

Panagtapok

**A Public Forum on the Perspectives of
Community-Driven Development (CDD)
in the Province of Siquijor**

**13 December 2024 | 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Siquijor, Siquijor, Philippines**

Prepared by Mari Elise Gwyneth Lim



UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
CENTER FOR
INTEGRATIVE AND
DEVELOPMENT
STUDIES

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Lower Ground Floor, Ang Bahay ng Alumni
Magsaysay Avenue, University of the Philippines
Diliman, Quezon City 1101

Telephone: (02) 8981-8500 loc. 4266 to 4268 / (02) 8426-0955

Email: cidspublications@up.edu.ph

Website: cids.up.edu.ph



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Photo by Neil Oring

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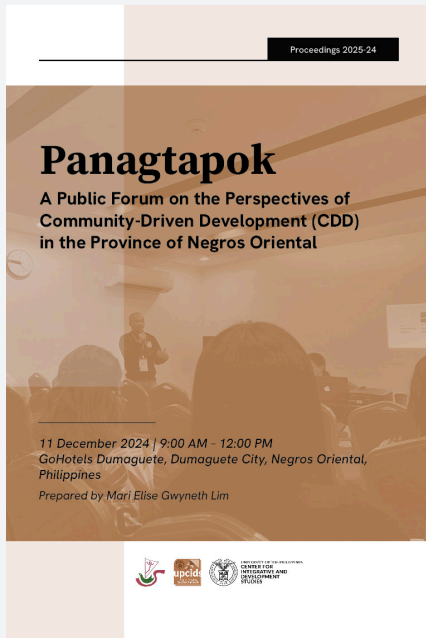
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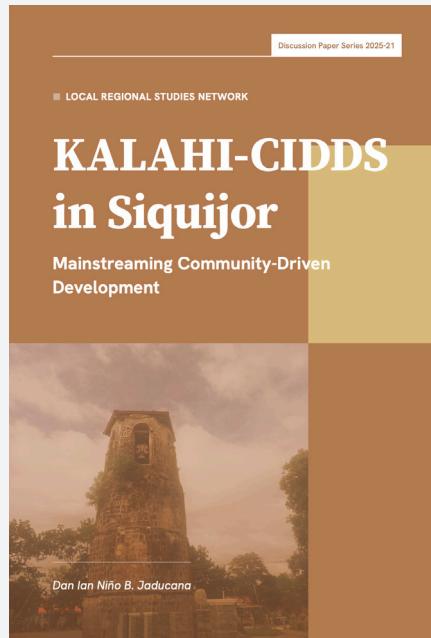
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About the Proceedings

Community-Driven Development (CDD) is a widely recognized approach to implementing development initiatives that empowers communities by placing decision-making authority, as well as financial and technical resources, directly in their hands. This approach has been adopted in over 100 countries, demonstrating its versatility and effectiveness in tackling various development challenges, including poverty reduction, social service delivery, post-disaster recovery, and infrastructure development.

In the Philippines, the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) KALAHI-CIDSS program is a leading example of CDD in action. The program aims to empower local communities by involving them in the planning and implementation of poverty reduction initiatives, while also fostering greater participation in local governance. Since its launch in 2003, millions of subprojects have been completed nationwide, covering infrastructure projects and livelihood programs. In addition to these tangible results, numerous success stories of CDD champions highlight the significant transformative impact this approach has had on both communities and individuals. In Central Visayas, the community-driven development and sustainability program has successfully implemented 1,578 projects in Cebu, 1,337 in Bohol, 665 in Negros Oriental, and 147 in Siquijor from 2014 to the present.

The *Panagtapok*: A Public Forum on the Perspectives of Community-Driven Development (CDD) in Siquijor, organized by the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies—Program on Local Regional Studies Network Cebu (UP CIDS LRSN Cebu), sought to capture the diverse experiences and insights surrounding CDD. The forum explored its successes, challenges, governance dynamics, and potential impact at both the municipal and barangay levels. *Panagtapok* in Siquijor serves as the fourth and last leg of the series of public forums under *Maayong Pagdumala* under UP CIDS Local Regional Studies Network Cebu.

