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**SOCIAL SERVICES IMPACT ON COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES: CASE OF KAPIT-
BISIG SA KAHIRAPAN PROJECT IN CAMARINES SUR**

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ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose	The general purpose of this study is to examine the impact of the KALAHY-CIDSS project on community development in the East Coastal Area of Lagonoy, Camarines Sur, Philippines after its implementation.
Background	Examining the impact of the KALAHY-CIDSS project on community development helps to determine the program's priority issues that the government should be able to address.
Methodology	This study used a purely qualitative method in gathering data following the case study design, and employed three different data gathering techniques. This method was used to develop in-depth analysis and provide appropriate baseline information on the impact of the KALAHY-CIDSS project on community development.
Contribution	The results of this endeavor will generate useful information for concerned Philippine government agencies to improve their programs or projects toward societal development. The formulation of possible relevant policies or additional activities under this project will deliver essential development to the lives of beneficiaries in terms of combating poverty and ensuring safety and protection during the onslaught of natural catastrophes.
Findings	The KALAHY-CIDSS project, while not free from flaws, has gained a lot of recognition as an effective poverty reduction program because of the job opportunities it generated in the poor communities, particularly in the East Coastal Area of Lagonoy. Significantly, it helped the community stakeholders to establish shared trust, mutual understanding, and cooperation among them. Its implementation promotes gender equality and stakeholder empowerment, upholding accountability and transparency in the

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	community.
Recommendations for Practitioners	The construction of infrastructures (e.g. seawalls) kept residents safe and protected from natural hazards. However, since poverty is a multi-dimensional issue, the government should not concentrate predominantly on the economic aspect of the lives of the Filipinos. Instead, they need to establish collaborative efforts with various government agencies to combat the prevalent problems in the country.
Recommendation for Researchers	There is still room to examine different aspects of this program such as different measurement and analysis to figure out how influential this program is.
Impact on Society	The significant positive feedback from the stakeholders may be used as baseline data to continually implement the project to those communities that need to be safe, protected and developed, as well as to reduce the poverty incidence. However, the implementing agency must consider the weaknesses found in this study as a guide for improved project implementation.
Future Research	The information generated in this study has the potential to be helpful to the scientific community focusing on the impact of KALAHI-CIDSS on community development. However, this does not provide enough concrete and empirical measurements that could actually provide scientific information regarding the impact of the project. Thus, conducting further investigation about the impact of KALAHI-CIDSS on community development by employing quantitative methods will be the future focus of the author. Utilizing a quantitative approach will provide the comprehensive and objective type of processes, tests, and results needed in order to be able to generalize the project's impact on KALAHI-CIDSS beneficiaries all over the Philippines.
Keywords	KALAHI-CIDSS, community development, poverty reduction program, community participation, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Poverty, inequality, and the dreadful aftermath of natural catastrophes are some of the recurrent issues that the Philippines is facing today. The occurrence of absolute and relative poverty is a pressing dilemma in the country. As of August 2016, the total population in the Philippines is 101 million, out of which 26.5 million (26.3%) experienced enduring poverty in the first half of 2015 (Philippine Statistics Authority Report, 2016). On October 27, 2016, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) (2016a), the country's latest full poverty incidence indicates significant changes from 2012 to 2015, estimating a difference of 3.6%. The 21.6% poverty rate last 2015 was lower than the recorded rate in 2012 of 25.2%. The PSA report provides the estimates of poverty incidence using the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) conducted in July 2015 and January 2016. Though the incidence of poverty was reduced to a certain percentage, the target result of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) of a difference of at least 18% was still unmet. More than 26 million Filipinos remain poor, with 12 million still trapped in the poverty web and lacking the means to feed themselves (Suansing, 2017). According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the main causes of poverty in the Philippines are the:

- a) Low to moderate economic growth for the past 40 years;
- b) Low growth elasticity of poverty reduction;
- c) Weakness in employment generation and the quality of jobs generated;

- d) Failure to fully develop the agricultural sector;
- e) High inflation during crisis periods;
- f) High levels of population growth;
- g) High and persistent levels of inequality (incomes and assets), which dampen the positive impacts of economic expansion; and
- h) Recurrent shocks and exposure to risks such as economic crises, conflicts, natural disasters, and environmental poverty (Asian Development Bank, 2009).

