

Evaluation of DOLE Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (DILEEP) in the adopted community of the University of the Assumption

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the paper is to evaluate the DILEEP as implemented by UA in Purok 8, Barangay San Jose, City of San Fernando (P) from June 1, 2016, to May 31, 2017. The evaluation was qualitative involving document reviews and interviews with the proponents and 28 female beneficiaries of the livelihood assistance. The program was found to be relevant as it supports the commitment of the University to the community concerning poverty alleviation. On the other hand, establishing effectiveness in terms of achieving the objectives of the program was difficult to establish because of the lack of necessary baseline data. Staffing was a significant concern, thereby affecting the program's efficiency. The impact evaluation was not done, for this requires an in-depth knowledge of the nature of the residents in the district. Funds do not dictate the sustainability of the program since DILEEP receives yearly appropriations from the government. Instead, it is determined by the proper program implementation of the partner institution. The evaluation supplies lessons learned to improve the University's future actions, planning, and decision-making on similar projects.

Key words: evaluation, DILEEP

INTRODUCTION

Barangay San Jose is one of the 36 barangays of the City of San Fernando, Pampanga. It has a land area of 322 hectares, with a population of about 15,000 (About the City..., 2018). The socio-economic survey of the barangay (Sicat, Bagtas, Calaguas & Espiritu, 2016) revealed the following: (a) each household has an average of four members; (b) there are slightly more males (51%) than females (49%); (c) almost half of the residents (47%) are married; (d) almost everyone (99.6%) is functionally literate; (e) 70% of ages 15 – 60 are employed; (f) small business is the primary source of income of about 19% of the residents; and, (g) unemployment is usually the root of domestic problems (82.4%).

The barangay is divided into eight districts or zones (purok), among which, Purok 8 is perceived by the Barangay officials to be the poorest. Households in this zone have an average of five members. About 90% of heads of household are employed mainly in construction work, and public conveyance, and earn an average daily income of Php 306. Most mothers (70%) are plain housewives; those who are employed are vendors earning an average of Php 268 per day. In June 2014, Purok 8 was formally recognized as an adopted community by the University of the Assumption (UA) through a Memorandum of Understanding (2014). For the next three years, UA committed to extending its assistance in addressing issues besetting the zone. One commitment is to provide a livelihood program, especially for women. In the first quarter of 2016, the UA College of Accountancy (COA) led an initiative of implementing the DOLE Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (DILEEP) in the district to fulfill this responsibility.

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the DILEEP in Purok 8, Barangay San Jose, City of San Fernando (P) from June 1, 2016, to May 31, 2017, with focus on the program's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability (Pasteur, 2014; Gray & Montgomery, 2013; Hempel & Fiala, 2012). The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of this evaluation are expected to supply lessons learned to improve future actions, planning, and decision-making on similar projects.

METHOD

The evaluation adopted a qualitative design. It began by reviewing relevant documents, which included Memorandum of Understanding between Barangay San Jose and University of the Assumption, Mother Proposal prepared by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and training materials used by the implementers. Internet searches regarding the background of the program were also conducted. The proponents and the beneficiaries of the program were interviewed. A site visit was also performed.

The documents and the responses of the proponents and beneficiaries of the program served as the bases for establishing the program's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Credibility was ensured through triangulation. Member checks were also done. The proponents were consulted for accuracy of information after the findings have been presented and analyzed.

FINDINGS

Project Background

According to DOLE (2017; n.d.), the DILEEP aims to reduce poverty through massive job generation for the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized workers. Either the DOLE or an accredited co-partner (e.g., organizations/associations, local government units, schools) may administer its implementation. It has two component programs– *KABUHAYAN* and TUPAD. The Livelihood or *KABUHAYAN* Program capacitates the recipient to earn income by starting a project or upgrading an existing undertaking. TUPAD (*Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers*) is an emergency employment program for displaced, underemployed, or unemployed workers. It was the *KABUHAYAN* Program that the COA implemented in the district.

The *KABUHAYAN* or DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP) has several forms– formation, enhancement, restoration, and community/group enterprise development. *Kabuhayan* formation provides a start-up capital amounting to not more than Php 10,000.00 to an individual or a group who will be venturing in a livelihood project. The capital is in the form of goods or equipment, depending on the proposed undertaking. On the other hand, *Kabuhayan* enhancement provides additional funds of up to Php 15,000.00 to existing businesses to make them more viable and sustainable. Individuals whose livelihood was lost or damaged due to natural and human-made occurrences can avail a maximum amount of Php 10,000.00 from *Kabuhayan* restoration to rebuild the business. DOLE can also facilitate the transformation of livelihood projects of groups of beneficiaries into a community enterprise through the community/group enterprise development. The DILP forms applicable for this project were formation and enhancement.

