

CHARTERING GAWAD KALINGA COMMUNITIES: A CASE OF DEVELOPMENT IN EASTERN SAMAR, PHILIPPINES

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Abstract

The study evaluated the implementation of GK program components in the communities in Eastern Samar. A descriptive method was employed utilizing a questionnaire to identify the profile of the implementers, the program implementation and the difference of perceptions of the beneficiaries and implementers of the GK program. The results showed that 35.7% of the implementers were 51-60 years old, 64.3% were males, 35.7% finished bachelor's degree and 28.6% attended 4-6 and 1-3 trainings respectively. It was revealed that shelter and environment and values components were evaluated to be adequate while the rest of the program components were inadequate. The difference of perception of the two-group of respondents on the implementation of the program yielded no significant difference.

Keywords: Community development, implementation of program components, gawad kalinga communities

Introduction

Through the years, integrated approaches to community development have been popularized. The whole idea of the integrated approaches is that the multi-dimensional concerns for community development are properly addressed simply because people with proper expertise and resources come together for a common purpose (Odivilas, 1998). Likewise, community development is not only the concern of the government organizations but of non-government organizations as well. Looking into the role of NGO's, Korten, 1990 as cited by Navarro, (1993) advances a vision for people-centered development as follows:

“People-centered development seeks to return control over resources to the people and their communities to be used in meeting their own needs. A people-centered development seeks to broaden political participation building from a base of strong people’s organization and participatory local government. It seeks the opportunity for people to obtain a secure livelihood based on the intensive, yet sustainable use of renewable resources. It builds from the values and culture of the people. Political and economic democracy are its corner stone.”

Development and change can also be justified and promoted by religious organizations. It is no coincidence that religious organizations organize health care as well as provide school education and vocational training in poor countries - doing so gives them an opportunity to exert influence, an opportunity which is, in principle, open to any agency ready to become involved. Where the state does not perform, religious and/or social forces step in, competing for influence and even dominance (Weingardt, 2007).

Gawad Kalinga (GK) as a non-government organization is not established for profit, not even for the interest of the few but for the benefit of the entire community. GK is a vehicle for convergence of the Filipino’s dream of a better Philippines free from slums, hunger, and violence. GK is not a work of charity but a movement for nation building and a mission for every Filipino. “*Kaagapay*” is working hand in hand and leading one another to a better quality of life and the benefits of the programs of GK are not “dole-outs.” To put dignity in it, one must strive to pay it forward (Sweet Equity) to spread out the blessings to as many as possible (GK Field Manual 1A Guide Book for GK Execom, 2006).

The GK-ANKOP AUSTRALIAN Community was established at Naparaan, Salcedo, Eastern Samar for a period of fifty years for the purpose of establishing socialized housing, livelihood, and other community development programs (GK Community Development Foundation, Inc. and Municipality of Salcedo, Memorandum of Agreement Partnership, 2006). The Saint Joseph Community at Hernani, Eastern Samar is another Gawad Kalinga Community established to accommodate the poorest among the poor in this part of the province, like any other GK community, its operates based on the program components to alleviate the poor sector (Odivilas, 1998).

Short literature of the study

Non-government organizations, alongside the government line agencies and other entities that provide support to whether development efforts are put in place are organization that equally supports the people.

These include the non-government organizations, the community organizations and the local development councils. Although some are operating in smaller coverage and are short time-bound, they are believed to significantly contribute to the local government of the people (Odivilas, 1998). Since NGOs are known to be active in delivering basic services at the grassroots, they can be potent vehicles for decentralization. Brillantes was quoted by Navarro (1993) on the impact of the roles of NGO in community development thus:

“Decentralization means harnessing the potentials and energies of the NGOs in the community. NGO involvement can range from identification and planning of development programs and projects for the community to monitoring and evaluation of projects. It is within the context that the NGOs role in the development process-complementary, supplementary, or even alternative service delivery mechanism should be encouraged within the context of implementing meaningful decentralization, towards the general goal and promoting local empowerment, equity and social justice”.