Event organizers

Local Regional Studies Network (LRSN) Cebu, University of the Philippines
Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS)

1. Regletto Aldrich Imbong, PhD, LRSN Cebu Co-Project Leader
2. Alyssa Soler, LSRN Cebu Senior Office Assistant
3. Dan Ian Nino Jaducana, LRSN Cebu Research Fellow
4. Mari Elise Gwyneth Lim, LRSN Cebu Paper Writer
5. Bernie Cañedo Jr., LRSN Cebu Transcriber
6. Beverly Ramos, LRSN Cebu Transcriber

These proceedings were prepared by Mari Elise Gwyneth Lim.¹

1 Mari Elise Gwyneth Lim (mrlim9@up.edu.ph) is a paper writer at the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS) Local Regional Studies Network (LRSN) Cebu.

Rationale

Assoc. Prof. Regletto Aldrich Imbong, PhD

Co-Project Leader, UP CIDS Local Regional Studies Network Cebu

Dr. Regletto Aldrich D. Imbong, co-project leader of LRSN-Cebu, discussed the rationale of the event. He began by introducing UP CIDS, its mandate, and the Local Regional Studies Network. Dr. Imbong also highlighted the LRSN Cebu 2024: *Maayong Pagdumala alang sa Kalamboan* project which sought to analyze the CDD utilized by the DSWD's KALAHY-CIDSS in the country. After that, he discussed the current situation of CDD in the country, its best practices, and its efficiency. Dr. Imbong emphasized that CDD has been proven to be successful and effective with regards to addressing poverty reduction, service delivery, and cost-effectiveness. He also underscored that CDD is people-centered as it is the community who identifies their problems that need to be addressed and in turn, would be responsible and accountable to crafting the solutions to address these identified problems. This also ensures the deterrence of corruption thereby creating sustainable and people centered developments that would not breed corrupt practices.

Community-Driven Development

Perceptions and Sentiments

Assoc. Prof. Regletto Aldrich Imbong, PhD

Co-Project Leader, UP CIDS Local Regional Studies Network Cebu

During this part of the program, participants were asked to signify their agreement or disagreement toward the statements presented by the facilitator. In the following section, these sentiments are discussed further and summarized according to their themes.

PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTION OF CDD²

QUESTIONS	AGREE	DISAGREE/NO RESPONSE
<i>Kahibalo ka ba bahin sa CDD?</i> (Are you familiar with Community-Driven Development (CDD)?)	21	0
<i>Kahibalo ka ba bahin sa programa nga Kalahi-CIDSS?</i> (Are you aware of the Kalahi-CIDSS program?)	21	0
<i>Para nimo, importante ba ang mga proyekto sa CDD alang sa kalamboan sa komunidad?</i> (Do you believe that CDD projects are important for community development?)	21	0
<i>Nakadawat ba ka og igong impormasyon bahin sa mga proyekto sa CDD sa inyong lugar?</i> (Have you received sufficient information about CDD projects in your area?)	21	0

² Total Number of Participants: 21; Local Executives, Community Facilitators, Community Volunteers

QUESTIONS	AGREE	DISAGREE/NO RESPONSE
<i>Para nimo, epektibo ba ang pamaagi sa CDD sa pagsulbad sa mga panginahanglan sa komunidad?</i> (Do you think the CDD approach is effective in addressing the needs of the community?)	21	0