In the Philippines, poverty is found to be most prevalent in coastal rural communities where the majority of the population gets sustenance from farming and fishing. People in these communities have limited access to basic services and are often isolated from the centers of business and government because of distance and poor infrastructure. Government services unfortunately do not contribute significantly to reducing the poverty incidence in these areas. People are not empowered to demand the delivery of services and influence how the government allocates resources and prioritizes projects (Songco, 2016). On the other hand, ravaging typhoons from the Pacific, extreme rainfall, severe flooding, landslides, and other natural disasters add to the burden of development in the country. These climatic hazards render Filipino people, most especially those residents from the coastal areas, to become more economically and socially vulnerable. With this condition, the poverty set-up among Filipinos exacerbates social inequalities that lead to a more complex social system in the country. To respond to these issues, the Philippine government provides social services that help vulnerable Filipinos to be resilient against poverty and to keep them safe from natural catastrophes. The services implemented by the government through the DSWD are based on the Social Protection Program that seeks to reduce poverty and vulnerability to risks, enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized by means of promoting and protecting livelihood and employment, protect against hazards and sudden loss of income, and improve peoples' capacity to manage risks (Cabral, 2008).

KALAHI-CIDSS PROJECT

The Kapit-bisig Laban sa Kahirapan (Linking Arms against Poverty) Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS) is one of the social service programs in the Philippines implemented to combat societal dilemmas. It is a community-driven poverty alleviation project undertaken by the DSWD to empower communities, improve local governance, and reduce poverty (Cabral, 2008). This project targets to provide community-based activities through community-driven development (CDD), also called a community participatory approach, that seeks to empower local communities to identify and implement the projects they most need (Beatty et al., 2011). The first stage of KALAHI-CIDSS or the KC-1 ran for 8 years, from 2003 to 2010, at a cost of US\$182 million, where about 54% of this amount was funded through a World Bank loan. The rest was contributed by the Philippine Government through the DSWD, beneficiary communities, and participating local government units. KC-1 was implemented in 42 provinces, representing more than 50% of all provinces in the Philippines with a poverty incidence higher than the national average of 33.7 % in 2002. The relative poverty incidence of the selected provinces was based on the measurement of the National Statistical Coordination Board and the United Nations' human development index (Asian Development Bank, 2012). After the Typhoon Yolanda on November 8, 2013, the DSWD redesigned the KALAHI-CIDSS to serve as a program responsive to post disaster rehabilitation. Asian Development Bank (2016) estimated that millions of Filipinos may have suddenly fallen into poverty, particularly in central Philippines, during that time. Due to the dreadful conditions, CDD approaches have been used to address the bottleneck in the local delivery of basic services. The CDD principles of participatory planning and community control of investment resources are being applied in the Philippines (Asian Development Bank, 2016). Institutionalization of CDD is reflected in how local governments undertake participatory, inclusive development planning; allocate resources for devel-

opment, as well as the parameters and criteria used in allocating resources; and implement development programs in a participatory, transparent, and inclusive manner (Asian Development Bank, 2012). KALAHY-CIDSS helped improve the delivery of basic services since then, lessening the influence of patronage in resource allocation and unemployment. Because of its implementation, the government identified the project as a pillar of the country's development and poverty reduction strategy. The KALAHY-CIDSS operations then expanded to the KALAHY-CIDSS-National Community-Driven Development Program (KC-NCDDP) (Asian Development Bank, 2016). In supporting the government's anti-poverty programs, the key objective of the KALAHY-CIDSS project is to assist in strengthening people's participation in community governance and to develop their capacity to design, implement, and manage development activities that reduce poverty (World Bank, nd). KALAHY-CIDSS has three components, namely:

- 1) *Social preparation, capacity building, and implementation support* in all levels of the project cycle stages, including training on various competency areas required by the subprojects as support for community mobilization activities;
- 2) *Provision of a seed fund for community development projects*, which the municipalities specifically allot to be utilized for development projects determined during barangay assemblies; and
- 3) *Monitoring and evaluation* to document and summarize learning and make possible adjustments in the project through studies or researches (KALAHY-CIDSS Manual, 2004).

