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IMPLEMENTATION OF CAPABILITY BUILDING AND PERCEIVED SUSTAINABILITY LEVEL OF THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM (SLP): BASIS FOR SUSTAINABILITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

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Abstract

This study examined the implementation of capability-building interventions and the perceived sustainability level of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) in Apayao, Philippines, as basis for a Sustainability Enhancement Plan. Specifically, the study assessed the implementation of capability-building interventions in terms of relevance, competency, and delivery, and determined their relationship with the economic, institutional, and operational sustainability of livelihood enterprises. An evaluative-descriptive research design was employed involving 40 SLP beneficiaries from selected municipalities in Apayao. Data were gathered using a researcher-constructed questionnaire adapted from the evaluation instrument of the Extension Office of Apayao State College. Statistical tools such as frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient were utilized in analyzing the data. Findings revealed that respondents assessed the implementation of capability-building interventions as highly effective, particularly in terms of trainer competency and delivery of training sessions. Likewise, livelihood projects were perceived to have a high level of sustainability across economic, institutional, and operational dimensions. Results further showed a significant positive relationship between the implementation of capability-building interventions and the perceived sustainability level of SLP projects, indicating that effective and responsive interventions contribute to improved enterprise continuity and organizational resilience. However, challenges such as inactive membership participation, market limitations, and operational constraints continue to affect project sustainability. Based on the findings, the study proposes a Sustainability Enhancement Plan aimed at strengthening continuous mentoring, localized support systems, and culturally responsive interventions to enhance the long-term sustainability of livelihood enterprises in Apayao.

Keywords: *capability-building interventions; Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP); livelihood sustainability; microenterprise development; evaluative-descriptive research; Apayao, Philippines*

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Introduction

Poverty and livelihood insecurity remain among the persistent challenges confronting developing countries, particularly in geographically isolated and disadvantaged communities where access to economic opportunities, infrastructure, and essential services remains limited. Despite various poverty alleviation interventions implemented globally, many rural populations continue to experience unstable sources of income, limited employment opportunities, and vulnerability to economic and environmental disruptions. In the Philippines, poverty incidence remains relatively higher in rural and marginalized communities, highlighting the continuing need for sustainable and community-based development interventions.

To address these socio-economic challenges, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) implemented the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP), a capability-building initiative designed to improve the socio-economic conditions of poor, vulnerable, and marginalized households. The program primarily operates through the Microenterprise Development (MD) and Employment Facilitation (EF) tracks, which aim to expand economic opportunities through skills enhancement, financial assistance, organizational development, and employment support.

Central to the implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program is the conduct of capability-building interventions, which seek to equip beneficiaries with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies required to sustain livelihood enterprises. Capability-building interventions are recognized as essential components of sustainable development because they enhance beneficiaries' entrepreneurial competencies, organizational participation, financial management capabilities, and decision-making skills. Studies have shown that effective capability-building interventions contribute significantly to the sustainability and long-term success of livelihood programs by strengthening human and social capital among beneficiaries.

The province of Apayao presents a relevant context for examining the implementation of capability-building interventions and the sustainability of livelihood projects. Despite its rich natural resources and cultural heritage, the province continues to experience development challenges associated with geographic isolation, limited infrastructure, constrained market access, and reliance on subsistence-based economic activities. The implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program in the province has reached numerous communities through livelihood assistance and organizational support. However, several livelihood projects reportedly encounter operational difficulties and sustainability concerns despite the provision of financial and technical assistance.



These challenges suggest possible gaps in the implementation, relevance, and delivery of capability-building interventions provided to beneficiaries. Although previous studies have examined livelihood programs at the national level, limited localized research has explored the relationship between capability-building interventions and the perceived sustainability level of livelihood projects within geographically isolated and culturally distinct communities such as Apayao.