The Mother Proposal relevant to the implementation of DILEEP at Purok 8, CSFP through UA lists the following objectives:

General

- To eradicate poverty through providing individual livelihood, or collective enterprise undertakings to the unemployed, seasonal, and low-waged workers
- To generate economic opportunities by providing logistical, financial, and training support
- To provide training, orientation, and technical knowledge to develop the entrepreneurial skills of the beneficiaries and to properly manage the business

Specific

- To provide start-up logistics to the selected beneficiaries

- To generate awareness on the significance of self-employment and to empower the beneficiaries as contributors to economic stability
- To augment income
- To provide social protection for the beneficiaries

Program Implementation

Conceptualization of the Program

Based on the Mother Proposal, DILEEP was a product of the COA's search for a "bigger, more beneficial, and long term" outreach program. In contrast to the usual medical missions and legal aid services they have provided to a number of communities in the past, the DILEEP sought to create income-generating activities that may help reduce poverty among the beneficiaries. COA, through one of its faculty members, requested assistance for 40 recipients from DOLE, which the latter granted. According to DOLE, working together with an educational institution like UA will be beneficial, particularly during the social preparation of the beneficiaries for the livelihood projects.

Identifying the Recipients

Upon receiving approval of the request, the COA coordinated with the University of the Assumption Outreach Ministry Office (UA OMO), initially to seek assistance for the identification of the beneficiaries. As agreed upon in the memorandum of understanding, women will be the recipients of livelihood initiatives. For this task, the OMO Director tapped the UA Grade School teachers who oversee the YAKAP Program (YAKAP is a charitable service UA which provides free formal education to children of indigent families in the University's nearby communities). The YAKAP mothers, mostly from Purok 8, were invited to the program. They also assisted in looking for other possible beneficiaries within the adopted community.

Thus, when the recipients were asked how they learned about the livelihood assistance, the names of the Director of the OMO, the coordinator of the YAKAP program, and one YAKAP mother, were mentioned, the last being the most popular. A conversation with the latter revealed that she was the one who scouted for possible beneficiaries.

"Opo, ako po yung naghanap sa kanila. Pinili ko po 'yung masipag, yung alam kong 'di masasayang yung tulong-pangkabuhayan na ibibigay ng UA."

According to the OMO Director, less than 40 women from Purok 8 responded to the invitation. In order to fill the gap, the program was extended to other women in the nearby communities. The prospective recipients were oriented about the program in their first meeting with the OMO Director.

The second meeting they (or their representatives) attended was a training facilitated by DOLE. In this activity, many of the participants recalled receiving more orientation about the *tulong pangkabuhayan*, and being taught about handling business. Aside from these, DOLE also informed the prospective recipients of the indicators for success in the program – business registration, pay taxes, and registration in the Social Security System (SSS). DOLE mentioned the possibility of further capital augmentation if the beneficiaries can manifest these indicators. After the forum, the participants are expected to prepare a proposal for a business

of their choice indicating the following: location of the project, modes of delivering goods and services, breakdown of the goods and services and corresponding amount not exceeding Php 10,000.00 which the DOLE will fund, and existing supplies, tools/equipment, comprising the beneficiaries share.

To help the prospective recipients to decide on the business that they will venture in, the OMO organized another seminar facilitated by the UA College of Business Administration and College of Hotel and Restaurant Management.

Only 28 among them, half coming from Purok 8, would eventually be awarded a *pangkabuhayan* package. The OMO Director explained:

May nasabi kasi ako nung unang orientation na ibabalik sa DOLE 'yung equivalent amount nung tulong na ibibigay sa kanila. Ang sinabi naman ng DOLE nung pangalawang orientation, ibabalik sa gobyerno yung tulong na ibibigay sa kanila sa pamamagitan ng pagbabayad ng taxes. Mas tumatak yata sa kanila yung sinabi ko, kaya yung iba, hindi na tumuloy. Meron namang nahirapan sa paggawa ng proposal kaya hindi na nag-submit. Yung iba naman, na-reject ng DOLE yung kanilang proposals, kaya 28 lang yung nakatanggap ng tulong-pangkabuhayan.