The people and agencies involved in this project are divided into two stages: first, during the project preparation or designing, and second, during implementation. The executing agency of this national community-driven development project is the DSWD. Throughout the project designing or preparation stage, the DSWD conducts consultations with different stakeholders and coordinates with development partners through workshops, field visits, and meetings to secure views about the components of the project and enhance the project design. In project implementation, the main stakeholders are the poor villagers (men and women), village volunteers, local government units and their staff, field staff of national agencies, and civil society organizations (KALAHY-CIDSS Manual, 2004). Since this project promotes gender equality, women receive equal treatment and remuneration as men laborers during the construction of the subprojects implemented in the villages. Thus, women have equal opportunity to be involved in all stages of project implementation in the community. Through its scale-up into a national community-driven development program on June 23, 2014, and its official roll out in July 2014, it was able to conduct the initial preparatory activities in 659 municipalities, where 80% are Yolanda-affected municipalities. In 2014, KALAHY-CIDSS mobilized and trained 60,418 community volunteers to participate in the program, from the preparation and implementation of the subprojects to the operation and its maintenance. This project was also able to provide short-term employment to 33,569 individuals during the subproject implementation phase through paid physical labor, with P107 million in salaries provided to them (Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2015). In the context of KALAHY-CIDSS in Partido Area - the 4th District of Camarines Sur, the municipality of Lagonoy is one of the localities continuously receiving aid from the government since 2014. The locality is supported by the program because of its geographical location, which is calamity-prone and where villages have a prevailing poverty incidence. Landslides, storm surges, and floods are the most common natural adversities that have been experienced by the locals. Perhaps it is because of these concerns that some of the study areas in Lagonoy, such as San Sebastian, Omalo, Cabotonan, and Panicuan, have been identified as priority areas and provided with important infrastructure subprojects.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

However, despite the remarkable implementation (remarkable because KALAHY-CIDSS was recognized as the flagship poverty reduction program of the Philippine government) and construction of KALAHY-CIDSS subprojects over several years, its impact on community development is under-

scrutiny because of the consistent number of disadvantaged Filipinos who still suffer from the breadth of poverty, specifically in the coastal rural communities where KALAHY-CIDSS subprojects have already been implemented. Some of the beneficiaries question the real impact of the project in their lives because, though they are a part of it, they still live in dire poverty. Thus, this study intends to examine the impact of the KALAHY-CIDSS project on community development in the East Coastal Area of Lagonoy, Camarines Sur, Philippines. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: Have the presumed impact of KALAHY-CIDSS program been met? What is the status of the KALAHY-CIDSS subprojects in the East Coastal Area of Lagonoy? What is the impact of the KALAHY-CIDSS subprojects on community development as perceived by the beneficiaries in the locality? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this program based on the data gathered?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study is to examine the impact of the KALAHY-CIDSS project on community development in the East Coastal Area of Lagonoy, Camarines Sur, Philippines after its implementation. Specifically, this study sought to meet the following objectives:

1. Determine the presumed impact of the KALAHY-CIDSS program/project.
2. Determine the status of the KALAHY-CIDSS subprojects in the East Coastal Area of Lagonoy.
3. Examine the impact of the KALAHY-CIDSS subprojects on community development as perceived by the beneficiaries.
4. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the program based on the data gathered.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of this endeavor will generate useful information for concerned Philippine government agencies to improve their programs or projects toward societal development. The formulation of possible relevant policies or additional activities under this project will deliver essential development to the lives of beneficiaries in terms of combating poverty and ensuring safety and protection during the onslaught of natural catastrophes.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA GATHERING TECHNIQUE

This study used a purely qualitative method in gathering data following the case study design, and employed three different data gathering techniques. This method was used to develop in-depth analysis and provide appropriate baseline information on the impact of the KALAHY-CIDSS project on community development in the East Coastal Area of Lagonoy, Camarines Sur.

