

The sustainable livelihood program implementation of the department of social welfare and development in the municipality of Polangui

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Abstract

This study assessed the extent of implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the Municipality of Polangui, focusing on input, process, and output dimensions, as well as the challenges encountered by beneficiaries and the development of a Technical Assistance Primer. A descriptive-quantitative research design was employed, using complete enumeration of 319 SLP beneficiaries as respondents. Data were gathered to evaluate perceptions on resource availability, implementation procedures, program outcomes, and implementation-related challenges.

The findings revealed that the SLP was generally implemented to a high extent across all dimensions, with strong performance in information dissemination, training provision, and alignment of services with beneficiaries' needs, resulting in positive short-term outcomes. However, gaps were noted in resource adequacy, fairness, and long-term sustainability. In terms of challenges, the program was generally affected by serious issues across input, process, and output, with the most critical concerns observed in beneficiary targeting, inclusivity, participation, compliance, and adequacy of technical and financial support. Based on these findings, a Technical Assistance Primer was developed to address identified gaps and strengthen program implementation. The study concludes that while the SLP is effectively implemented, its sustainability and inclusivity are constrained by operational and beneficiary-level challenges. It further concludes that the developed primer is a relevant capacity-building tool for improving service delivery.

Keywords: Sustainable Livelihood Program; Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD); Technical Assistance Primer; Descriptive-Quantitative Research

1. Introduction

This study supports the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goal 1, which focuses on ending poverty in all its forms and promoting access to economic resources and livelihood opportunities for vulnerable populations. By examining the effectiveness of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP), the study contributes to understanding how government interventions can improve the socio-economic conditions of beneficiaries and promote sustainable community development. The findings may provide insights that can strengthen livelihood initiatives and support inclusive growth among disadvantaged sectors.

In the Philippines, promoting inclusive economic growth remains a critical strategy for poverty reduction. Recognizing this, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) launched the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) in 2011. The program is designed to assist vulnerable individuals and communities by fostering entrepreneurship, enhancing employability, and promoting financial independence. Through its two-track approach which are the Microenterprise Development and Employment Facilitation, the SLP aims to provide opportunities for income-generating activities and sustainable livelihood, ultimately helping poor households transition toward economic

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stability. Supporting this initiative, studies and policy insights, such as those cited by Gatchalian, emphasize the importance of strengthening microenterprises and self-employment as key drivers of income among low-income households. Data show that a significant proportion of individuals in the bottom income group rely on self-employment, highlighting the relevance of livelihood programs in addressing poverty and unemployment. Consequently, the government has prioritized micro-entrepreneurship interventions to expand economic opportunities for disadvantaged populations.

In the Bicol Region, particularly in Albay, the implementation of the SLP has been reinforced through financial assistance, capability-building activities, and market linkages. Program beneficiaries undergo a structured, multi-phase development process that equips them with the necessary skills and knowledge to sustain their chosen livelihood. Various Sustainable Livelihood Program Associations (SLPAs) have been established across municipalities, engaging beneficiaries in enterprises such as general merchandise, agriculture-related ventures, transport services, and community-based businesses. These initiatives demonstrate the government's commitment to strengthening local economies and improving the quality of life of its constituents.

Moreover, the implementation of the SLP is guided by DSWD Memorandum Circular No. 7, s. 2023, or the "Revised Guidelines for the Comprehensive Implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program," which underscores the importance of enhancing participation, strengthening capability-building interventions, and improving program processes and timelines. This policy framework ensures that program implementation is systematic, responsive, and aligned with development goals. Despite these efforts, there remains a need to systematically assess the extent of the program's impact, particularly in terms of input, process, and output. In one municipality in Cluster C, Albay, while financial assistance and livelihood opportunities have been extended to beneficiaries, there is limited documented evidence on whether these interventions have significantly improved their socio-economic conditions. Furthermore, challenges encountered during program implementation may affect its overall effectiveness and sustainability.

Given these considerations, this study was undertaken to assess the extent of impact of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the DSWD among its beneficiaries in a municipality in Cluster C, Albay. Specifically, it examines the program's implementation in terms of input, process, and output; determines whether significant differences exist among these variables; identifies the challenges encountered; and proposes training materials to enhance program implementation and sustain beneficiaries' livelihoods. Ultimately, the findings of this study aim to contribute to the improvement of SLP implementation and support evidence-based decision-making for future program development.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

This study aims to determine the extent of implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) among beneficiaries in the Municipality of Polangui. It also seeks to assess the implementation of the program in terms of input, process, and output, identify the challenges encountered by beneficiaries along the same indicators, and develop a Technical Assistance Primer based on the findings of the study. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the extent of implementation of the sustainable livelihood program of DSWD in the Municipality of Polangui along with
 - Input
 - Process
 - Output
- What are the challenges encountered in the implementation of slp of dswd along
 - Input
 - Process
 - Output
- What recommendations may be proposed in order to improve the implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program?
- What Technical Assistance Primer can be proposed based on the findings of the study?