Post-awarding Activities

Of the 28 livelihood projects, 23 were into re-selling (e.g., bigasan, sari-sari store, e-load business); only five are skill-based (e.g., dressmaking, lutong-ulam vendor). Before receiving the livelihood assistance, almost all of them have their sources of income. These businesses were the same or similar to the livelihood they proposed. Thus, the goods or equipment that they received from DOLE were used to augment their existing business.

COA gave follow-up training after the beneficiaries received their livelihood packages. One specifically mentioned learning about “audit” and “inventory” in this meeting. Moreover, the recipients remembered being visited twice or thrice by teachers and students from UA while managing the livelihood they received.

...parang ene-evaluate kami.

...tinitignan nila kung nagnenegosyo talaga kami.

...kinukumusta yung negosyo namin kung maayos at umunlad

...nagtatanong kung kumusta na ang negosyo

... binibisita at pinaaalalahanan kung paano patakbuhin ang negosyo

The total project cost amounted to Php 531,400.00. DOLE released Php 280,000.00 worth of goods and equipment to the beneficiaries. The rest of these, Php 251,400.00, were UA COA's (Php 5,900.00) and the beneficiaries' (Php 245,500.00) share. UA COA funded the expenses for the materials and meals during the beneficiaries' orientation and training. Existing goods and equipment comprise the beneficiaries' share.

Experiences of the Participants While Running their Business Challenges

Since most of them went into re-selling, their most common challenges are “*nangungutang sa Bumbay ng 5-6*”, “*nangungutang na kapitabahay na hindi mahindian*”, “*minsan, naluluge*”, “*kompetisyon*”, “*minsan malakas, minsan mahina*”, “*pag nagkukulang ng budget, nakukuha yung sa tindahan*”. Some of them, however, are able to address these concerns.

...dati, nangungutang sa Bumbay ng 5-6 pag naubos puhunan...tinapos ko yung utang sa Bumbay, pina-iikot ko na lang puhunan...napasemento ko na bahay naming...sipag at tyaga lang...

...may mga kapitbahay na gustong umutang, pero hindi ko pinapayagan dahil maliit lamang ang aking tindahan.

...pag 2000 pesos na yung benta, namimili na uli.

...maraming kakompetisyon sa pagtitinda; ang ginagawa ko ay bababaan ko ng kaunti ang presyo ng aking mga paninda.

...pag hindi mabenta yung isang produkto, pag naubos, hindi ko na bibilhin.

...difficulty dahil sa competitor kaya nag-add ng mami-lugaw at sari-sari.

...nakukuha yung sa tindahan, pero pinapalitan naman pag nagkaroon.

One, however, claimed that the business has not prospered: “*Sobrang hina po ngayon...*”

Benefits from the Program

The participants benefited from the program in terms of goods or equipment, knowledge in running a business properly, and additional business opportunities.

Goods or equipment

...nagbigay sila ng paninda na naipandagdag sa tindahan.

...nagbigay sila ng mga damit

...nadagdagan ang capital

...Before, pumupunta pa ng palengke para magpa-zigzag ng tahi; gastos sa pamasaha, ngayon, hindi na...

Knowledge of running the business properly

Natutunan ko pong magpalago ng negosyo na hindi nakaasa sa iba. Natuto ako na i-manage ng maayos ang pangkabuhayan na ibinigay sa akin ng DOLE,

nakatulong ang seminar na nadaluhan para maging mabuting nagnenegosy... dumami customers...

During seminar, maraming advice[s] ang nalalaman tungkol sa business na pwedeng i-apply.

...dagdag kaalaman sa negosyo dahil sa seminars...

*additional business opportunity
...sidelines...*

...nagde-deliver ng kalamansi juice; occasionally, nagpapa-order ng tibok-tibok, dahil din sa seminar ng DOLE

Mas nadagdagan yung knowledge pagdating sa pagluluto...

Natuto rin sa paggawa ng Grahams at naibenta din...

DISCUSSION

This study aims to evaluate the DILEEP as implemented by UA in Purok 8, Barangay San Jose, City of San Fernando (P), focusing on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. It also seeks to provide lessons learned to improve future actions, planning, and decision-making on similar projects.