The following data gathering techniques were conducted in this investigation.

1. Literature Review and Data Mining

A literature review about the KALAHY-CIDSS project implementation was done to glean information or insights associated with the issue that could provide useful content to the discussion of this study. Data mining was also used to analyze the gathered essential secondary data to assess the status of the KALAHY-CIDSS subprojects in the study area.

2. Exploratory Interview

An exploratory interview was conducted to gather firsthand data or information from purposively chosen respondents, who provided useful information that, could shed light on the qualitative analysis and results of the impact of KALAHY-CIDSS on community development. The respondents of

this study were the people from the Municipal KALAHI-CIDSS Office of Lagonoy, the Municipal Social Welfare Development office, and the barangay offices of San Sebastian, Omalo, Cabotonan, and Panicuan; the volunteers, particularly the women; and other stakeholders who were involved in the project implementation.

3. Field Observation

In order to triangulate the gathered data through data mining and interviews the researcher used the village walk to verify and examine the subprojects implemented through KALAHI-CIDSS in the study area.

LOCALE OF THE STUDY

Lagonoy is a 2nd class municipality in the 4th district (also known as Partido Area) of Camarines Sur, Philippines. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, as of August 2015, the total population of the locality is 55,465. It is politically subdivided into 38 barangays (villages), of which San Sebastian, Omalo, Cabotonan, and Panicuan are part of the East Coastal Area (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2016b). This study determined these villages as study areas because they are beneficiaries of KALAHI-CIDSS subprojects in the municipality.

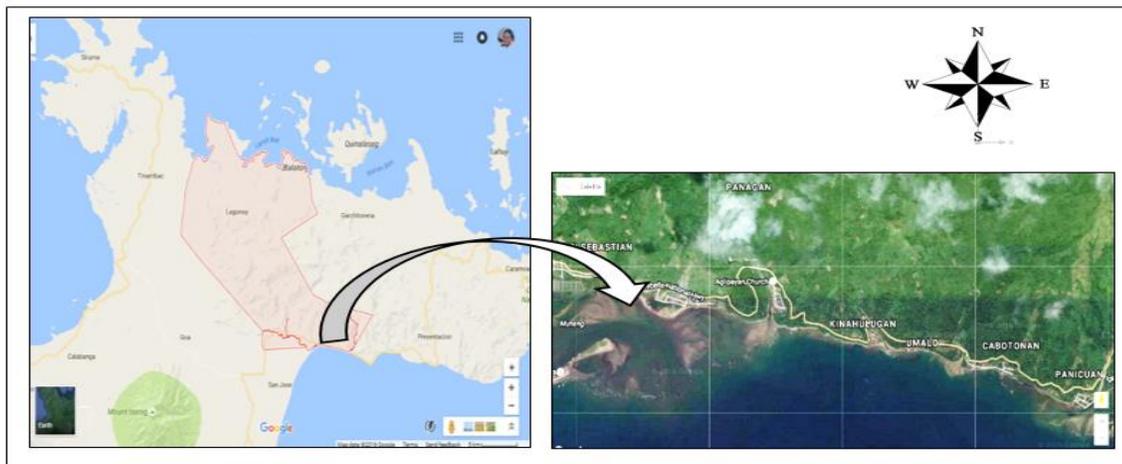


Figure 1. Map of East Coastal of Lagonoy, Camarines Sur (Google Map, 2017)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

PRESUMED OUTCOMES AND IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

Based on the data gathered, the presumed primary impact of this project is the improved resiliency of poor communities to natural hazards. Improvement in access to services and infrastructure for communities in affected provinces, and their participation in the more inclusive local disaster risk reduction and management planning, budgeting, and implementation are the expected outcomes of this project. Consequently, as of June 30, 2016, 73% or 7,612 subprojects out of 10,381 approved subprojects have been completed. Twenty percent (20%) of the paid jobs were held by women. Membership of people's and civil society organizations in local development councils and special bodies have increased by 93%, equivalent to 826 target municipalities, which is higher than the 85% target. An average of 20 community volunteers per village have been trained, 59% of which were women. Fifty-five percent (55%) or 55,201 out of 99,520 village committee heads were women. The system of requesting for community funds at the national and regional levels have been completed and became operational beginning in December 2014. A total of 229 new KC-NCDDP municipali-