PARTICIPANTS' SENTIMENTS ON CDD

QUESTIONS	AGREE	DISAGREE/NO RESPONSE
<i>Kontento ko sa resulta sa mga proyekto sa CDD.</i> (I feel satisfied with the outcomes of the CDD Projects.)	15	6
<i>Positibo ang akong paglantaw sa umaabot nga epekto sa mga proyekto sa CDD sa among komunidad.</i> (I am optimistic about the future impact of CDD projects in my community.)	21	0
<i>Para nako, giila ang akong opinyon sa pagplano sa mga proyekto sa CDD.</i> (I feel that my opinions are considered in the CDD project planning.)	21	0
<i>Positibo ko sa pag-apil sa mga proyekto sa CDD sa among komunidad.</i> (I am generally positive about the involvement of CDD projects in my community.)	21	0

THE CHANGES THEY SAW IN THE CDD PROJECTS

QUESTIONS	AGREE	DISAGREE/NO RESPONSE
<i>Nakabantay ko nga naay mga kalambuan sa mga pasilidad sa komunidad tungod sa mga proyekto sa CDD.</i> (I have noticed improvements in community facilities because of CDD Projects.)	21	0
<i>Sa akong tan-aw nakapalambo ang mga proyekto sa CDD sa kalidad sa kinabuhi sa among komunidad.</i> (I think CDD projects have improved the quality of life in my community.)	21	0

QUESTIONS	AGREE	DISAGREE/NO RESPONSE
<i>Akong nakita nga adunay kausaban sa lokal nga imprastruktura tungod sa mga proyekto sa CDD.</i> (There have been noticeable changes in local infrastructure because of CDD projects.)	21	0
<i>Para nako, epektibo nga nasulbad sa mga proyekto sa CDD ang mga partikular nga problema sa komunidad.</i> (I believe that CDD projects have effectively addressed specific community issues.)	21	0

DISCUSSION

Perceptions of Community-Driven Development

For the Siquijor cluster, participants shared that the effectiveness of the Community-Driven Development (CDD) framework can be seen in the initiatives/projects which have been created from the grassroots' assessments and community prioritization of needs. Through the KALAHI-CIDSS program, barangays have implemented CDD projects that undergo a participatory process. Residents vote for and validate the priorities of needs in the locale. This has led to empowered communities actively addressing their genuine needs, facilitated by grants and financial assistance.

Furthermore, they also shared how community facilitators play a crucial role in supporting this CDD process. During the discussion, facilitators ensure the community's active participation, where they strive for at least 75 percent engagement from the total population. They shared that some of their methods include the usage of household surveys and rapid assessments, to identify and prioritize projects based on the barangay's top needs. The CDD process ensures transparency, with decisions coming directly from the community rather than being imposed by politicians alone or external organizations. The CDD approach fosters accountability and ensures that the projects genuinely address the community's needs.

For the Lazi and Maria Community Volunteers and facilitators, they emphasized how the program empowers ordinary community members, giving them decision-making roles and technical knowledge through training and hands-on

involvement. Many volunteers, initially unfamiliar with community projects, gained valuable skills in project management, procurement, and infrastructure. They highlight the transformation from being passive residents to active contributors in community development, particularly in prioritizing and implementing projects like water systems. The inclusivity and transparency of KALAH-CIDSS ensure that even those with limited formal education can participate and make meaningful contributions.

Volunteers also noted the personal growth and opportunities they have gained, such as traveling for training and engaging with government processes. Despite initial doubts, they found fulfillment in seeing a tangible progress in their communities. Ultimately, they express gratitude for the program, recognizing its role in both community development and personal empowerment.

KALAH-CIDSS AND CDD

The terms CDD and KALAH-CIDSS are often used interchangeably by the respondents during the discussion, referring to both as a program and method that cater to the needs of the people through a bottom-up approach. During the focus group discussion (FGD), the Siquijor Cluster defined KALAH-CIDSS as a particular program coursed through the DSWD. They see KALAH-CIDSS as a manifestation of how the CDD Framework operates. In terms of the difference, respondents see CDD as a guiding principle to strengthen the implementation of grassroots programs like the KALAH-CIDSS by ensuring full community empowerment in decision-making. CDD emphasizes people's participation, making it a key factor in enhancing the effectiveness of KALAH-CIDSS. The integration of CDD reinforces the program by ensuring that projects truly reflect the community's needs and priorities.