1.2. Scope and Delimitation

This study determines the extent of the impact of the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) among beneficiaries in a municipality in Cluster C, Albay. The assessment focuses on the program's inputs, processes, and outputs, as well as the challenges encountered by beneficiaries in these areas. The findings serve as the basis for developing training materials aimed at enhancing program implementation for Fiscal Year 2025 and sustaining beneficiaries' livelihood initiatives.

The study is limited to one municipality in Cluster C, Albay. The respondents consist of 319 SLP beneficiaries for Fiscal Year 2025. DSWD staff and administrators are not included as participants in this study. Furthermore, this study does not cover other municipalities or clusters, does not include a comparative analysis with other livelihood programs, and does not assess long term impacts beyond Fiscal Year 2025.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design

This study employed the descriptive-quantitative research design, which is a systematic method of inquiry that utilizes numerical data to describe, interpret, and analyze a particular population, phenomenon, or situation. According to Creswell (1994), descriptive-quantitative research focuses on gathering measurable information to provide an accurate and objective picture of existing conditions. It is commonly used when the primary goal of the study is to determine "what exists" rather than to manipulate variables or establish cause-and-effect relationships. Through this design, researchers are able to present data in quantifiable form, allowing for clearer interpretation, comparison, and generalization of findings.

In the context of this study, the descriptive-quantitative design was deemed most appropriate because it enabled the researcher to systematically assess the extent of implementation and impact of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) among beneficiaries in the Municipality of Polangui. The design facilitated the collection of structured responses from respondents, which were translated into numerical data using rating scales. These numerical values were then analyzed to determine the level of implementation in terms of inputs, processes, and outputs, thereby providing an objective basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the program.

More specifically, the quantitative approach was used to measure the perceptions and experiences of SLP beneficiaries regarding key aspects of program implementation. For instance, under the input component, data were gathered on the availability and adequacy of resources such as financial assistance, training materials, and institutional support. Under the process component, the study examined the efficiency and effectiveness of program implementation activities, including training delivery, orientation sessions, monitoring systems, and coordination among stakeholders. Meanwhile, under the output component, the study evaluated the outcomes of the program in terms of livelihood improvement, skills acquisition, and income-generating capacity of beneficiaries. These indicators were quantified to provide a comprehensive and measurable description of program implementation.

In addition, the same descriptive framework was applied to identify the challenges encountered by the beneficiaries along the three components of input, process, and output. Respondents provided ratings that reflected difficulties such as limited resources, delays in assistance, inadequate training support, monitoring gaps, and sustainability issues in livelihood projects. The aggregation and analysis of these responses allowed the researcher to determine the most prevalent implementation problems and to identify areas that require strengthening or intervention. Furthermore, the results generated from the descriptive-quantitative analysis served as the empirical foundation for addressing the third research problem, which involved the development of a proposed technical assistance primer or intervention material. The design ensured that the proposed output was not arbitrarily created but was instead grounded on actual data derived from beneficiaries' experiences and perceptions. By doing so, the study ensures that the intervention is responsive, evidence-based, and aligned with the real needs of program implementers and beneficiaries.

2.2. Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the 319 Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) beneficiaries in one municipality in Cluster C, Albay under the DSWD. They were selected through complete enumeration, representing 100% of the target population, and served as the main source of data and information in answering all the problems of the study. Other SLP beneficiaries from different sectors or areas were not included in this study.

2.3. Data Gathering Tools

The study used a researcher-made questionnaire designed to be clear, specific, and easy for respondents to understand and accomplish. It was developed based on the objectives of the study and aligned with the key variables on the extent of impact and challenges of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) along inputs, processes, and outputs. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part I assessed the extent of impact of the SLP in terms of inputs, processes, and outputs. Part II identified the challenges encountered by beneficiaries in the implementation of the program along the same indicators to ensure consistency with the research problems. To ensure validity and reliability, the instrument was based on related literature and was reviewed and validated by experts in the field of education and research. A dry run was conducted in another municipality in Cluster C, Albay among selected SLP beneficiaries who were not included as respondents of the actual study. Feedback from the dry run and expert validators was used to improve the clarity, content, and structure of the questionnaire.