Evaluation of the DILEEP in Purok 8 Relevance

Relevance looks into the appropriateness of the livelihood program, i.e., DILEEP, with objectives of the MOU between UA and Barangay San Jose. Based on document reviews, the poverty-alleviating nature of DILEEP supports UA's commitment to improving the lives of the people in the district. This makes DILEEP an essential endeavor for the University to engage in.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of a livelihood program depends on the extent by which its objectives were achieved as anticipated at the end of the initiative. There are four specific objectives in the undertaking. Objective #1 is "to provide start-up logistics to the selected

beneficiaries.” Most of the recipients at Purok 8 already had existing businesses. Thus, the *pangkabuhayan* packages they received were enhancements, not start-ups. This was probably due to the absence of a clear set of criteria in identifying the beneficiaries. In effect, those tapped to look for candidates in the program invited women who have experiences in running a business so that the livelihood package that will be awarded to them will not go to waste. It is suggested that a selection committee be established to identify recipients of any future extension activities.

The second objective is “to generate awareness on the significance of self-employment and to empower the beneficiaries as contributors to economic stability.” Business registration and tax payments will be proofs of attaining Objective #2, as DOLE mentioned during the orientation with the recipients. However, no document authorizes UA to check the recipients’ business permits and tax receipts. Agreements such as this should be stipulated in documents duly approved by both proponents and beneficiaries.

“To augment income” is objective #3. For most of the recipients, this means higher income than they usually earn before they received the livelihood package. Site visits revealed that most of the businesses are still operating. However, establishing income augmentation will require a comparison of their business status before and after receiving the package. There are no quantitative data to perform this analysis. Hence, this evaluation is inconclusive as regards augmented income. Similar future undertakings will require a committee to monitor and document the progress of the beneficiaries’ livelihood projects.

The last objective is “to provide social protection to the beneficiaries,” expecting that they will register with SSS within one year after receiving the *tulong pangkabuhayan*. None of them have done this one. Continual reminders or assistance from the implementers may be necessary to achieve Objective #4.

Efficiency

Efficiency refers to the utilization of resources relevant to the program. More than the capital and the beneficiaries, people in charge of the implementation of the livelihood program may greatly influence its outcome (Gray & Montgomery, 2013). Thus, there should be enough staff to carry out the project. As previously shown, there were no committees to identify the beneficiaries and monitor the progress of the project.

Staffing was a concern in the implementation of the DILEEP. The faculty members of COA, the leading proponent of the program at UA, are focused on their role as teachers. On the other hand, OMO, the office which oversees outreach activities of the University, is manned by its director and several student and teacher-volunteers. This implies the necessity of having a project coordinator at the outreach/extension office whose primary function is to ensure that outreach/extension projects entered into by UA are well-planned and being implemented as planned.

Impact

Determining the impact of a livelihood program involves comparing households that received the *tulong pangkabuhayan* package with households of similar characteristics but were not beneficiaries of the program (Lombardini, 2015). The impact of the DILEEP would be challenging to conduct, considering the absence of comprehensive preliminary information about the nature of the households in Purok 8. It may be beneficial for UA to establish a more in-depth description of the members of its adopted community through focus group discussions.

Sustainability

“A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims, and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term” (Chambers & Conway, cited in Krantz, 2001). DILEEP, being a government initiative, merits yearly fund appropriations. This explains DOLE’s commitment to providing additional *tulong pangkabuhayan* if the beneficiaries can give back to the government the assistance they received, by registering their business, paying taxes, and becoming a member of the SSS. The sustainability of the DILEEP, therefore, lies in the proper planning and implementation of the program.

Lessons Learned

COA’s effort to find a more meaningful outreach activity through the DILEEP is noteworthy. Foremost, the project is not doled out but an undertaking that requires commitment and hard work from the beneficiaries. Moreover, this activity allowed the faculty of COA, CBA, and CHRM to share with the community their expertise instead of material things. UA should get more involved in this type of extension activities. Other departments may imitate COA by serving as a partner in delivering programs of the government which are aligned to their expertise.

This evaluation revealed the importance of coming up with both quantitative and qualitative baseline information about the members of an adopted community; their absence results in challenging evaluation efforts in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

Before implementing any program, project proposals should be in place. In the case of a livelihood program, criteria for the selection of the beneficiaries should be well stipulated. Every member of the community who meets the criteria should be given a chance to be prospective recipients. Periodic monitoring should also be part of the plan. Meaningful and

measurable indicators should have been enumerated in the proposal to serve as a basis for the project evaluation.

There should also be a coordinator who will ensure that the project is being implemented as planned. While faculty members are expected to carry out outreach/extension activities, they may need staff to remind them of their schedule of activities, and do the paper works (e.g. requests for meals, transportation, etc.), considering that they have an equally important task, that is, teaching.

To address the challenges being experienced by recipients of livelihood projects, a support group may be established. The role of the group could be to provide expert advice to deal with concerns about the business. A cooperative which could address issues on dwindling capital may also be put up.

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