In response to this question, facilitators and volunteers from Lazi and Maria shared their experiences in defining the concept of KALAH-CIDSS and the CDD process. Volunteers in the KALAH program play a crucial role in community-driven development. Their responsibilities include conducting community profiling, leading barangay assemblies, canvassing for project materials, and monitoring project implementation. They experienced significant personal growth, overcoming shyness and learning leadership, negotiation, and problem-solving skills. Facilitators face challenges such as

resistance to participation, logistical difficulties, and ensuring sustainability, especially when KALAHÍ temporarily exits a barangay. Despite the lack of financial compensation, volunteers were driven by their commitment to the barangay's development. They endured challenges such as logistical issues, lack of funds for travel, and personal sacrifices, but were able to gain valuable knowledge and fulfillment. The volunteers shared that the work they do, has helped ensure that projects are sustainable and beneficial to the community. Such examples of projects include health centers, roads, water systems, and trading posts.

Overall, the participants agreed that KALAHÍ-CIDSS is considered widely recognized as a CDD program under the DSWD. Though often associated with other government programs like Pantawid Pamilya (4Ps) the distinction is in its focus on empowering communities to identify, plan, and implement development projects. People see it as a structured initiative that provides funding and guidance for barangay-level projects, ensuring that the community is actively involved in the decision-making process. KALAHÍ-CIDSS is also viewed as a platform for leadership development, transparency, and participatory governance, where volunteers and stakeholders work together to improve their communities. While KALAHÍ-CIDSS follows the CDD approach, people recognize that CDD is a broader development methodology that emphasizes community participation in governance and decision-making.

SUSTAINING CDD

According to the respondents from the Siquijor Cluster, the KALAHÍ-CIDSS, through CDD, has proven that sustainable development is possible when the community leads the process. It creates a system where projects are well-planned, resources are efficiently used, and transparency is upheld, making it a powerful tool for grassroots development.

Before the introduction of CDD, barangay officials were the sole decision-makers, leaving communities passive and without a voice. With the implementation of KALAHÍ-CIDSS using the CDD approach, the community became the priority—they now have the power to identify their real needs, propose projects, and prioritize interventions, rather than rely on barangay officials' preferences.

A concrete example provided by the participants was the prioritization of infrastructure projects. In the past, projects were often selected based on the personal interests of officials. However, with CDD, decisions are made through a voting process, ensuring that the most pressing needs—such as farm-to-market roads—are prioritized over personal interests. This shift highlights genuine community empowerment that leads to real and sustainable development.

In terms of transparency and accountability, they expressed that CDD has minimized corruption by ensuring full transparency in financial transactions. Community volunteers actively monitor fund allocation, questioning any discrepancies. Additionally, Barangay and Municipal Accountability Reporting require the full disclosure of financial documents, from project inception to completion, reinforcing accountability. Furthermore, they stated that KALAHI-CIDSS emphasized the long-term maintenance of projects through Operations & Maintenance (O&M) groups, which are community-led associations responsible for sustaining completed projects. Unlike government projects that are sometimes abandoned after completion, CDD ensures that projects remain functional for future generations.

For respondents coming from Lazi and Maria, particularly those who were community volunteers, they shared the same sentiments with the Siquijor respondents. For them, CDD has transformed communities by shifting the power of development planning from government officials to the people themselves. Through this shift, communities have been able to prioritize their most urgent needs, develop a sense of ownership over projects, and ensure the sustainability of improvements in their barangays. Before the introduction of CDD, many communities relied solely on their barangay officials to voice out their needs. Unfortunately, this often led to projects being chosen based on political priorities rather than actual community necessities. The introduction of KALAHI-CIDSS changed this dynamic by empowering ordinary citizens to identify, propose, and implement projects that truly addressed their struggles. Instead of waiting for government intervention, communities became proactive in shaping their development. For instance, in many barangays, the lack of potable water was a long-standing problem. Through KALAHI, these communities were able to secure funding for water system projects, ensuring that every household had access to clean water. Beyond infrastructure, KALAHI-CIDSS also improved access to essential services. Many barangays

