the project site, every day. I teach them how to do this and that. I conduct on-site monitoring to observe the work of the laborers. As a Chairman, I am supposed to supervise them because I do not want them to say anything, like just because I am Chairman, I don't do my tasks. As the Chairman, I always take the lead.]

The BSPC Chairman in Pinit likewise shared that she initially started as a beginner with no knowledge of the procedures but eventually learned how to properly process documents to ensure they were complete and accurate. A crucial lesson learned was the importance of self-reliance and versatility in her role; she realized that relying solely on others could delay document processing. She shared that as a chairman, she must also be knowledgeable in other functions, such as budgeting, secretarial duties, and administrative tasks, to facilitate faster transactions and smoother project implementation. As the head, she gained knowledge and learned the proper protocols in resolving conflicts and issues during the implementation. Finally, the experience taught her to be flexible and capable of working under pressure—an attribute she found essential for KALAH, which ultimately brought her satisfaction and recognition as an outstanding BDC chairman.

Findings revealed that participation in KALAH-CIDSS served as a significant catalyst for the development of leadership skills among community volunteers. Initially, many volunteers possessed limited management experience and expressed uncertainty about the complexities of project implementation. Through structured training, mentorship, and direct involvement in KALAH activities, these individuals progressively developed into confident and capable leaders. These skills enabled them to manage and lead the project activities, coordinate with other teams, and manage resources effectively. The challenges and responsibilities of the KALAH-CIDSS volunteers turned out to be opportunities for personal and professional growth. It is inherent that many volunteers became hesitant at first in leading a team for community development, yet taking on the challenges not only improved how projects were carried out but also built them as skilled leaders who can support community empowerment well beyond the life of the KALAH-CIDSS projects.

Within the KALAH-CIDSS program, volunteers who develop various leadership skills become catalysts for participatory governance. When volunteers acquire the ability to lead the team, preside over organized meetings, defend community priorities, and manage resource allocation ensures that the community voices are not only considered but also acted upon in community development. Leaders become empowered, and it continues to impact even beyond the implementation of sub-projects

Theme 4: Increased communication skills and confidence

One of the most significant transformations shared by KALAH-CIDSS volunteers was the increase in confidence and developed self-esteem in public speaking (Namoc & Robles, 2024). In this study, the changes did not happen overnight; rather, they came through repeated exposure to seminars, activities, and reporting opportunities, which helped them overcome shyness and gain confidence in public engagement. Participants shared that they attended workshops and seminars, participated in meetings, and gradually became accustomed to speaking in front of both small groups and larger audiences. As they stood up in front of people, shared ideas, and presented reports, their self-esteem and communication skills grew. As their confidence grew, volunteers found themselves taking on more active roles in discussions such as leading meetings and helping to make decisions. An AIT volunteer in Pinit shared that her shyness faded, and she learned to share in front of the assembly. The skills they gained went beyond public speaking because they also became comfortable mingling with others, forming social connections, and interacting with a wider range of community members from other areas. In Villaflorida, the BSPMC Chairman was not used to mingling with other constituents, yet she began to enjoy the process of communicating and engaging with others when she was elected to the biggest role. She narrated how the program boosted her self-esteem and confidence through repeated exposure to meetings, seminars, and community interactions. This newfound confidence translated into personal enjoyment in embracing the role. Highlighting the social benefits of participation, she shared,

“Dakol akong nanudan...kang primero, garo ako matunaw pag ako mataram na sa inutan. Hanggang garo nasasanay naman ako pahaloy haloy, nawawara naman si supog ko... Nakisalamuha na ako sa tao, nahali naman si supog ko. Kaya naogma ako ta huna ko dae ko kayang magvolunteer... ngunian kaya ko nman makisalamuha jan.” [I learned a lot. At first, I felt like I was going to melt when I was speaking in front. Until I got used to it, later, my shyness faded away. I get acquainted with people. My shyness is gone, I'm happy because I thought I couldn't volunteer... now I can socialize here.]

Both Heaton et al. (2024) and Talo and Mannarini (2015) emphasize that communication is a driver of civic engagement and empowerment. Increased communication skills and confidence among community members, a vital impact of empowerment, directly enhances participation and inclusivity in local governance. Within the KALAH-CIDSS process, volunteers and residents gain competence in public speaking, facilitation, and documentation, and they become more capable of expressing their ideas, negotiating priorities, and engaging in collective decision-making. This ability moves everyone, giving opportunities to the marginalized sector who previously lacked confidence, to raise concerns and propose solutions. As communication skills improve, volunteers inspire others to engage and participate, which later creates a ripple effect of participation across the community. With these, volunteers transform the dynamics of leadership and accountability. Confident volunteers create more engaged and self-reliant communities. Communities become capable of influencing outcomes that lead to tangible output and enduring empowerment impacts. It is not limited to the completion of projects but extends to the cultivation of a participatory culture where collective problem-solving is embedded

in everyday governance. Thus, communication skills and confidence stand as reinforcement of empowerment, ensuring that communities continue to grow in agency, solidarity, and democratic practice.