ties (those affected by Typhoon Yolanda in 2013) were generated (sex-disaggregated data), which is higher than the targeted 189 municipalities. Lastly, the implementation of the Gender Action Plan is ongoing, with 20 out of 29 actions and targets achieved so far (Asian Development Bank, 2016). This information implies that the DSWD performed its best to attain the outcomes and impact of the project towards societal development. The efforts that the agency exerted provided a significant change in the implementation of the program holistically. Attaining the goals of the program is a challenge for the government agencies. Meeting the needs of their beneficiaries is necessary to achieve their targets. However, it can be concluded that the DSWD accomplished a lot in order to deliver the basic services that the Filipinos need, especially in addressing the recurrent exposure to risks such as social and economic inequalities, conflicts, natural disasters, and poverty.

STATUS OF KALAHI-CIDSS SUBPROJECTS IN THE EAST COASTAL OF LAGONOY, CAMARINES SUR

According to the KALAHI-CIDSS Lagonoy Municipal Office Report (2016), as of October 2016, the construction and infrastructure projects in the East Coastal Area were 70-100% completed (see Table 1). In Cabotonan, construction of the reinforced seawall and the day care center is 100% completed. In San Sebastian, the rehabilitation of the seawall is 100% finished and construction of the evacuation center-cum-training center is 80.35% finished. In Omalo, construction of the reinforced seawall is 74% completed, and in Panicuan, construction of the day care center is 100% done. With these data, it shows that the objectives of the project to empower communities, promote local governance, and reduce poverty through the creation of jobs for the residents have somehow been realized. Furthermore, through the continuous implementation of the KALAHI-CIDSS project, there is hope that the Philippines will consequently be free from prevalent poverty and residents near calamity-prone areas will be safe and protected from natural disasters. This also implies that the Philippine government, through the Local Government Units, aspires to provide safe and sound communities for the people to live in, particularly those in coastal communities.

Table 1: Status of KALAHI-CIDSS subprojects in the East Coastal Area of Lagonoy, Camarines Sur

Villages	Name of Subprojects	Physical Target	Physical Accomplishment
Cabotonan	Construction of reinforced seawall	150 m.	100%
	Construction of day care center	48 sq. m.	100%
Omalo	Construction of reinforced seawall	63 m.	74%
Panicuan	Construction of day care center	48 sq. m.	100%
San Sebastian	Rehabilitation of seawall	85 m.	100%
	Construction of evacuation center-cum-training center	7 m. x 18 m.	80.35%

PERCEIVED IMPACT OF KALAHI-CIDSS SUBPROJECTS IN THE EAST COASTAL OF LAGONOY, CAMARINES SUR

Based on the interview conducted, according to the village chief of San Sebastian, Lagonoy, Camarines Sur, the KALAHI-CIDSS project positively affected their lives significantly since the East Coastal Area is prone to landslides and storm surges and has a prevalent poverty incidence. In addition, a project monitor said that the project has an effective campaign on gender equality because of

the equal opportunities and remuneration that beneficiaries receive; however, the culture and mindset of Filipinos, particularly by the rural male residents, which underestimate the competencies of women in the labor market, were observed to still exist. Thus, this means that the participation of women in social, economic and political life is hindered by everyday sexism and inequalities in relation to men (World Bank, 2011). One of the village councillors in Cabotonan, Lagonoy, Camarines Sur stated that the KALAHI-CIDSS project showed a remarkable outcome in the lives of the impoverished residents in their community. According to her, this project aided residents, especially the women, to have other sources of income for their daily consumption. She also said that, as a community officer, empowering her capabilities through this project helped her and others invest on their careers for the long term since this project capacitates their local management skills, which they can use for their professional advancement. Similar to what other beneficiaries experienced, the village treasurer of Omalo, Lagonoy, Camarines Sur shared the contribution and impact of KALAHI-CIDSS in their community. As an appointed village officer, she emphasized that the efficient processing of the budget to implement the subprojects in their community was an effective objective by the KALAHI-CIDSS because they were able to efficiently allocate funds and implement the subprojects in the allotted time. Thus, through tedious training activities and seminars, their participation as officers in community-based project implementation paid off. Furthermore, to establish substantial evidence and confirm different perspectives on the contribution and impact of the KALAHI-CIDSS project, this study included interviews with the youth. Since they are the successors and will be the future beneficiaries of potential development, this study sought to find out what their perception was regarding this issue. One of the active youth leaders in the East Coastal Area said that:

“Inot na inot nagkaigwang trabaho si mga tawo didgi samo lalo na so mga tambay. Panduma, nakainas sa makusog na alon kapag may bagyo ta may seawall na. Pantulo, dae na naggad nagtatao nin danyos sa mga pagrugaring na harani sa dagat. Asin an konseptong ini talagang tigtatauban nin kusog ang partisipasyon kan mga residentes na sa bandang huri makakatabang sa pagpababa kan kapobrehan kasi tinatauban ninda nin trabaho o oportunidad na magkatrabaho an mga tawo.” (First of all, the residents who are jobless here in our village had a chance to be employed. Second, because of the constructed seawall, we were kept safe and protected from the robust tidal waves or storm surges during the onslaught of typhoons. Third, the subprojects helped preserve our properties, especially those near the seashores. The concept of this program indeed empowered us to participate in order to alleviate poverty and provide job opportunities to those in need.)

Since the area is close to the seashore, the rehabilitation and construction of new seawalls in their community largely helped them to safeguard their properties, which also meant securing their livelihoods. The rehabilitation and construction of new community roads and day care centers were some of the subprojects spearheaded by KALAHI-CIDSS. The testimonies given by the key persons who were interviewed in this study imply that the implementation of the KALAHI-CIDSS project has a significant impact on the development of their community. This potentially uplifted the lives of the beneficiaries to some extent, particularly in the economic aspect. The job opportunities produced by the project indeed benefited the impoverished residents of the villages, providing additional income, however minimal, for their subsistence. In addition, the views of the beneficiaries regarding their living conditions changed a bit because of the opportunities they were given to earn extra income. Similarly, the study results of Edillon, Piza, and Abad Santos (2011), found that this project indeed brought significant contribution and impact to the beneficiaries in terms of improvements in household welfare, accessibility, social capital, and community development. On the other hand, Reid (2011) found that when it comes to poverty reduction, the impacts of KALAHI-CIDSS were uncertain or weak and it does not necessarily target the most vulnerable groups in the community. In reality, according to Panay (2014), the “effectiveness of development strategies lie in the actual implementation of the processes and their effects on the behavior of the community. It must not only be properly designed and planned by the technical team and thrown to the community for implementation but must also be sponsored and upheld sincerely by political leaders and the community (p. 74).”