In Nunnenkamp’s (2008) article, “The Myth of NGO Superiority” debunked the idea that NGOs provide well-targeted aid. NGOs are said to be particularly close to the poor, as many of them directly cooperate with local target groups, circumventing recipient governments with a reputation of corruption. Accordingly, the argument goes, they are better aligned to poor people’s needs and suffer from less leakage, however, some critics believe that NGOs probably prefer the quiet life of implementing their agendas in attempts to outperform state agencies. This seems NGOs financially depend on official “back donors”.

In response to Nunnenkamp’s article, Warning and Tepel (2008) contended that NGOs, together with their partners, developed concepts that served as models and worked out over the long run. In particular, development projects that are funded exclusively by NGOs (and thus do not depend on conditional co-funding from governments) have a great potential for innovation. They even held established Organizations such as the Association of German Development Non-Governmental Organizations (VENRO) to provide a more comprehensive view of the situation and pointed out their achievements.

One of the popular NGOs today is Gawad Kalinga Community Development Foundation, Inc. (GK). It aims in providing better quality of life for families by helping them build homes that provide a sense of security and will being, embodying the Filipino “Bayanihan Spirit” (Gawad Kalinga, 2008). Gawad Kalinga came about in obedience to seek deeper expression of holiness by loving the poor and to seek a new path towards self-discovery as a Filipino by finding out dignity and provide as a people within the country.

The Gawad Kalinga Movement

This journey began in 1995 Bagong Silang with a group of people who sought to find answers to (1) Why Filipino who is naturally gifted and hardworking is poor? (2) Why those born in stun communities have difficulty in getting out of poverty? (3) Why gentle Filipinos become criminals when brought up in slum communities? From 1995 to the present, many groups and communities were assisted through the different programs of Gawad Kalinga. The success was contributed by the participation and involvement of government organizations, private companies and individuals and other concerned groups whose aims were to alleviate the plight of the rural poor (Gawad Kalinga, 2008).

In 2000, 12 teams pioneered the first GK outside of Bagong Silang. This was made possible through the network of Youth for Christ. These twelve sites participated in the Gawad Kalinga awards to recognize the best practices in the various GK programs. That year, GK built 80 homes for 400 victims of the big flood that killed thousands and almost wiped out the entire city of Ormoc (Gawad Kalinga, 2008). In 2002 (Gawad Kalinga, 2008) some 2,000 volunteers from Singles for Christ built in three days 16 GK homes in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental. Impressed by what she witnessed, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo challenged GK to build 1,000 with P30 million from her presidential fund. In spite of its lack of experience in building of such a scale back then, GK succeeded in building in 70 sites throughout the country a year. The next few years saw GK collaboration with government officials. Through their support, according to Melloto (2009) whole communities with houses, schools, water systems and farms were built for typhoon and fire victims, urban informal settlers, rebel returnee, soldiers and other marginalized sectors of society.

The Community Development Process

Organizing begins with one person wanting to change one thing. It is a way for people to work together to solve a common problem. It focuses on a place and addresses people who live in the same place. There are approaches to solve problems in the communities namely: service, advocacy, and mobilizing. The first two approaches do not involve community residents in problem solving. In fact, residents may never be consulted. Service focuses on the individual, trying to address on individuals problems such as unemployment, poverty, lack of health insurance, or mobility limitations. Service programs address problems one at a time, not comprehensively, and do not examine or challenge the root causes of those problems. Advocacy is a process where one individuals or groups of individuals speak for another person or group of persons. Advocates can affect change in organization on behalf of others. Mobilizing involves

community residents taking direct actions to protect or support local projects, policies or programs. Mobilizing is important because it gets people involvement in direct action on a problem (Kahn, 1991).

Community visioning as a technique is used to promote broad public participation on the direction a community should move in the future toward which to strive (Shipley and Newkisk, 1998). Further, Shipley and Newkisk (1998) consider visioning as a way to return to the roots of planning where it strives to establish a vision through broad public participation rather than individuals view. In theory, a community vision occurs through a group process that tries to arrive at a consensus about the future of a place. It is admitted that for development to take place, people should be the focus as well as the locus, planner and implementer of development programs (Morales, 1990). In a long term process, empowerment is transferring economic and social power from one center to another and/or the creation of new centers of socio-economic power complementary to, or in competition with the traditional centers become inherent in the management in the GK center.