Theme 5: Strengthened volunteerism and community commitment

Volunteers shared how the KALAH-CIDSS program fostered a spirit of volunteerism among the community. The experiences shared by the volunteers were stories of volunteerism for the sake of service – service that came with sacrifices, courage, and dedication to making the community a better place. Volunteers repeatedly described their service as a meaningful obligation to their community despite considerable challenges. Volunteers recounted sacrificing personal time, comfort, and even financial resources to ensure the success of the community projects. For instance, several volunteers shared their personal vehicles during canvassing, and when running to errands, volunteers worked long hours, sometimes late into the night, and used their own money to cover transportation costs and meals. As the volunteers shared:

“Mapagonal Mam, ta volunteer, mayo ano [pondo], sariling bulsa nailuluwas, panggasolina, pagkakan. Mapagal pero enjoy man po...inisip ko na lang makatabang sa komunidad. grabe ang mabibinepesyuhan kaitong project na pathway.” [It’s tiring, ma’am, because we’re volunteers. We use our own money for fuel and food. It’s exhausting but fulfilling. I just thought about helping the community—that many will benefit from our pathway.] – BAC, Villaflorida

“Mayo pamasaha, [pero] ayos lang po...para mahaman ang [tinampo]... basta may deliver po, maduman ako, sako ang pamasaha.” [I paid for my own fare—it’s okay. It’s fine to complete [the roads]. If there are deliveries, I go, with my own fare.] – MIT, Pinit

For younger volunteers who were at the same time schooling, they performed their roles while managing their time. A student who was a PPT head recalled that they spent days on proposal making, revising, and finalizing while they were schooling because she believed that they could manage their schedules while volunteering. Indeed, she had proven its truth and felt joy that she was able to contribute to her barangay.

In Pinit, the Chairman described her service as akin to being a philanthropist, highlighting her willingness to use personal funds for the greater good of the community. The Chairman narrated that she was always present, even with the cost of borrowing money first, for her travel expenses on the volunteer work. Another story from the PIT head of La Purisima Nuevo, who personally advanced Php 20,000 from his own pocket to pay the laborers' wages while waiting for the official check to be released. The lesson cited: "Isipon mo na dapat igwa kang pocket money" (You must think that you need pocket money) when managing a government project, because there should be full compliance with the proper documentation of the claims before funds can be disbursed, yet the laborers advanced for their wages to sustain their family needs.

Therefore, strengthened volunteerism and community commitment are clear manifestations of empowerment, as they reflect the community’s willingness to take ownership of development processes beyond external facilitation. In this KALAH-CIDSS experience, volunteers who dedicated time and resources to project implementation embody the principle of collective responsibility. Chen et al. (2025) highlight that volunteer mobilization is a mechanism for community revitalization. Volunteers’ active participation in planning, monitoring, and maintenance demonstrates that empowerment is not only about acquiring skills but also about cultivating a deep sense of duty toward the welfare of the community. This commitment ensures that projects are sustained, resources are managed responsibly, and community priorities remain at the center of local development

Theme 6: Increased social capital

Volunteer-participants described how they worked together in labor roles, shared schedules, and distributed workloads according to each member’s strengths and availability. These collective actions were not only limited to formal meetings and seminars, but also extended to the physical tasks, such as hauling materials, canvassing supplies, and managing project deliverables, which strengthened their relationships within the community. As per a PT volunteer from La Purisima Nuevo, workshops helped them develop teamwork and encouraged

openness to feedback among members. Their collaboration and teamwork allowed them to distribute tasks fairly, provide mutual support, communicate effectively, and build connections and trust. Teamwork further helped volunteers to be more determined. Having people to work with, they easily get things done as tasks and resources are shared and schedules are followed efficiently. The volunteer work became more enjoyable for them as they immersed themselves in villages, meeting new people and making new connections. According to the volunteers, even after a project is finished, stronger relationships among them continue to thrive.

Cross-barangay networking and unity were also strengthened through workshops and seminars. These gatherings allowed volunteers to work with peers from neighboring communities, further expanding their networks and fostering a sense of unity beyond their own barangay. One Chairman said that the barangay likewise shared the difficulties, albeit a fulfilling experience during the workshops, as they were trained to do the process. During the workshop, she shared that there were other barangays, and they were being grouped and asked to build a building with a strong foundation. Through the workshops, she gained an understanding of the importance of working with diverse groups and of celebrating unity and achievement when they completed the activity with full cooperation. As the Chairman of Villaflorida recalled,

“Masakit man talaga, pero magayon man nakakaduman ako sa ibang barangay, lalo na pag may mga activities, tigharalo-halo kami, naoogma ako kaan ta miski so ibang barangay. May activity kami... Itong naggiribo kaming building, na dapat daa pusog.” [It was truly difficult, but I enjoyed going to other barangays, especially during activities where we were mixed with other barangays. I felt happy because even with people from different places, we worked together like in an activity, we built the building, which should be strong.] — Chairman, Villaflorida

Relationship building and trust extended beyond the original volunteer groups. The inclusive nature of KALAHICIDSS initiatives meant that individuals who may not have previously interacted, such as those from different barangays or socio-economic backgrounds, found themselves working closely together. This initiated new friendships and broadened social networks, helping to break down barriers of unfamiliarity and social status. Volunteers frequently mentioned how meeting new people and collaborating with so-called “decent people” helped them overcome feelings of inadequacy or hesitation. A volunteer narrated:

“Nakatabang na may nakahalubilo, arog sako, mayo inadalan na tao, mga disenteng tao makaibahan mo... Kung baga maalangan ka na ta saro kang mayong inadalan, [kala ko] dae ka pwede makiulay sa mga disenteng tao, pwede man palan. May mga nabisto naman ako at nadagdagdan pa ang kabisto.” [It helped me that I mingled with others. Though I have not gone to proper schooling, I was able to be with decent people. I should feel hesitant because I feel that since I am uneducated, I should not be talking to decent people. I realized it's alright. Others had known me, and I also gained acquaintances.]