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE PROGRAM/PROJECT

Strengths

One of the major strengths this project has is its clear objectives that accentuate the power of the community. The influence of community in conducting this intervention is important in order to facilitate appropriately and effectively the purposes of this project. Through community participation, impoverished people in the community have been given an opportunity to increase their per diem returns. Hence, this means that the project is economically beneficial (Araral and Holmemo, 2007). The decisions or voices of the ordinary people have influenced the decision-making landscape of the community through effective participatory approach during the conduct of meetings or assemblies regarding the identification of priority infrastructure projects. Using this method also, the priority needs of the community were determined and addressed. Moreover, empowering the aptitude of skilled workers within the community has great support during project implementation. The basic supervision and local management skills of some volunteers have been challenged, however, eventually, it will help them in their future careers. In this perspective, this project deemed that, once the community has empowered its resources (human, environmental, economic, etc.); it will definitely accumulate significant changes in poverty reduction as well as in sustainable societal development. Gender equality, on the other hand, is another principle that this project has been promoting. Equal treatment for males and females result in equal opportunities to everyone who had the skills and potential for project implementation and decision-making. With this kind of freedom, a healthy competition on who might produce quality work in the end is encouraged, since competition is one of the ingredients for a healthy organization. However, conflicting ideas of both males and females contributed additional concerns due to their diversified cultural and familial responsibilities in the community. Still, the program encourages this in order to acknowledge the cultural diversity of the volunteers with regard to responsibilities and the nature of work and their skills, giving this program another advantage. The bottom line is that both men and women have equal job opportunities and responsibilities during the project designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. An additional strength of the project is its contribution to the fight against corruption in the government. Overwhelming corruption in the Philippines has been observed and experienced for several decades due to the selfish interests of some public servants. Because of this emerging problem, the government, through the KALAHI-CIDSS project, passed the accountability and responsibility of allocating and disbursing budget to the community. The funds are downloaded and forwarded directly and immediately to the community where the project will be implemented so that direct influence to fraud, misuse, and manipulation of finances from national, regional, and municipal public officials might be discouraged or evaded. Another thing to be considered strength of this program is the scope of its implementation. Because the project is implemented nationwide, each community has the opportunity to receive financial aid as a support to improve its infrastructure or facilities such as day care centers, evacuation centers, production centers for livelihood activities and the like. Thus, all the communities that received fiscal support from this project have the tendency to embrace the primary objective of the project, which is to make a community resilient, free from poverty and safe from hazards, particularly from the common natural disasters in the Philippines (typhoons, landslides, extreme floods or severe flooding, storm surges, and others). The local skilled volunteer workers have an essential role to play in this program. Establishing human capital is a community-based asset because it will provide potential investment to the labor market, which will produce valuable products and/or services to cater to the needs of the community. In addition, having more employed civic members will create more funds in the community that will support other basic community-based social services.

Weaknesses

On the contrary, several weaknesses of the program have been observed and examined. Community participation was mentioned in this study as one of the strengths instilled in this program. However,

one of the project components, the monitoring and evaluation procedure, have been deemed as one of the weaknesses due to some issues (e.g., evaluation and monitoring control system of local government units) that ensued. Since this program empowers the public to participate in the planning and implementation stages, this does not necessarily mean that government offices do not have any direct control in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) during project implementation. Because it measures the effectiveness of community interaction and emphasizes the important lessons learned in project implementation (World Bank, 2011). The external monitoring and evaluation scheme from the municipal, regional, or national levels is a vital step to assess the practices or activities done by the community for them to be able to enhance the process and procedures and to ensure transparency and accountability in spearheading supplementary projects within their locality. The creation of a core group of M&E personnel from the municipal or regional levels (as external evaluators) who oversee the stiff evaluation on community-based monitoring and evaluation conducted by the volunteers may help the community to improve this concern. Because with this, a likely expansion in capacity-building activities would be realized and hence, the local management skills of every volunteer who holds the position will be enhanced. Then, eventually, they will be able to use these skills in the future, which could lead to resolving societal problems in the country. According to the volunteers interviewed in this study, in most cases at the community level, the assigned monitoring officer was biased because he/she undertook monitoring and evaluation depending on his/her interest or preferences. Also usually, the officer manipulates the data based only on his/her knowledge without parallel actions or decisions from the municipal, regional, and national levels or even based on the performance appraisal of volunteer laborers. Empowering people in the community and providing shared trust and mutual respect among them are some of the great ideals of this program, however, rigid parallel monitoring and evaluation of the project will be a great help for them to improve their knowledge in enhancing their own capacity. Thus, requiring the community to conduct internal post-evaluation reviews of the previously implemented community-based project could be done so that the community will immediately see problems that could develop during the project designing and implementation process. Moreover, using what has been found in this step could help resolve issues as soon as possible, even without the presence of external evaluators.