Thus, this study was conducted to determine the implementation of capability-building interventions and the perceived sustainability level of the Sustainable Livelihood Program in Apayao, Philippines, as basis for a Sustainability Enhancement Plan. Specifically, it assessed the implementation of capability-building interventions in terms of relevance, competency, and delivery; evaluated the perceived sustainability level of livelihood projects across economic, institutional, and operational dimensions; and determined the relationship between capability-building interventions and project sustainability.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

This study aimed to determine the implementation of capability-building interventions and the perceived sustainability level of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) in Apayao as basis for a Sustainability Enhancement Plan.

Specific Objectives

Specifically, this study sought to describe the demographic and program-related profile of the respondents in terms of sex, educational attainment, type of Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) track, and years of project operation. It further aimed to assess the implementation of capability-building interventions in terms of relevance, competency, and delivery. Moreover, the study determined the perceived sustainability level of Sustainable Livelihood Program projects across economic, institutional, and operational dimensions. The study also identified the challenges affecting the sustainability of SLP projects in Apayao and developed a Sustainability Enhancement Plan based on the findings of the study.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design



This study employed an evaluative-descriptive research design to examine the implementation of capability-building interventions and the perceived sustainability level of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) in Apayao as basis for a Sustainability Enhancement Plan. The evaluative approach was utilized to assess the implementation of capability-building interventions provided to beneficiaries in terms of relevance, competency, and delivery, while the descriptive component was used to describe the respondents' profile and perceptions regarding the sustainability of livelihood projects.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in selected municipalities of Apayao Province, namely Santa Marcela, Flora, Pudtol, and Luna. These municipalities were selected because they are among the areas where Sustainable Livelihood Program projects are actively implemented.

Participants of the Study

The respondents of the study consisted of 40 beneficiaries actively participating in the Sustainable Livelihood Program. A random sampling technique was employed to ensure equitable representation and minimize selection bias. Respondents were selected based on their active participation in livelihood projects implemented under the program.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-constructed questionnaire as the primary data-gathering instrument. The questionnaire was developed based on the objectives of the study and relevant literature related to capacity-building training and livelihood sustainability. The instrument was also adapted from selected evaluation indicators used by the Extension Office of Apayao State College.

The questionnaire consisted of five parts. The first part gathered the demographic profile of respondents. The second part assessed the effectiveness of capacity-building training in terms of relevance, competency, and delivery. The third part evaluated the sustainability of livelihood projects along economic, institutional, and operational dimensions. The fourth part identified challenges encountered by beneficiaries in sustaining livelihood enterprises. The final part gathered recommendations for improving the implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program.

Data Gathering Procedure



Prior to data collection, necessary permissions were secured from the Department of Social Welfare and Development and concerned local authorities. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the selected respondents. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants, and instructions for completing the questionnaire were provided.

Participation in the study was voluntary. Respondents were assured that all information gathered would be treated with confidentiality and used solely for academic and research purposes.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data gathered were tallied, coded, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the demographic profile of respondents. Weighted mean and standard deviation were utilized to assess the effectiveness of capacity-building training and the level of sustainability of livelihood projects.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was employed to determine the relationship between capacity-building training and the sustainability of Sustainable Livelihood Program projects. The level of significance was set at 0.05 alpha level.

Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical standards in conducting research involving human participants. Participation of respondents was voluntary, and informed consent was secured prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were strictly maintained in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). The collected data were used solely for academic and research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. The profile of the respondents

Profile Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	11	24.44%
	Female	34	75.66%
Educational Attainment	Elementary level	4	8.89



	High School Graduate	26	57.7
	College level	10	22.2
	College Graduate	5	11.1
Type of SLP Track	Micro-enterprise Development Track	40	100
Years of Operation	2 years	7	15.56
	3 years	16	35.56
	4 years	19	42.22
	5 years and above	3	6.67

The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents were female beneficiaries, indicating the active participation of women in livelihood and income-generating activities under the Sustainable Livelihood Program. Most respondents were high school graduates, suggesting that beneficiaries possess sufficient educational background to understand and apply the knowledge and skills acquired from capacity-building interventions.

All respondents belonged to the Microenterprise Development Track of the Sustainable Livelihood Program, indicating that entrepreneurship and small-scale enterprise development remain the primary focus of program implementation in the study area. In terms of years of project operation, most livelihood enterprises had been operating for three to four years, suggesting that several projects had already reached the stabilization stage of enterprise development.