The social bonds formed during the KALAHICIDSS projects did not dissolve when projects ended. Volunteers shared that relationships and a sense of teamwork persisted, supporting continued collaboration on other communities' initiatives. These created networks enable communities to mobilize quickly, coordinate projects, and amplify citizen voices in governance. Increased social capital allows more individuals to willingly share resources and time, strengthening networks of cooperation, thereby resulting in civic engagement in collective action and participation in governance processes (Chen et al., 2025). As a result, communities with strong capital demonstrate greater solidarity, civic participation, and capacity to sustain development initiatives. Social capital ensures that empowerment is not fleeting but enduring, enabling communities to continuously adapt, innovate, and thrive.

Theme 7: Sustained civic engagement

KALAHICIDSS not only builds infrastructure and gives strength to the community, but it also promotes lifelong civic consciousness. Volunteers keep volunteering post-program through barangay councils, local committees, and civic groups. Their stint in KALAHICIDSS becomes an opportunity to become more involved in governance and community building beyond KALAHICIDSS programs. One volunteer from Villa Florida who volunteered and became elected as Barangay Kagawad said KALAHICIDSS was a significant turning point for developing confidence and leadership. From being timid volunteers to gradually growing into the team leaders,

the volunteers showed themselves that they can lead. One Chairman attested that her role, along with the seminar learnings and experiences, inspired her to take the baton for barangay councilor (she never imagined that she would run for public office). She narrated:

“Nakatabang ta nakakua ko duman ning kaaraman... sa mga paseminar... dati mam dae ako nakikihalubilo, ta masupgon ako. Kaso naging chairman ako, duman ko naman pinunan... garo naglakas loob man ako nyako matry man daw ako maging kagawad. Mayo man plano magkagawad. Naencourage ako. garo dae ko kaya. Pero itong pag laog ko dgdi [sabi ko] try ko nman magkagawad.” [It helped me gain knowledge through seminars. I used to avoid socializing because I was shy. But when I became chairman, I stepped up. I even gained the courage to try becoming a barangay official. I didn’t plan to run for barangay councilor. But our barangay captain encouraged me. I said I wasn’t sure I could do it, but after joining KALAH, I thought I’d give it a try.]

This study showed how empowerment programs offered not just skills but also courage, making self-doubt a means to serve the community and to play a bigger part. Because of the spirit of volunteerism, the community expressed its commitment to continuously offering its help for whatever available roles needed in their community. Volunteers from these barangays shared that even in the next cycle, they will continue to be present when needed and open to help the community. As the Punong Barangay from Villaflorida reflected the impact of community participation, he stressed that it’s indeed a good implication that the volunteers gained understanding about various processes in the barangay, such as procurement (canvassing), and the step-by-step procedures. He emphasized that volunteers’ participation extended beyond KALAH projects; their commitment remains in supporting other programs of the community aside from KALAH initiatives.

Talo and Mannarini (2015) validate civic engagement as a measurable and central aspect of community engagement. This is because it signifies the long-term effect of participatory processes within local governance. Through KALAH-CIDSS programs, communities not only mobilized for specific sub-projects but are also encouraged to continuously participate in decision-making, monitoring, and accountability processes (World Bank, 2013). This ongoing involvement reflects a shift from passive citizenship to active stewardship, where residents recognize their role in shaping development outcomes. Empowered communities sustain civic engagement by regularly attending assemblies, voicing concerns, and contributing to planning, thereby ensuring that governance remains responsive to collective needs rather than dictated by external actors. The persistence of civic engagement also strengthens democratic culture at the grassroots level. When community members consistently participate in governance, they reinforce transparency, accountability, and inclusivity. This sustained involvement builds trust between citizens and local leaders while also creating mechanisms for grievance redress and constructive dialogue.