The pilot study by Hernandez and Romero (1991) as cited by Navarro (1993) explores the extent and manner in which people's empowerment is manifested by the NGOs since the EDSA Revolution. The study also identifies the factors that may have encouraged or discouraged the empowerment process. Hernandez and Romero (1991) evaluate people's empowerment at the organizational level and individual levels. At the organizational level, they rank how the fourteen NGOs manifest empowerment through: (1) local resource management; (2) organizational growth and stability; (3) networking and alliance building; (4) increase in organizational prestige. At the individual level, they likewise rank how NGOs bring about their members empowerment in terms of: (1) greater participation in decision making; (2) increased self-confidence and efficiency; and (3) higher income and well-being (Navarro, 1993)

Mangada (2007) investigates the social capital of the four barangays in the municipalities of Sta. Fe and Capoocan, Leyte. She discerns that associational life in these communities is not vibrant and bonding. Social capital is dominant among existing groups. Poverty, partisan politics and bad governance cause the weakening of social connectedness while direct socioeconomic benefits drive and may help sustain the villagers' affiliation in the human association. In Ilocos region, poverty incidence is studied in order to establish aggregated data as basis in poverty profiling. The study of Balisacan (2001), "Poverty Profiling in Ilocos Norte: Methods Based on Livelihood System Approach," establishes a method of profiling poverty, provides a relevant information for planning, beneficiary targeting, monitoring and policy-making processes in poverty reduction and

sustainable food security. The study further claims that livelihood systems of 595 farmers, fishermen, backyard/small-scale livestock raisers and entrepreneurs are characterized. The dynamics of poverty has been looked at through the use of focus-group-discussions/surveys, and factors that account for the respondents' poverty are identified and their views/ideas are also considered (Balisacan, 2001)

The University of St. La Salle establishes a baseline research entitled "Baseline Profile of the Four GK Villages: ERH, HORE, DREAM and FIAT in Bacolod City." Relevant findings show that there are top 5 basic needs and problems identified across the four sites namely: (1) financial problems; (2) peace and order; (3) values and attitudes; (4) water supplies/facilities; and (5) livelihood/joblessness. The research findings also disclose the top 5 suggested program and services by the GK beneficiaries from the GK partner communities as follows: (1) livelihood; (2) individualized LENECO electric meter; (3) emergency health services; (4) Scholarship Programs of the OSY, and the childcare/work program.

Moreover, Cocjin's (2010) study aims to understand the impact of service learning among Civil Welfare Training Service (CWTS) students during the "build" of project at GK Village is done at Iloilo City. Student volunteers participate in the construction of houses and document their experiences through written observations and reflections which serve as basis for students' generated narratives of their volunteer experiences. Analysis of narratives reveals the impact of "build" experience on the personal and social dimensions of students' lives. On a personal level, students find the experience difficult and challenging; however, they find it fulfilling. They learn values such as discipline and sharing. On the other hand, students make friends, helping one another and have appreciated the personal interactions with GK beneficiaries.

Objectives

The assessment of the Gawad Kalinga communities in the 2nd district of Eastern Samar is the primary purpose of the study. It answers the following objectives (1) determine the profile of GK program implementers; (2) evaluate the GK program implementation; and (3) identify the difference of perception of the beneficiaries and the implementers of the GK program.

Methodology

The descriptive method of research was used. A survey questionnaire was employed to determine the profile of GK program implementers, the program implementation and the difference of perception of the beneficiaries and the implementers of the GK program. Mean and t-test for independent samples were used to analyze the data.

Results and discussion

The Profile of GK Program Implementers

The profile of the implementers includes age, gender, educational attainment and number of GK Trainings attended. As to age, Table 1 presents the implementers' age, where thirty six percent are in the age bracket of 51-60 years old, 29% are in the 31-40 age brackets, 14.3% are in their 41-50 and 21-30 age brackets respectively and 7.1% under the 61 and above age category. This further reflects that majority of the respondents are already in their late years and middle age groups respectively. This complements Inocian and Hermosa (2014) findings that respondents who belong to the middle age brackets of—thirties and—forties represent the most productive years of career life. On the same Table, there are 9 or 64.3% males and 5 or 35.7% are females. It can be noted that more males are involved in the implementation of program components in the GK Communities. Likewise, educational attainment further reveals that 5 or 35.7% obtained a bachelor's degree. Four or 28.6% graduated high school, 1 or 7.1% attained doctorate degree, doctorate level, master's degree, masters and bachelor's levels respectively. These results signify that more than 50% of the implementers obtain higher educational degrees. The number of trainings attended by the respondents show that four or 28.6% attends 4-6 and 1-3 trainings respectively. Three or 21.4% attends 7 to 10 trainings respectively. These results convey that more than 50% of the respondents are exposed from 4-6 and 10 and above trainings during the duration of the study.