previously lacked nearby health centers, forcing pregnant women and the elderly to travel long distances on unsafe roads for medical care. According to the volunteers, through KALAHI-CIDSS, barangays were able to construct local health centers, making healthcare more accessible to those in need. Similarly, in areas where students had to walk through dangerous and muddy paths to get to school, communities prioritized the construction of safe walkways with solar-powered lights to protect their children. These projects not only improved daily life but also reinforced the importance of community participation in decision-making.

One of the most significant impacts of KALAHI-CIDSS noted by the participants was the development of a strong sense of ownership among community members. Unlike traditional government-led projects that are often abandoned after completion, they state that KALAHI projects are maintained by the people who advocated for them. Many barangays have established associations to manage their projects, ensuring their long-term sustainability. For example, in one barangay, the water system project became so successful that it generated income, allowing the community to fund future repairs and expansions. This model of sustainability according to the volunteers, is one that the benefits of KALAHI projects continue for generations.

The program has also had a profound personal impact on individuals, particularly volunteers. Many participants who initially lacked confidence and education have found themselves learning new skills, speaking in public, and taking on leadership roles. The process of engaging in community meetings, advocating for projects, and working with others has empowered individuals to believe in their capacity to bring about change. This transformation goes beyond infrastructure—it is about people realizing their power to shape their own future.

Despite initial doubts and challenges, KALAHI-CIDSS has proven that when people are given the opportunity to lead their own development, the results are more sustainable and meaningful. Through CDD, communities have built not just physical structures, but also a culture of empowerment, transparency, and collective responsibility. As barangays continue to thrive under this model, it becomes evident that true progress comes not from top-down governance, but from the active participation and determination of the people themselves.

For the facilitators of Lazi and Maria, one of the most profound effects of KALAH-CIDSS is how it has transformed volunteers from passive community members into active agents of change. Many volunteers initially spent most of their time at home, with limited experience in community leadership. However, through their involvement in KALAH, they developed essential skills such as patience, commitment, and a strong sense of responsibility for their barangay's development. The rigorous demands of the program, such as attending numerous meetings, processing documents, and coordinating with LGUs ensured that only those with genuine dedication and passion remained. Volunteers who lacked commitment often struggled to keep up with the requirements and eventually stepped down.

Beyond personal growth, KALAH-CIDSS has also emphasized the importance of community participation. A significant factor in project selection is the level of involvement from residents. For a barangay to secure a project, it must demonstrate high levels of household participation. This requirement has encouraged local leaders to engage their communities actively, ensuring that all residents, regardless of their daily responsibilities, contribute to the development process. Strategies such as conducting meetings in different *puroks* (small community divisions) and holding discussions on weekends have been employed to maximize attendance. By making participation a collective effort, barangays have been able to score higher in project assessments, increasing their chances of receiving funding for priority projects.

KALAH-CIDSS follows a transparent and democratic process in identifying barangay priorities. Each community must propose three top-priority needs, from which only the most urgent one is funded. This ensures that resources are allocated to the most critical infrastructure and service gaps. Once a project is implemented, barangays conduct sustainability evaluations to assess whether the project remains functional and beneficial to the community. If maintenance issues arise, meetings with the LGU are called to address these concerns and ensure that projects do not fall into disrepair.

The program has been particularly beneficial for remote barangays, such as those in mountainous areas like Quisumbing, where residents have long struggled with poor infrastructure. Through their collective efforts, these communities have secured paved roads, health centers, and other essential facilities. More importantly, they have taken full ownership of these projects, ensuring they are properly maintained and not neglected.