Theme 8: Fostered sense of ownership and responsibility

Community volunteers had demonstrated a high sense of ownership, exercising a higher degree of prudence in safeguarding the resources. This is evident when the volunteer from Pinit shared that materials delivered were cautiously monitored and disbursement vouchers were reviewed carefully before releasing the payment. These may be part of their role, but taking full responsibility made them an active partner for transparency. Volunteers were vigilant in their role, especially when it comes to finances. As volunteers and citizens, themselves, they were watchful against misuse of funds, irregularities, or neglect of agreed priorities. One Chairman shared that owning the responsibility of making sure that transactions paid were proper, accurate, and compliant, she really made sure to review all the documents carefully before approving and signing. She also discussed any concerns among other members of the team to ensure that she will not compromise any transactions. As she narrated,

“...Ang kwarta mam, dae ako basta basta nagpipirma jan. Pasiguro ako tigrekesa ko an. Ta ako nakataya jan. Ang treasurer ako may BAC, kami nagorolay olay man, ako ang nakataya jan.” [When it comes to money, ma’am, I do not just sign documents carelessly. I make sure to review them thoroughly because I am accountable for it. As the treasurer, together with the BAC, we also deliberate and consult each other, since I am the one held responsible.]- BSPMC Chairman, Villaflorida

The experience of another Chairman in Pinit being awarded as an Outstanding BDC Chairman proved that she had excelled in the given role. She shared with confidence that taking the lead should embody the attributes,

such as performing the tasks that should be performed only by the team head to facilitate the process, and not by relying on others, which may delay the transactions. Through exposure to training, she made sure to learn the necessary information to be trustworthy in the role. She learned all the processes in implementing the program, how things should be done, including how to resolve issues and concerns. She proved to be a responsible person by exerting efforts and giving her best, even if it means staying late at work and sacrificing personal time, just to accomplish the assigned tasks for the completion of the projects. She recalled,

“sa KALAHl. Ano sinda, ito yong na-empowered man talaga po kaming mga chairman, ano kumbaga natukdaan kami na dapat sa senaryo na arog kaini, sa programang may problema, sa implementation na masakit, dapat flexible kami, Kaya minsan kato, nag uuli ngani ako alas otso na. kasi, bago ang tatapos ang papel, ang nanoodan ko sa inda. Kung ini lang si time frame, dapat, regardless na kung anong oras ko, basta ang importante, natapos ko sa arog kaining oras. iyan ang nanoodan ko sa KALAHl.” [Another thing that I really learned from KALAHl is that we, the chairmen, were truly empowered. We were taught that in scenarios like this—when a program faces problems, we must be flexible. That is why sometimes I would go home as late as eight o’clock, because I had to finish the paperwork first. What I learned from them is that when there is a time frame, regardless of what time I must complete it within the given period. That is what I learned from KALAHl.]—BSPMC Chairman, Pinit

The sense of ownership and responsibility is also evident through assemblies, monitoring teams, and participatory audits. During the monitoring stage, the organized set of members of the O&M group participated in the management of the sustainability of the sub-projects. The completed subprojects were turned over to the community organizations. In La Purísima Nuevo, the barangay road was turned over to the La Purísima Women's Planters Association. In Pinit, the Access Road was turned over to the Pinit Irrigators Association, Inc., and the pathway in Villaflorida was turned over to the Fibers Industry Development Authority. Community volunteers and implementers were present during the turnover ceremony. They also engaged in the evaluation sessions conducted by the DSWD and other external parties. Continuous O&M was monitored by the association with the aid of the barangay. The barangay allocated funds in their Annual Investment Plan (AIP) for maintenance of said KALAHl-CIDSS subprojects. The community association ensures that these completed projects will be sustained to provide benefits to the community in the long run.

A fostered sense of ownership and responsibility is a defining impact of community empowerment because it signifies that development initiatives are no longer perceived as externally imposed but as genuinely community driven. Community members take responsibility for project outcomes (DSWD, 2015). The impact of ownership and responsibility extends beyond project maintenance. Communities that feel accountable for their initiatives are more vigilant in monitoring progress, addressing grievances, and demanding transparency from leaders. This accountability strengthens governance processes, as citizens actively uphold standards and prevent misuse of resources. Moreover, ownership fosters pride and identity, reinforcing the idea that development is not something given but something achieved through collective effort.

Theme 9: Community-Led Transparency and accountability

Community-driven development has demonstrated that when accountability, transparency, and participation are embodied in systems, procedures, and structures, the outcomes are favorable and may even surpass the conventional methods of governance in general and project implementation in particular (Cabiles and Permejo, 2021).

Efficient Fund Management. KALAHl-CIDSS operationalizes accountability by empowering the community to manage, monitor, and disburse funds. Based on the FGD narratives, the participants shared how they managed the community funds entrusted to them. The download and disbursement of funds were monitored by the KALAHl-CIDSS to ensure main financial transparency. The core group of the community handles the distribution of the salary, and based on the FGDs, there was no noted misappropriation of funds. In fact, it was expected that there would be transparency as the community trusted the KALAHl personnel monitoring the program (Mahinay, 2019).

Unlike traditional LGU-led projects, KALAH-CIDSS directly downloads the funds into the accounts managed by the community. This process minimizes opportunities for graft and elite capture before it reaches its intended implementing organizations or agencies. This gives the community a sense of trust from DSWD as the steward of the finances and a sense of accountability, being answerable for every utilization of the fund. Since the fund is community-managed, a strict three-signatory rule is followed. While the traditional government practices only require two approving authorities to check disbursement, in KALAH-CIDSS, the check is signed by three people (the elected BSPMC Chairperson, the Treasurer, and the Area Coordinating Team (ACT)). This measure ensures that no single individual can unilaterally authorize disbursement. It reduces misuse, fraud, or collusion because each signatory represents a different function, which prevents concentration of financial control in only two hands.