These demographic and program-related characteristics are important in understanding the beneficiaries' participation in capacity-building interventions and their ability to sustain livelihood enterprises over time.

Table 2. Respondents' Assessment of Capacity-building Training across three key dimensions

Dimension	Mean	Interpretation
Competency	4.85	Very high
Delivery	4.85	Very high
Relevance	4.80	Very high
Grand Mean	4.83	Very high



The respondents assessed the capacity-building training as highly effective across the dimensions of relevance, competency, and delivery. Among the indicators, trainer competency and delivery obtained the highest ratings, indicating that respondents perceived the facilitators as knowledgeable and effective in delivering the training sessions.

The findings suggest that the training interventions provided under the Sustainable Livelihood Program were well-organized, relevant to the actual needs of beneficiaries, and responsive to the operational requirements of livelihood enterprises. Effective training delivery contributes to improved learning outcomes and strengthens beneficiaries' confidence in managing enterprise activities.

The positive assessment further indicates that capacity-building interventions serve as important mechanisms in enhancing beneficiaries' technical knowledge, organizational participation, and enterprise management competencies.

Table 3. Sustainability Level of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) as Perceived by the Respondents

Dimension	Mean	Interpretation
Economic sustainability	4.38	Very High
Institutional sustainability	4.29	Very High
Operational sustainability	4.27	Very High
Grand Mean	4.31	Very High

The results showed that the livelihood projects were perceived to have a high level of sustainability across economic, institutional, and operational dimensions.

In terms of economic sustainability, respondents indicated that livelihood enterprises contribute to household income generation and provide additional economic opportunities for beneficiaries. Institutional sustainability was reflected through organizational participation, leadership involvement, and collective decision-making within the associations.

Operational sustainability was likewise assessed positively, indicating that many livelihood projects continue to operate despite economic and environmental challenges. However, variations in operational continuity suggest that some enterprises continue to experience difficulties in sustaining production, managing resources, and maintaining consistent market demand.



The findings imply that while livelihood projects demonstrate sustainability potential, continuous technical support and monitoring remain necessary to strengthen enterprise resilience and long-term viability.

Table 4. Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP)

Challenges	Frequency (f)	Rank
Lack of active members	40	1
Poor management or leadership	29	2
Weak market demand	2	5
Poor monitoring/support	6	4
External factors (weather, supply issues)	19	3

Despite the positive assessment of capacity-building interventions, respondents identified several challenges affecting the sustainability of livelihood projects. Among the commonly encountered issues were inactive membership participation, limited market access, operational constraints, insufficient capital management, and external economic factors.

Some respondents also reported difficulties in maintaining regular enterprise operations due to fluctuating market demand, transportation costs, and limited access to raw materials. Inactive participation of members was identified as a major factor affecting organizational performance and enterprise continuity.

These findings indicate that while capacity-building interventions contribute significantly to enterprise sustainability, external and organizational factors continue to influence the long-term success of livelihood projects.

Table 5. Sustainability Enhancement Plan for the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) in Apayao

Areas/Challenges	Objectives	Activities/Strategies	Time Frame	Responsible Person	Budgetary Requirement
Inactive participation of members	To strengthen members'	Conduct regular organizational development	Quarterly	SLP PDOs, Association	Training materials, food, venue,



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	participation and organizational commitment in SLP associations	sessions, leadership training, team-building activities, and monthly meetings with attendance monitoring		Officers, LGU Partners	and transportation expenses
Weak organizational management and leadership	To improve leadership capacity and organizational governance among association officers	Conduct capability-building training on leadership, conflict management, decision-making, and organizational management	Semi-Annual	DSWD-SLP Staff, Resource Speakers, Association Officers	Honorarium, training kits, and operational expenses
Limited market access	To enhance market linkage opportunities and increase product visibility	Establish partnerships with local markets, schools, government offices, and trade fairs; participate in product exhibits and local events	Continuous	DSWD-SLP, LGU, DTI, Association Officers	Marketing materials, transportation, booth rental, and promotional expenses
Financial management issues	To strengthen financial literacy and enterprise fund management among beneficiaries	Conduct training on bookkeeping, budgeting, savings mobilization, and financial recording; monitor utilization of enterprise funds	Quarterly	SLP PDOs, Financial Literacy Trainers	Training materials and monitoring expenses
Operational constraints and	To improve continuity and	Develop operational plans, production schedules, and	Continuous	Association	Monitoring and technical