A notable initiative that has emerged from KALAH-CIDSS is the institutionalization of sustainability measures at the LGU level. In the LGU of Maria, for instance, a Citizen's Order was passed, mandating an annual sustainability evaluation for all KALAH projects. This ordinance ensures that barangays continuously monitor their infrastructure, addressing issues such as road cleanliness, flood control, and vandalism prevention. Volunteers and residents alike take pride in their projects, regularly repainting buildings, repairing cracked roads, and removing debris. The sense of ownership cultivated by KALAH has led to a cultural shift in how communities view and maintain public infrastructure.

In addition to physical improvements, the program has fostered financial sustainability. Barangays have committed to allocating a portion of their budget each year for project maintenance. If any barangay fails to uphold this commitment, volunteers and local leaders intervene to ensure that funds are properly allocated and used for repairs or upgrades. This proactive approach guarantees that current and future generations can continue to benefit from the projects initiated through KALAH.

MOVING FORWARD WITH CDD

The implementation of CDD projects in the LGU of Siquijor has significantly contributed to the development of various communities, addressing their most pressing needs through participatory governance. The CDD approach has proven to be highly effective in ensuring that projects align with the priorities of the people, as it directly involves community members in identifying, planning, and implementing initiatives. While the impacts of these projects have been substantial, there is a strong belief that the CDD approach should not be limited to community-based initiatives but should also be integrated into national government programs for more extensive and sustainable development. One of the major achievements of CDD-based projects in Siquijor is the establishment and sustainability of essential infrastructure and services. Daycare centers have been successfully implemented, providing accessible early childhood education for children in remote areas. This has significantly benefited families, as many children previously had to travel long distances just to attend school. Additionally, barangay health centers have been constructed, such as the one in Barangay Caticugan, ensuring that residents have access to prenatal care, immunization services, and

basic medical assistance. These facilities not only benefit residents but also serve as an important resource for tourists and individuals from neighboring barangays in times of medical emergencies. Infrastructure development has also been a key area of success. In remote barangays like Quisumbing, road improvements have been made, making transportation easier and enhancing access to healthcare and other essential services. Previously, poor road conditions made it difficult for residents to travel, especially in emergency situations.

The successful implementation of these projects was made possible through active community participation and proper monitoring. To ensure the long-term sustainability of these initiatives, a sustainability evaluation system was established. The LGU even passed an ordinance institutionalizing this process, requiring an annual assessment of completed projects to determine their condition and maintenance needs. Community members have taken responsibility for preserving the infrastructure, preventing vandalism, and maintaining cleanliness to prolong the lifespan of these projects.

Despite these achievements, financial constraints have limited the full potential of CDD-based development efforts. One of the major concerns is the lack of national-level integration of the CDD approach. Many national government agencies implement projects without consulting LGUs, leading to initiatives that may not fully address the needs of local communities. Applying the CDD process to national government programs would create more inclusive and effective development projects. Additionally, funding limitations remain a challenge, as Siquijor consists of 42 barangays, and the budget must be divided among them. As a result, not all barangays receive the necessary projects, and prioritization becomes difficult. With additional financial support, every barangay could benefit from infrastructure and social services that cater to their specific needs.

To ensure the continuity of CDD initiatives, the LGU has already secured funding for 2025, regardless of whether the KALAHI-CIDSS program continues. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been signed to sustain existing projects, and a portion of the LGU's 20 percent development fund has been allocated specifically for CDD-based programs. These measures demonstrate a strong commitment to maintaining the positive impact of community-driven development.

Therefore, the implementation of CDD projects in Siquijor has been largely successful, bringing meaningful improvements to local communities. However, expanding the CDD approach to national government projects and ensuring greater financial support would further enhance its effectiveness. Sustainable development requires continuous collaboration between the government and the people, ensuring that projects remain community-driven, well-maintained, and responsive to the evolving needs of society.