This measure shows the empowerment of the community being entrusted with this great financial accountability, without considering their formal education, but the sense of trust given by the community in being elected as Chairman of the subproject management committee. The community-managed fund is coupled with meticulous and strict documentation for every disbursement, which reduces its opportunities for misuse while enhancing transparency. This still follows the same procedures stipulated in the Government Accounting Manual. But for the community handling the funds, participants commented on their strict adherence to the rules. Volunteers narrated that the release of funds requires a certain completion rate before payment. Deliveries of the materials, which should meet the quality standards and specifications, are strictly monitored and should comply with the guidelines before issuance of payment.

Optimal Resource Allocation. Transparency and accountability begin from the selection of the sub-projects up to their evaluation. The selection and prioritization of projects is explicitly participatory. Community members identified and selected which sub-projects to fund, ensuring that resources address the most urgent local needs. In Villaflorida, the prioritized project was the concreting of the pathway. The reason was that the locations cover Zone 4 and 7, where 113 families dwell, and the residents had trouble accessing the main road, especially during the rainy seasons. According to the PT head, students had to walk on the muddy, sticky area to reach the national road. When there is heavy rain, the water rises and causes floods.

In La Purisima Nuevo, the concreting of the barangay road was selected for funding. Based on the document reviews, the current barangay road was not safe for the transportation of 405 male and 350 female residents during the rainy season. Through the PSA, the community proposed to have a concrete road to improve the safety and security of residents. This road will not only help us improve our access and transportation but will also provide development in other aspects that make up our community, such as education, health, economy, and environment.

In Pinit, one of the largest barangays in the Municipality of Ocampo, consisting of seven (7) zones, was provided with the concreting of an access road with a drainage canal. The zone where the concreted access was granted is an isolated area of the Barangay and the most marginalized zone of the barangay, needing urgent attention. The zone was unsafe for transportation for 379 residents when it was wet or on rainy days. 91 households were most affected by the situation. It also affects the transport group due to difficulties in access to transportation, and students and farmers suffer a lot during the rainy season or when the road is muddy (CBIM 2020, From 4).

To fully optimize the resources available, the community was involved throughout the decision-making process and monitored the final output. The funds allocated to the intended purpose were carefully managed by the community. These funds were directed to the priority projects. Materials were procured at fair prices and inspected diligently to comply with the correct specifications. Laborers were mobilized within the community to reduce costs. Volunteers were offered the job so they can earn for their household. Hence, there were still savings from the fund, which were returned to fund sources, but without compromising the quality of the projects.

Transparent Financial Disclosure. KALAH-CIDSS promotes transparency by ensuring communities have access to and monitor financial data related to projects. This participatory approach enhances residents' understanding of barangay income and expenditures, fostering accountability and trust in local governance (Holmlund & Rao, 2021; DSWD, 2025). FGD participants shared that funds were routinely presented during

community assemblies using accessible formats such as PowerPoint presentations, the use of manila paper, and reproducing copies of reports to ensure wide understanding. All financial records are available for scrutiny. During Barangay assemblies, residents were allowed to question leaders and volunteers about progress. There was also innovation in how the financial reporting was conducted. If before, the community made use of the manila paper, in this period, they presented using a PowerPoint presentation flashed with the aid of a projector. The use of technology, as described by the volunteers, facilitates a culture of transparency, making financial data both available and understandable to all stakeholders. The treasurer presented and explained the financial reports and allowed the community to ask questions, validate information, and raise concerns if needed.

Effective Transparency Response System. The Grievance Redress System (GRS) is one of the integral transparency check and accountability tools in the KALAH-CIDSS National Community-Driven Development Program (NCDDP, 2015). It is a mechanism for communities to raise concerns, clarifications, and input in a formal manner that addresses projects and their implementation (Cabiles and Permejo, 2021). GRS does not only deal with corruption or malpractice allegations. It is also responsive to requests for information, operational feedback, and recommendations for improving program delivery. Participants of the KII to GRS volunteers of each barangay of Pinit, La Purisima Nuevo, and Villaflorida shared their experiences. According to them, they were oriented about their roles and responsibilities. Each barangay established a feedback box in the barangay hall, available to the residents for concerns or ideas. Boxes were opened weekly at a scheduled time to check for submissions. When the sub-project was completed, they provided a report. Despite the system being in place, all three barangays reported no formal complaints or feedback submitted via the boxes. In Lapurissima Nuevo, a similar formal grievance system exists. While there have been no major complaints filed by residents, the system was in place to handle dissatisfaction, such as potential issues with project quality or labor. This fostered a climate of trust and accountability to the three barangays while maintaining the program's integrity. This fostered a climate of trust and accountability to the three barangays while maintaining the program's integrity.

Community-led transparency and accountability stand as a powerful impact of empowerment because they shift the responsibility of oversight and disclosure from external actors to the people themselves (DSWD, 2015; World Bank, 2013). In this KALAH-CIDSS process, communities that establish monitoring committees, grievance systems, and participatory reporting mechanisms demonstrate that empowerment has matured into self-governance. By directly tracking fund utilization, project progress, and decision-making, citizens ensure that development initiatives remain fair, inclusive, and responsible to collective priorities. This grassroots ownership of transparency transforms communities from passive recipients of information into active stewards of governance.