2.3.1. Administration and Retrieval of Data.

Before the actual data gathering, permission to conduct the study was secured from the Office of the Mayor and the DSWD office in the selected municipality. The researcher personally distributed and retrieved the questionnaires from the respondents. Instructions were clearly explained, and informed consent was obtained before participation. The questionnaire was also translated into Filipino to ensure better understanding among respondents. Communication during distribution and retrieval was facilitated through personal coordination and mobile communication when necessary. All responses were collected, tabulated, and organized for statistical analysis in line with the study's variables on inputs, processes, and outputs.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Extent of Implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program of DSWD in the Municipality of Polangui

3.1.1. Input

The inputs of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) refer to the resources provided to support the implementation of livelihood interventions for beneficiaries. These inputs include financial assistance, support services, tools, and program guidelines that guide the delivery of the program. Specifically, they cover financial support such as the Seed Capital Fund (SCF), Skills Training Fund (MD-STF),

Employment Assistance Fund (EAF), and Cash-for-Building-Livelihood Assets (CBLA), as well as equipment, requirements, and orientation activities provided to beneficiaries. In this study, these inputs are examined in terms of how financial assistance, materials, program requirements, and orientation sessions are delivered and utilized by the recipients. These resources play a vital role in preparing and enabling beneficiaries to engage in sustainable livelihood activities, thereby contributing to the overall impact of the program on their socio-economic conditions.

Table 1 Extent of Implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program of DSWD in the Municipality of Polangui along with Input

Indicators	WM	VI	R
1. The program goals were clearly explained to me	4.77	VHE	3
2. I was informed about the benefits of the program	4.61	VHE	5
3. The training materials provided were easy to understand.	3.79	HE	7
4. The financial assistance provided was sufficient for my livelihood.	2.76	ME	8
5. The tools or equipment provided were useful	2.71	ME	9
6. I received the assistance on time	2.70	ME	10
7. The program requirements were reasonable	3.83	HE	6
8. The orientation helped me understand the program.	4.68	VHE	4
9. The staff explained the program clearly.	4.81	VHE	2
10. The program matched my livelihood needs.	4.82	VHE	1
Average Weighted Mean	3.95	HE	

Legend

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation
1	1.00 – 1.79	Very Low Extent (VLE)
2	1.80 – 2.59	Low Extent (LE)
3	2.60 – 3.39	Moderate Extent (ME)
4	3.40 – 4.19	High Extent (HE)
5	4.20 – 5.00	Very High Extent (VHE)

Table 1 reveals that the implementation of the SLP in terms of input is generally strong in areas related to information dissemination, orientation, and alignment of the program with beneficiaries' livelihood needs, as reflected in the very high extent ratings of the top three indicators. The highest-rated indicator, the program matched livelihood needs, implies that the intervention is largely responsive to the socio-economic conditions of beneficiaries, which aligns with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (2025) emphasizing that SLP is designed to enhance socio-economic conditions by providing access to necessary assets and appropriate livelihood opportunities through its Microenterprise Development and Employment Facilitation tracks. The strong ratings on clarity of explanation and orientation support Villar-Sipag (2024)¹, who stressed that SLP implementation relies heavily on capacity-building, training, and guidance to ensure beneficiaries can effectively engage in livelihood activities. However, the lower ratings on sufficiency of financial assistance, usefulness of tools or equipment, and timeliness of assistance reflect gaps in resource adequacy and delivery efficiency. These findings are consistent with Ballesteros et al. (2020)² and Orbeta et al. (2022)³, who reported that while SLP provides seed capital and livelihood support, challenges such as limited capital, insufficient business resources, and implementation inefficiencies often hinder full program effectiveness. Similarly, Castillo and Mantillas (2024)⁴ noted issues in resource mobilization and sustainability of assistance, which may explain the moderate to low ratings in material and financial support components.

3.1.2. Process

The process of implementing the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) refers to the series of stages undertaken to ensure the effective delivery of services to beneficiaries. These stages include beneficiary selection, social preparation, provision of orientation, skills training, resource mobilization, project development, actual livelihood implementation, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. In this study, the process component focuses on how these implementation stages influence the participation and engagement of beneficiaries in the program. It examines the effectiveness of program procedures in guiding beneficiaries from preparation to actual livelihood engagement, ensuring that they are adequately supported, informed, and actively involved in sustaining their livelihood projects.