From the perspectives of the Lazi and Maria LGUs, the implementation of community-driven development projects, particularly through the KALAHICIDSS program, has greatly improved the quality of life for many barangays. One of the most significant achievements has been the establishment of a water system, which has provided clean and accessible water to residents. Before this project, community members struggled with inadequate water supply, often resorting to fetching water from communal sources, which led to conflicts and inconvenience. Through KALAHICIDSS, the barangay was able to develop a functional and sustainable water system, significantly easing the burden on residents.

One of the key successes of the project was the creation of a local water association, which now manages the system and ensures its long-term sustainability. This association allows new members to install water connections on an installment basis, ensuring financial accessibility while also generating funds for maintenance. The presence of a dedicated organization ensures that the water system remains operational and well-maintained, reinforcing the importance of community ownership in project sustainability.

One of the most impactful projects received by a barangay in Maria was the construction of a road leading to their chapel. The community, located in a mountainous area and considered the farthest barangay in the municipality, previously struggled with poor road conditions. Before the project, the path was rough and muddy, making it difficult for residents, particularly women wearing formal attire such as high heels, to attend church services safely. The steep and slippery terrain posed a significant risk, especially during rainy days when accidents were common. The newly constructed road has dramatically improved mobility, allowing residents to attend church services without fear of injury.

Another vital infrastructure improvement was the construction of a health center, which has provided residents with better access to medical services. The availability of healthcare facilities within the barangay reduces the need for long-distance travel to receive medical attention, particularly for children, elderly individuals, and pregnant women. These projects demonstrate how KALAH-CIDSS has addressed fundamental community needs and improved the overall quality of life for residents.

Despite these achievements, several challenges remain. A major setback was the inability to place the water reservoir at a higher elevation, which would have allowed for a gravity-fed distribution system. Due to the lack of land donations and the absence of legal ownership documents such as deeds of donation or usufruct agreements, the reservoir had to be constructed in a lower area, requiring mechanical pumps to push the water to higher ground. This setup has led to increased electricity costs, reaching Php 3,000.00 per month, adding a financial burden on the community. Additionally, water scarcity in upland areas remains a pressing concern. Many residents living in elevated regions still struggle with water access, as the current system does not efficiently reach these areas. Over the years, multiple barangay officials have attempted to address this issue, but finding a sustainable water source remains a challenge. While the current system has provided relief to many, ensuring water security for all residents is an ongoing goal. Moving forward, the community aims to secure land for an elevated reservoir, which would reduce electricity costs and improve water distribution efficiency. Additionally, identifying and developing a more sustainable water source is a priority to ensure long-term access for all households, particularly those in upland areas. The KALAH-CIDSS program has undeniably brought positive changes, and the community remains hopeful that further improvements will be made to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of essential services.

SENTIMENTS ON THE CDD PROCESS

The implementation of KALAH-CIDSS has brought significant improvements in various barangays, particularly in terms of community development, empowerment, and governance transformation. Through the CDD approach, the program has fostered greater community participation, financial awareness, and local leadership development, making it a key driver of progress.

One of the most notable impacts of KALAHİ-CİDSS is the active involvement and enthusiasm of barangay volunteers. Whenever KALAHİ projects are introduced in a barangay, the sense of ownership among community members becomes evident. While some were initially unaware of the processes involved, facilitators played a crucial role in guiding them through the project implementation steps. Eventually, community members embraced the KALAHİ system, realizing that these projects were not solely government initiatives but were meant to be planned, implemented, and sustained by the people.

A key achievement of KALAHİ-CİDSS is capacity building. Many volunteers gained knowledge in project proposal writing, financial disbursement, and procurement procedures, helping them understand the importance of proper planning, budgeting, and technical assessments. Before KALAHİ, there was a common misconception that government projects were granted without extensive documentation and preparation. However, through KALAHİ's structured approach, residents learned that every project requires detailed planning and proper execution, ensuring that barangays are well-informed about governance processes. This newfound knowledge reduces the risk of financial mismanagement and enables the community to make informed decisions about future development projects.