Challenges Encountered and Lessons Learned

The implementation of KALAH-CIDSS projects revealed interrelated operational and institutional challenges that affected both the community level and the municipal level. During the FGD and KII, participants shared that at the community level, among challenges encountered were administrative burdens and timeline pressures, human resources and volunteer concerns, environmental and safety challenges, and resources and technical constraints. Two of these challenges were also encountered at the municipal level, which are the administrative burdens and timeline pressures, and the budgetary constraints.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

Administrative Burden and Timeline Pressure. Participants highlighted the sheer volume of paperwork required by the program. In La Purisima Nuevo, the Captain described the process as involving the volume of documents and piles of paper needed just to initiate a project. Similarly, the Villaflorida official noted that one had to be meticulous with papers, especially during financial presentations. The Punong Barangay during KII bluntly criticized the documentation requirements as excessive and the repetitive meetings about the program. The release of funds (tranches) requires meeting strict completion percentages (e.g., 60% completion), which can be stressful for volunteers. The sheer volume of paperwork was a major challenge. Volunteers and officials sometimes struggled to manage documents, especially during bad weather when they had to protect papers from rain.

Human Resources and Volunteer Concerns. Villaflorida's narrative shared the entire story without a doubt about the weight of this burden. Volunteers did not get paid, as repeatedly emphasized by the participants. The work was exhausting and required sleepless nights to meet documentation deadlines and to perform roles like inspecting the deliveries, even late at night. This aligns with external reviews of CDD programs that frequently report volunteer fatigue and the significant opportunity cost of participation as major obstacles. Project assignments often require working late into the night to meet strict deadlines, consuming more time than their personal life. However, volunteers believed their work contributed to the betterment of the community. Volunteers often struggled to balance their civic duties with school, work, and family responsibilities. The unavailability of the other volunteers due to school, work, and other priorities seemed to be a concern, but volunteers managed to perform their functions. Some women volunteers arranged their time and often left their children with older children and other relatives.

Resource and Technical Constraints. The technical deviation was experienced in the implementation of the concreting of the access roads in Pinit and in La Purisima Nuevo. In La Purisima Nuevo, the implementation of the road faced a budget shortage because the actual conditions on the ground (muddy terrain) required more materials than the initial Program of Works estimated. The engineering estimates had defaulted to a standard mix, but during execution, the laborers used a rich/heavy mix, meaning they used more cement than specified to ensure durability. The volume of sand in the sacks hauled was also inconsistent, complicating ratio calculations. As a result, there was a material deficit of around 88 bags of cement for a 10-meter stretch. Instead of stopping the project to apply for a variation order (which would cause further delays), the Barangay Council intervened. They used barangay funds to purchase the gravel, sand, and 88 bags of cement that were lacking. Sometimes, volunteers carried the burden of paying for the need to comply with the requirement and assumed the financial burden to make the project succeed. However, the barangay had to step in with counterpart funding to complete the project and prevent substandard work. In addition, as per the PIT head, he had to look for the funds first to support the labor payments because the KALAH-CIDSS system releases funds in tranches upon completion of at least 60% of construction. The laborers, who are daily wage earners, could not wait for the processing. According to the PIT, there were instances when workers threatened to stop working because their wages were delayed, and the PIT needed to shell out its own money first for reimbursement later.

Environmental and Safety Challenges. The physical environment of Villaflorida, generated some geographical problems. Since the ground is not flat but rather steep, it made the new concreted routes dangerous. Most of the participants' claims focused on safety. The participants said they were frightened by the steepness of the road when riding a motorcycle along a new path. The second problem was the fear that came from the different smooth surfaces interacting with the steep terrain. This fear stems from the interaction between the new smooth surface and the steep topography. While the mud acted as a brake (albeit a paralyzing one), the concrete allows for speed, which can be dangerous if the gradient is too high or if the motorcycle's brakes fail. They shared that there were some instances in which residents felt as if they might slide off the path into the ravine. In addition, during the implementation, the transport of materials was a concern, especially during inclement weather or when deliveries were late.

Challenges Encountered in Municipal Level

Among the challenges encountered by the Municipality of Ocampo, as shared by the mayor's office, are the tight timelines and the budget limitations.

Administrative Burden and Timeline Pressure. This kind of culture of urgency from the implementing agency and an enormous documentation burden were experienced by the LGU, which is typical of local communities that run programs themselves. Based on KII, from the stage of pre-implementation to post-implementation, personnel managed an undue amount of paperwork on their own, which got exacerbated by timelines whereby requirements were received on one day, then due the next.

Limited Funding and Prioritization. Due to a limited budget, the LGU still included the projects in the Local Development Plan that were not allocated funds during the prioritization scheme in KALAH-CIDSS. The municipality utilizes the Economic Development Fund (EDF) as a cushion to reduce budgetary shortfalls and priority developments. In addition, LGU serves as a financial safety net whenever the budget lines are in a hole.

When the financing for La Purisima Nuevo's road project lacked funding to cover construction materials and supplies, the municipality stepped in to finish the project. This collaborative strategy ensured that the right infrastructure was built for the needs of citizens, even in low-resource LGUs.