During the delivery of resources in the project implementation, poor governance of village officials and behavioral conflicts (among volunteers and also between officials and volunteers) were some of the weaknesses observed in this study. The delivery of resources, such as materials and remuneration, delayed the construction of some facilities because of the conflicting decisions of community-level officials. Poor governance of community leaders caused inadvertent problems during construction of some of the subprojects because of the ineffective and inefficient delivery of services to the constituents. Of course, the behavioral conflict among them was observed based on the statements given by the people concerned in the project implementation. With this, communities in the East Coastal Area must be involved in strategic planning because this could be a way to immediately address unintended conflicts or problems. Flaws were also observed in the quality of the construction projects and the presence of professional experts. Since the main objectives of the KALAHI-CIDSS program were to “empower people” and “promote community participation,” the quality of the community construction subprojects suffers. There is a tendency that the quality of facilities might be substandard since community-based skilled workers lack the proper training. This is similar findings found by University Research Company (2016) that some of the KALAHI-CIDSS subprojects have encountered several asset management issues including limited technical and engineering capacity at the community-level as well as poorly maintained work results. This implies that constructing substandard infrastructures will result in further damage to the community and will cause more waste of money. To solve this, the leading or implementing agency could provide the necessary training for the community’s skilled workers, particularly the volunteers who will work on the construction projects, to improve their craft and at the same time the quality of outputs and services. Likewise, professional experts from the municipal or regional offices should be present prior to and during the project implementation to supervise and provide quality control to the facilities being constructed.

These results imply that, although the program is well-recognized for helping reduce poverty in the country, there are some flaws that need to be addressed in order for this to further improve. Actually, this project has strengths that can be used by the government to enhance the lives of the disadvantaged sectors in the Philippines, particularly in the coastal communities. Some of these are: the advocacy of community participation and gender equality, the creation of jobs that could provide residents with extra income, and improving the sense of accountability and responsibility of community officers in allocating and utilizing resources to help prevent fraud and misuse by government officials. All of these can bring about another milestone to the Philippine landscape on community development because the program actually altered the decision-making scheme of the Filipino people who reside in rural communities. Perhaps, through this system, social issues such as corruption will be avoided and, eventually, the problems of social inequality and extreme poverty in the country will be addressed. In the course of this study, some weaknesses in the KALAHY-CIDSS project were revealed as the researcher provided in-depth analysis and keen observation during data gathering. This study, however, is not against the principles, philosophies, and objectives of the program. Furthermore, this study does not underestimate the skills and knowledge of the community in terms of project implementation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The KALAHY-CIDSS project, while not free from flaws, has gained a lot of recognition as an effective poverty reduction program because of the job opportunities it generated in the poor communities, particularly in the East Coastal Area of Lagonoy. Significantly, it helped the community stakeholders to establish shared trust, mutual understanding, and cooperation among them. Its implementation promotes gender equality and stakeholder empowerment, upholding accountability and transparency in the community. Hence, being equal opportunity for employment through this project, the local volunteers have been able to raise, to some extent, their economic conditions, which may contribute to the alleviation of poverty in the East Coastal Area of Lagonoy and, eventually, in the whole country. Furthermore, the construction of infrastructures (e.g., seawalls) kept residents safe and protected from natural hazards. However, since poverty is a multi-dimensional issue, the extent of KALAHY-CIDSS on poverty reduction is frail; thus, the government should not concentrate predominantly on the economic aspect of the lives of the Filipinos. Instead, they need to establish collaborative efforts with various government agencies to combat the prevalent problems in the country so that more Filipinos could be able to feel the positive changes brought about by this program. The significant positive feedback from the stakeholders may be used as baseline data to continually implement the project to those communities that need to be safe, protected and developed, as well as to reduce the poverty incidence. However, the implementing agency must consider the weaknesses found in this study as a guide for improved project implementation.

DELIMITATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The information generated in this study has the potential to be helpful to the scientific community focusing on the impact of KALAHY-CIDSS on community development. However, this does not provide enough concrete and empirical measurements that could actually provide scientific information regarding the impact of the project. Thus, conducting further investigation about the impact of KALAHY-CIDSS on community development by employing quantitative methods will be the future focus of the author. Utilizing a quantitative approach will provide the comprehensive and objective type of processes, tests, and results needed in order to be able to generalize the project's impact on KALAHY-CIDSS beneficiaries all over the Philippines.

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