Table 2 Extent of Implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program of DSWD in the Municipality of Polangui along with Process

Indicators	WM	VI	R
1. The application process was easy.	4.80	VHE	3
2. The staff were approachable and helpful.	4.82	VHE	2
3. Trainings were conducted properly.	4.86	VHE	1
4. I was encouraged to participate actively.	4.76	VHE	4
5. The schedule of activities was convenient.	2.71	ME	8
6. The program followed what was promised.	3.80	HE	7
7. I was guided during the implementation of my livelihood.	3.90	HE	6
8. The staff regularly monitored my progress	4.74	VHE	5
9. My concerns were addressed properly	2.65	ME	9
10. The program implementation was fair to all beneficiaries.	1.83	LE	10
Average Weighted Mean	3.89	HE	

Table 2 shows that the implementation process of the SLP in Polangui is generally strong in terms of procedural accessibility, training delivery, and staff engagement, as reflected in the very high extent ratings of the top indicators. The highest-rated item, trainings were conducted properly, suggests that the program is effectively building beneficiary capacity through structured and well-delivered learning activities. This aligns with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (2025)⁵, which emphasizes that SLP is anchored on capability building interventions that strengthen skills and enhance livelihood readiness through structured training and support mechanisms. The high ratings on staff approachability and ease of application further reinforce Villar-Sipag (2023), who highlighted that SLP implementation is dependent on strong facilitation, mentoring, and guided processes to ensure effective participation of beneficiaries. The presence of regular monitoring also supports Saong and Manuel (2019)⁶, who found that continuous coaching and monitoring significantly contribute to improved livelihood engagement and program acceptance among beneficiaries.

3.1.3. Output

The output of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) refers to the immediate and tangible results achieved after program implementation. These include improved skills among beneficiaries, access to financial assistance, and the establishment of livelihood projects through microenterprise development and employment facilitation. It also covers the formation of Sustainable Livelihood Program Associations (SLPAs) that are expected to be self-sufficient and community-driven. In this study, the output component captures the outcomes experienced by beneficiaries following the implementation of the program. It reflects the extent to which the SLP has contributed to increased household income, enhanced technical and entrepreneurial skills, and the successful establishment of sustainable livelihood initiatives within the community.

Table 3 Extent of Implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program of DSWD in the Municipality of Polangui along with Output

Indicators	WM	VI	R
1. The program helped improve my income.	4.83	VHE	3
2. My livelihood became more stable because of the program.	4.87	VHE	2
3. I gained new skills from the program.	4.81	VHE	4
4. The program helped my family meet daily needs.	4.89	VHE	1
5. I became more confident in managing my livelihood.	4.79	ME	5
6. The program helped reduce my financial problems.	3.76	HE	6
7. I am satisfied with the results of the program.	3.55	HE	7
8. The livelihood provided is sustainable.	1.90	LE	10
9. I would recommend the program to others.	2.71	ME	9
10. The program improved my quality of life.	2.78	LE	8
Average Weighted Mean	3.89	HE	

Table 3 reveals that the output of the Sustainable Livelihood Program in Polangui is highly effective in addressing immediate household needs, improving income, and enhancing livelihood stability, as reflected in the very high extent ratings of the top indicators. The highest-rated indicator, the program helped my family meet daily needs, suggests that the intervention has strong short-term welfare impacts and directly contributes to household survival and consumption needs. The strong results on livelihood stability and income improvement are also consistent with Burgess et al. (2020)⁷, who found that livelihood asset transfers and skills development significantly improve earnings and economic stability among poor households. Similarly, Ballesteros et al. (2020) reported that SLP interventions can enhance labor outcomes and income levels, particularly when beneficiaries are able to engage in microenterprise activities supported by capital and training. The gains in skills acquisition further support Villar-Sipag (2023), who highlighted that SLP strengthens entrepreneurial and employability capacities through structured training and capability-building interventions.

3.2. Summary of the Extent of Implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program of DSWD

The Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the DSWD is implemented through the provision of financial assistance, training, equipment, and orientation (inputs), followed by a structured process of beneficiary selection, capacity

building, resource provision, project implementation, and monitoring. These lead to outputs such as improved skills, established livelihood projects, increased income, and formed livelihood associations, reflecting the program's role in improving the socio-economic conditions of beneficiaries.