LESSONS LEARNED

Social Inclusion Strengthens Outcomes. Social inclusion strengthens the outcomes by ensuring marginalized groups, including women and indigenous people, actively participate in the decision-making and project implementation. As the findings revealed, the area of Zone 2 in Pinit is composed of the most marginalized individuals and now enjoys the fruit of the concreting of the access roads. In addition, the area of Villaflorida with the majority of the IPs is now privileged to enjoy the socio-economic benefits of the concreting of the pathway. These are the result of the active participation of all the marginalized groups in the selection of the priority needs and even beyond the completion of the projects. It was worth noting that those considered marginalized groups from IPs and all women were elected to various roles in the governance structure, including the BSPMC chairman. They had gained technical knowledge, increased confidence in public speaking, embodied the spirit of volunteerism, built social networks, and developed teamwork, which made them not a mere recipient of benefits but an active partner in community development. As an empowered individual, they sustained engagement, even holding public office to serve in a bigger way.

Capacity Building for the Volunteers is Essential. Capacity building is a long-term investment in local governance. Behind every successful community initiative was a team of well-trained facilitators. These individuals played a vital role in guiding communities through complex processes such as procurement, budgeting, and monitoring. In Villa Florida, some volunteers claimed that only a few had attended the actual training. They were only oriented on their responsibilities. But with the presence of the hands-on community facilitator, they were able to learn the processes. These skills continue to benefit communities beyond KALAH-CIDSS projects. However, there were reported cases where not everyone who was given the role was able to attend seminars, but rather an orientation was conducted in the barangay. Some were not allowed to interact with other barangays, though they performed their respective roles well. This capacity building is essential to understand the mechanism and the government process. One instance is the claim of the participants on the strict documentation before the disbursement of funds. While this seemed to be a burden to the implementers, the volunteers exerted effort because it is necessary when disbursing funds. These can be more manageable if all volunteers in the governance structures were given the proper capacity building instead of a simple orientation of the tasks to ensure proper coordination among roles and expedite the processes without any deviation from the rules and regulations.

Local Government Support is Crucial. Based on the KII with the Mayor, Punong Barangay, and other barangay officials, the LGU has been supportive of the KALAH-CIDSS projects. They made sure to allocate the budget included in their AIP for their respective counterparts, including the yearly fund for the operation and maintenance of the completed subprojects. At the municipal level, the Municipality of Ocampo provided for the manpower and financial contribution corresponding to the funds from DSWD. This shows that when the municipality is serious as an active participating agency of KALAH-CIDSS projects, DSWD continues to extend projects in the municipality. Sustained LGU commitment guarantees the long-term viability of community-driven development, which will benefit the wider communities of Ocampo. However, due to the competing priorities, the LGU also faces challenges with the funding of other projects, which were not prioritized by the KALAH-CIDSS. Embedded in the CEAC, those non-prioritized projects by the KALAH-CIDSS should be included in the multi-year development plan of the LGU to ensure the urgent response to the community needs based on the situational analysis they performed. In response to this, the municipality had attested that one strategy they have is the use of the Economic Development Fund to fill the gap. In addition, the continuous funding for the Operation and Maintenance, as claimed by the Punong Barangay, has been allocated yearly to maintain the completed infrastructure, resulting in the sustainability of the completed projects.

Community Empowerment Requires Time. Community empowerment is a long-term process, especially when we consider the involved community members. Based on the results of the FGD and KII, volunteers were empowered to perform their individual roles because they were entrusted with roles that gave them autonomy in terms of project implementation. However, communities often begin with hesitation and low self-esteem, and

they need technical guidance to ensure that they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge. The participants of the study possess the confidence and dedication to learn in pursuit of these sub-projects that will benefit their community; hence, they feel empowered to extend their service and volunteerism. Yet not every volunteer has the same urge to actively engage and be confident with their individual capacity. The need for capacity building, constant mentoring, hands-on supervision, and encouragement during participatory decision making takes repeated cycles of simulation before confidence and leadership emerge. Moreover, empowerment involves cultural and social transformation – culture adaptation, strengthening accountability, and dismantling entrenched hierarchical barriers – which these changes require patience and continuity. Time is essential for communities to embrace their roles as active agents of change, validate their ideas through implementation, and adapt their strategies through monitoring and adaptation. True empowerment requires patience because, without it, it may result in token participation, elite capture, and unsustainable projects. Patience ensures that empowerment evolves as a long-term investment in people and relationships, leading to sustainable community-driven change.