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inconsistent enterprise activities	operational sustainability of livelihood projects	monitoring systems; provide technical assistance and coaching		Officers, SLP PDOs	assistance expenses
Limited access to raw materials and transportation difficulties	To ensure continuous production and timely delivery of products	Coordinate with suppliers, adopt bulk purchasing strategies, and establish transportation support mechanisms	Continuous	Association Officers, LGU, Suppliers	Transportation and procurement expenses
Lack of continuous mentoring and monitoring	To provide sustained technical support and guidance to beneficiaries	Conduct regular project monitoring, mentoring sessions, and coaching activities for SLP associations	Monthly	SLP PDOs, PME, Association Officers	Transportation, communication, and monitoring expenses
Low adaptability to market and environmental changes	To improve enterprise resilience and adaptability	Conduct training on product innovation, risk management, and market trend analysis	Annual	DTI, DSWD-SLP, Resource Speakers	Training and workshop expenses
Weak documentation and reporting practices	To improve organizational transparency and project documentation	Conduct workshops on records management, minutes writing, and report preparation	Semi-Annual	SLP PDOs, Association Secretaries	Office supplies and training materials
Sustainability of livelihood enterprises	To ensure long-term sustainability and growth of	Develop a localized Sustainability Enhancement Program integrating continuous training,	Continuous	DSWD-SLP, LGU, Partner Agencies	Program implementation and operational expenses



	SLP projects	mentoring, market linkage, and monitoring mechanisms			
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The Sustainability Enhancement Plan presents the proposed interventions designed to address the major challenges encountered by Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) beneficiaries in Apayao. The matrix focuses on improving the implementation and long-term sustainability of livelihood projects through targeted objectives, strategic activities, defined time frames, responsible persons, and corresponding budgetary requirements.

The plan primarily addresses issues such as inactive membership participation, weak organizational management, limited market access, financial management concerns, operational constraints, and insufficient monitoring and mentoring mechanisms. Through continuous capability-building activities, strengthened partnerships, regular monitoring, and enhanced market linkage initiatives, the proposed plan aims to improve the economic, institutional, and operational sustainability of SLP enterprises.

Furthermore, the Sustainability Enhancement Plan emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts among DSWD-SLP implementers, local government units, partner agencies, and association officers in ensuring the continuity, resilience, and overall success of livelihood projects in the province of Apayao.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that capacity-building training plays a significant role in sustaining Sustainable Livelihood Program projects in Apayao. Effective training interventions enhance beneficiaries' competencies, organizational participation, and operational management, thereby contributing to the sustainability of livelihood enterprises.

The findings further reveal that respondents generally perceived the capacity-building interventions as highly effective and the livelihood projects as sustainable across economic, institutional, and operational dimensions. Moreover, the significant positive relationship between capacity-building training and project sustainability highlights the importance of continuous capability enhancement in achieving long-term livelihood success.

However, challenges such as inactive participation of members, market limitations, and operational constraints continue to affect enterprise sustainability. These findings



underscore the importance of strengthening continuous mentoring, localized support systems, and culturally responsive interventions to sustain livelihood projects in geographically isolated communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. The Department of Social Welfare and Development may strengthen continuous post-training mentoring and monitoring mechanisms for beneficiaries.
2. Capacity-building interventions should be localized and culturally responsive to the needs of rural and indigenous communities.
3. Additional market linkage initiatives and enterprise development assistance may be provided to support livelihood sustainability.
4. Sustainable Livelihood Program associations may strengthen organizational participation and encourage active involvement of members in enterprise operations.
5. Future researchers may conduct similar studies using larger samples and mixed-method approaches to further validate the findings.

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