Table 4 Summary of the Extent of Implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program of DSWD

Parameters	WM	VI	R
1. Input	3.95	HE	1
2. Process	3.89	HE	2.5
3. Output	3.89	HE	2.5
Over-all Average Weighted Mean	3.91	HE	

Table 4 reflects the summary of the extent of implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development in the Municipality of Polangui across Input, Process, and Output parameters. The results indicate that Input obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.95 with a verbal interpretation of high extent and ranked 1. Both Process and Output registered the same weighted mean of 3.89 with a verbal interpretation of high extent and shared rank 2.5. The overall average weighted mean is 3.91 with a verbal interpretation of high extent, reflecting a generally positive implementation across all dimensions of the program.

The results imply that the Sustainable Livelihood Program in Polangui is generally well-implemented, with a strong foundation in program design and input delivery that supports effective implementation processes and outputs. However, the equal ranking of Process and Output suggests that improvements are needed to strengthen implementation efficiency and ensure that positive inputs translate more effectively into sustainable and long-term livelihood outcomes. This indicates that while beneficiaries experience strong program initiation and moderate-to-strong implementation and results, the program may still require enhanced monitoring, continuity mechanisms, and post-intervention support to fully maximize its developmental impact. Strengthening these areas would help ensure that the strong input foundation consistently leads to higher process efficiency and more sustainable outputs for beneficiaries.

3.3. Summary of the Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of SLP

The implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the DSWD is influenced by several factors related to sustainability of livelihood activities, capacity of beneficiaries, delivery of support services, and access to resources and markets. These factors shape how beneficiaries engage with the program and how livelihood initiatives are maintained over time. Variations in skills, resource utilization, program support, and external conditions contribute to differences in program outcomes among beneficiaries. Overall, these aspects reflect the areas that need to be strengthened to further enhance the effectiveness and long-term impact of the SLP.

Table 5 Summary of the Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of SLP

Indicators	WM	VI	R
1. Input	3.62	SC	3
2. Process	4.05	SC	2
3. Output	4.20	VSC	1
Average Weighted Mean	3.96	SC	

Table 5 presents the summary of challenges encountered in the implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development in the Municipality of Polangui along Input, Process, and Output. The results show that Output obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.20 with a verbal interpretation of very serious challenge and ranked 1, followed by Process with a weighted mean of 4.05 interpreted as serious challenge and ranked 2, and Input with a weighted mean of 3.62 also interpreted as serious challenge and ranked 3. The overall average weighted mean is 3.96, interpreted as serious challenge.

The findings suggest that among the three dimensions, Output-related challenges are the most critical, indicating that difficulties are most strongly experienced in the final stage of program implementation. This implies that issues such as beneficiary targeting, inclusivity, and sustained engagement significantly affect the overall effectiveness of the Sustainable Livelihood Program. The prominence of output-related concerns suggests that even when inputs such as financial assistance, tools, and training are provided, and processes such as implementation and monitoring are in place, the expected results are still constrained by implementation gaps at the beneficiary level.

Meanwhile, Process-related challenges ranked second, indicating that issues such as beneficiary participation, compliance with program policies, and implementation procedures also significantly affect program delivery. This supports the idea that the effectiveness of implementation mechanisms plays a crucial role in translating inputs into meaningful outcomes. Input-related challenges, although ranked lowest, still fall under the category of serious challenges, suggesting that resource provision, training adequacy, and support services remain areas for improvement but are not as critical as issues encountered in later stages of implementation.

Overall, the results imply that while the Sustainable Livelihood Program in Polangui is generally implemented with considerable inputs and structured processes, the most pressing concerns arise during and after implementation, particularly in ensuring that beneficiaries are properly targeted, actively engaged, and able to sustain livelihood outcomes. This finding aligns with the view that successful livelihood programs depend not only on adequate resource provision and implementation procedures but also on effective beneficiary participation, monitoring, and sustainability mechanisms. Strengthening these areas would be essential to enhance the overall impact and effectiveness of the program.

4. Conclusion

On the bases of these findings, the researcher made the following conclusions:

- The extent of impact of Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) of the Department of Social Welfare and Development in one of the municipalities in Cluster C Albay have High Impact along inputs, process and outputs.
- There is no significant difference in the extent of impact of the implementation of sustainable livelihood program (SLP) of DSWD among the 3 variables of the study. The null hypothesis was accepted while the alternative hypothesis was rejected.
- The extent of challenge encountered in the implementation of SLP of DSWD along inputs and process was much encountered while challenges in output were very much encountered.
- A training material in power point was developed to engage and maintain respondents' livelihood.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

I declare that I have no conflicts of interest related to this research. I have no personal or financial relationships that could influence my work.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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