Additionally, KALAHİ has played a crucial role in leadership development and empowerment. Many former volunteers have successfully transitioned into barangay officials, including councilors and captains, with the skills, experience, and public trust they gained during their involvement with KALAHİ projects. Their ability to effectively communicate, engage with residents, and manage community projects has made them strong candidates in local governance. This demonstrates how KALAHİ not only provides infrastructure and livelihood opportunities but also shapes the next generation of local leaders.

Beyond leadership, KALAHİ also supports poverty reduction and economic sustainability. Unlike traditional government projects that rely on external contractors, KALAHİ empowers barangays to implement their own projects, ensuring that economic benefits remain within the community. This approach provides local employment opportunities, as barangay residents are hired for construction and project implementation. In many areas, there was

initial hesitation regarding community involvement in such projects, as people believed there were no direct financial incentives. However, KALAHl demonstrated that participation in government initiatives can generate income while fostering community development.

Furthermore, gender inclusion has been a priority in KALAHl initiatives, particularly through its women's empowerment programs. The program mandates that at least 35 percent of workers involved in KALAHl projects should be women, ensuring that they have equal opportunities to contribute to community development. Women have taken on roles in construction, material handling, and logistics, proving that they are just as capable as their male counterparts. This shift in gender roles has challenged traditional biases and promoted a more inclusive work environment within barangays.

Perhaps one of the most transformative aspects of KALAHl is its impact on governance and decision-making. Barangays that have implemented KALAHl projects have adopted a more open and transparent approach to governance, as community members now understand the importance of public consultations, budgeting, and project monitoring. Unlike traditional barangay councils that often limit decision-making to a select group of officials, barangays with KALAHl experience prioritize community participation and ensure that development plans are aligned with the needs of residents. This shift in governance mindset strengthens democracy at the local level and ensures that projects genuinely address community needs rather than being dictated by a few individuals.

CHALLENGES OF A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT

While KALAHl-CIDSS has brought significant improvements to communities through its CDD approach, challenges still arise, particularly in relation to volunteer retention and political conflicts. Despite the overall success of the program, sociopolitical dynamics within barangays have led to conflicts, disruptions, and volunteer disengagement.

One of the most common challenges encountered in Siquijor is volunteer fatigue and discouragement. Although the program heavily relies on community

participation, there were instances where volunteers lose motivation or become inactive over time. In such cases, facilitators must continuously encourage and remind them of the importance of their role in community development.

A more serious issue faced in some barangays is political interference and leadership transitions. In one case, a dispute emerged between a former volunteer and the community due to land ownership issues. The landowner, who was once an active volunteer, filed a case in court after a water reservoir was built on his property. This legal conflict was further complicated by political rivalries, as the newly elected barangay captain was hesitant to fully support the project because it was initiated under the previous administration. Although the captain was expected to back the KALAH-CIDSS initiative, political tensions led to reluctance in actively supporting the program.

Additionally, leadership conflicts have hindered the implementation of projects. In one case, an approved project that was ready for execution was delayed due to disagreements between political factions. The conflict arose between relatives affiliated with opposing political parties, preventing consensus on project implementation. Political divisions between former and current barangay officials have, in some instances, negatively impacted community projects.

Moreover, there have been instances where volunteers resigned due to changes in barangay leadership. Some volunteers aligned themselves with the outgoing barangay captain, and when leadership changed, they chose to withdraw from the program. In one example, a barangay secretary who was actively involved as a volunteer resigned from the project after the previous barangay captain lost the election. However, such cases remain isolated and do not significantly affect the overall progress of KALAH-CIDSS implementation. Despite these challenges, KALAH-CIDSS continues to be a strong model for community participation and local empowerment. By addressing political conflicts, reinforcing volunteer engagement, and ensuring that projects remain community-driven, the program can maintain its goal of sustainable development while minimizing the impact of political transitions. Ensuring that barangay leaders prioritize the needs of the community over political affiliations remains a key factor in successfully implementing and sustaining KALAH projects.

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