Effective Utilization of Funds Translates into Quality Outputs. Evident in the KALAH-CIDSS program is the community-managed funds, which are utilized only for the infrastructure and social service projects that directly respond to the community's priority needs. Volunteers shared that since they were entrusted with the government fund, they made sure that they produced a quality output by carefully choosing materials and supplies that met the accurate specifications. This is very relevant, especially in the issues of flood control projects, wherein other projects used substandard materials, and there were issues of ghost projects. As claimed by the volunteers, procuring materials with the correct specification, not substandard, the quality of the outputs could last longer and can even survive a disaster. In KALAH-CIDSS, the community itself identifies, implements, monitors, and sustains the completed projects because the funds allocated to the projects are managed by the elected ordinary community members who are volunteers and extend efforts even without payment for the benefit of the community. With their careful financial management, they maximized the use of the limited resources. With these, proper fund utilization enhances credibility and demonstrates that community-driven development can deliver tangible, high-quality results, with the presence of committed community members and with the continued support from both LGUs and external partners. They did not receive any complaints related to misuse and corruption, but rather more on generosity. It is also evident that those savings against the planned cost were reverted to the source without compromising the quality of projects.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the KALAH-CIDSS program in the Municipality of Ocampo, Camarines Sur, stands as a compelling example of effective participatory governance and community-driven development. With the embedded governance structures, roles, and responsibilities of the actors in the program actively participating in the Community Empowerment Activities Cycle, ordinary citizens developed technical, leadership, and communication skills, strengthening both social capital and civic engagement. These transform individuals into active drivers of community development. Through the active involvement of citizens, especially the marginalized group, the program has achieved not only the tangible improvements and benefits of the infrastructure built but, more importantly, has fostered the empowerment of individuals and communities. Despite the challenges related to administrative requirements, volunteer concerns, resources, technical constraints, and safety issues, the dedication and collective commitment demonstrated by community volunteers and local leaders have proven instrumental in surpassing these obstacles. The experiences shared by the participants revealed a transformative effect: volunteers emerged as confident leaders, responsible stewards of public resources, and advocates for transparency and accountability. The transition of these volunteers into formal government service roles and sustained civic engagement within the community underscores the program's long-term impact on community empowerment and local governance.

Despite the challenges encountered, the lessons learned from Ocampo's case study highlight the importance of continuous capacity building of the volunteers, strong support from the government, effective resource allocations, and sustained social inclusion to further enhance the program's outcomes. Ultimately, KALAH-CIDSS in Ocampo, Camarines Sur, has not only addressed immediate development needs but has also established a foundation for a culture of participation, responsibility, and empowerment that can serve as a

replicable model for other communities seeking to advance an inclusive and empowered community supporting community development initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher recommends the following initiatives involving key stakeholders to deepen and sustain community empowerment through community-driven development like KALAH-CIDSS.

To the Department of Social Welfare and Local Government units, it is crucial to reinforce the conduct capacity building for all community volunteers, not just an orientation, and for those selected functions, such as financial management and procurement. Every role is significant, and at least one comprehensive training session, frequent consultation from the facilitators, and periodic visits may be conducted across barangays to ensure that volunteers are equipped with the necessary expertise in performing their individual roles. Through capacity building, volunteers may gain confidence, widen their network with other barangays, and the learnings will enhance their technical knowledge, leadership, and project management skills. Investing in learning, especially at the barangay level, can equip ordinary citizens to become confident, capable leaders and active participants in community governance.

To the Local Government Units of Ocampo, Camarines Sur and to all its Barangays, the researcher urges to continue provide the 100% required counterpart– the manpower and financial counterparts to deepen the community trust and collaboration. In cases of budget constraints, the LGUs should look into more. In addition, for the citizens to feel empowered, the local government units should require the Municipal council and Barangay council to adopt immediately through an ordinance and LGU or embed into existing municipal development plans and barangay governance manual, the best practices of KALAH-CIDSS to sustain the empowerment of all volunteers. Among these practices are the participatory situational analysis which serves as evidence-based community needs identification, community consultation, facilitation protocols for the marginalized group inclusive representation, the thirty (30%) women paid labor during project implementation, installation of grievance boxes, posting of the financial reports in the transparency board, public financial reporting at least a week after submitting reports to the COA, and the conduct of annual sustainability audit of the completed sub-projects and publishing results of the audit immediately or as what is prescribed in the rules of KALAH-CIDSS to maintain its relevance to the public information. These initiatives will empower more communities to be collaborative in all local government units' programs aside from KALAH-CIDSS.

To all community members and volunteers, cultivate a sustained culture of volunteerism and collective action. Encourage teamwork and mutual support to strengthen long-term engagement. Even beyond KALAH-CIDSS projects, encourage other members of the barangay to participate, share invaluable experience to inspire others to join and remain engaged in all the community activities, and stay vigilant and watchful of all the leaders' actions and hold them accountable if necessary.

To all program implementers, DSWD, LGUs and other stakeholder, continue to document and share success stories of empowered individuals and communities in each concluding cycle. The BSPMC may conduct a separate forum after the turn-over of each subproject and highlight the positive outcomes and lessons learned to inspire replication of participatory approaches. Organize exposure visits between barangays to spread good practices. Use real-life narrative to spread the culture of empowerment across barangays. Maximize the use of social media platforms to feature stories of volunteers and the quality of outputs produced by the KALAH-CIDSS. A volunteer for each cycle maybe featured through social media posting or through any posting in a conspicuous area of barangay to appreciate their contributions to the community.

To all future researchers, conducting further studies on the long-term impacts of community-driven approaches on community empowerment across different municipalities to provide deeper insights about factors contributing to successful empowerment. Other areas such as sustainability of the completed sub-projects and the impact on local governance may also be explored.

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