Table 1 The Profile of GK Program Implementers

| Age | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 61 and above | 1 | 7.1 |
| 51 - 60 | 5 | 35.7 |
| 41 - 50 | 2 | 14.3 |
| 31 - 40 | 4 | 28.6 |
| 21 - 30 | 2 | 14.3 |
| Total | 14 | 100.00 |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 9 | 64.3 |
| Female | 5 | 35.7 |
| Total | 14 | 100.00 |
| Educational Attainment | | |
| Doctorate Degree | 1 | 7.1 |
| Doctorate Level | 1 | 7.1 |
| Master's Degree Graduate | 1 | 7.1 |
| Masters Level | 1 | 7.1 |
| Bachelor's Degree Graduate | 5 | 35.7 |
| Bachelors Level | 1 | 7.1 |
| High School Graduate | 4 | 28.6 |
| Total | 14 | 100.00 |

| Number of GK Trainings Attended | | |
|--|-----------|---------------|
| 10 and above | 3 | 21.4 |
| 7 - 9 | 3 | 21.4 |
| 4 - 6 | 4 | 28.6 |
| 1 - 3 | 4 | 28.6 |
| Total | 14 | 100.00 |

The GK Program Implementation

The study focuses in the status of implementation of GK Program Implementation. Table 2 shows that both group of respondents rated shelter and environment and values formation components to be adequate, all other components were rated moderately adequate. The grand means for both evaluators were 3.13 and 3.47 or moderately adequate, respectively. It can be assumed that the implementation of some of the major components were adequate it still need an in depth refocusing of the implementation strategies among others.

Table 2 The GK Program Implementation

| Program Components | Beneficiaries Rating | | Implementer's Rating | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Mean | Interpretation | Mean | Interpretation |
| 1. Shelter and Environment | 3.53 | Adequate | 3.89 | Adequate |
| 2. Education | 2.58 | Moderately Adequate | 3.02 | Moderately Adequate |
| 3. Health | 3.17 | Moderately Adequate | 3.41 | Moderately Adequate |
| 4. Productivity | 2.78 | Moderately Adequate | 3.06 | Moderately Adequate |
| 5. Values Formation | 3.60 | Adequate | 3.96 | Adequate |
| Grand Mean | 3.13 | Moderately Adequate | 3.47 | Moderately Adequate |

Differences of Perceptions of the Beneficiaries and Implementation and the Shelter of GK Program Implementation

The difference on the perception of the two groups respondents in Table 3 shows that, in terms of shelter and environment, education, health, productivity and values formation components, it yielded the following t-values and p-values: 1.861 – .070; 1.949 – 0.058; 0.835 – 0.408; 1.408 – 0.408 and 1.800 – 0.079 respectively. When these paired values are analyzed, it shows to be insignificant. These results show that the extent of implementation of the program components does not differ as seen by the respondents.

Table 3. Difference of Beneficiaries' Perception and Implementer's on the Status of GK Program Implementation

| Program Components | T-values | P-values | Implementation |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 1.Shelter and Environment | 1.861 | .070 | Not significant |
| 2. Education | 1.949 | 0.058 | Not significant |
| 3. Health | 0.835 | 0.408 | Not significant |
| 4. Productivity | 1.408 | 0.408 | Not significant |
| 5. Values Formation | 1.800 | 0.079 | Not significant |

Conclusion

The Gawad Kalinga (GK) beneficiaries were assisted through their program implementers in terms of shelter, environment, education, health, productivity and values formation components. There were no differences on the status of program implementation in all service components.

Recommendation

All program stakeholders need properly orientation, training and commitment for the program delivery. A built-in and periodic program assessment and evaluation may be conducted to elicit useful data in charting the full development of the communities. Replication of this study can be made accessible to validate the findings for future researches.

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