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ABSTRACT

The National Government of the Philippines has implemented various poverty-alleviating programs, such as Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) and Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP), administered by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). However, despite these efforts by the government, the issue of poverty remains. While previous studies have provided analysis on the program implementation, there still persists a knowledge gap on this topic. Thus, this study applies the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework by Scoones (1998), aiming to understand the need to recognize the significant roles played by the vulnerability context of the urban poor, their livelihood assets, the presence of structures and processes, and livelihood strategies in improving the livelihood conditions of the urban poor. The quantitative and qualitative aspects of this paper revealed the importance of incorporating and understanding how the variables present in this study contribute to the goal of the program. While these findings may be limited in scope, they present several policy implications, suggesting the need to streamline implementation guidelines, reinforcement of collaboration efforts with interrelated agencies, alignment with urban livelihood realities, and fostering connections with the target participants and private organizations to ensure operational efficiency and better public service delivery. This study contributes not only to ensuring the successful implementation of the program but also to the existing gap in studies grounded in DSWD's Sustainable Livelihood Program.

Keywords: *public administration, livelihood program, sustainable livelihoods framework, urban poor, livelihood condition, poverty, role of institutions*

INTRODUCTION

Improving the livelihood conditions of the poor in the country has been a concerning issue for the national government. The urban poor in the Philippines face multifaceted vulnerabilities to poverty, exacerbated by limited access to basic services, inadequate housing, unstable employment, and insufficient social protection (Pantolla & Atibagos-Nacion, 2023). In this study, they highlighted that trends show that poverty clusters exist in the region across different periods, indicating persistent challenges for the urban poor. Second, shocks such as frequent typhoons exacerbate poverty incidence in vulnerable areas, impacting the urban poor disproportionately. Lastly, the seasonalities in poverty hotspots reveal variations in vulnerability levels, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to support the urban poor. Hence, areas like Brgy. Payatas in Quezon City, where poor living conditions are a persistent challenge, improvement in livelihood conditions is elusive. These challenges are further compounded by the lack of financial resources and social safety nets, leaving them highly susceptible to economic shocks and downturns (Ariyanto, 2023). Urban poor lack financial resources, making them highly vulnerable to economic shocks and downturns, and limited social safety nets exacerbate their precarious situation, leaving them with inadequate support during times of crisis. Efforts to address these issues require a comprehensive approach that integrates initiatives, improved governance, and inclusive decision-making processes to enhance the resilience and well-being of the urban poor in the country. Consequently, many are confined to informal or low-paying jobs, rendering them vulnerable to economic shocks and exploitation.

Poverty and unemployment remain persistent socio-economic challenges in the Philippines, particularly in urban areas like Quezon City. Understanding the factors that drive poverty, the vulnerabilities experienced by poor communities, and the role of institutions in livelihood strategies is essential in assessing programs like the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP).

Over the past decade, people talking about development in the Philippines have started to shift their focus. Poverty is no longer seen as just a lack of income; it is more than that. It is about not having access to decent jobs, healthcare, education, and support when life gets hard. A lot of this is caused by weak systems: shortage of teachers, poor roads, far too few government services, and the fast pace of urbanization that forces people to settle in places without proper planning or resources. In cities, you can see this clearly. Families crowd into small, rented spaces, water and waste systems are often unreliable, and many rely on jobs that change day to day. Ballesteros and Ancheta (2021) pointed out that while cities are growing fast, the systems meant to support poor communities are not keeping up. That is one of the reasons why areas like Brgy. Payatas continue to struggle.

Programs such as the 4Ps, the SLP, and other government efforts were established to address these problems. They offer help in the form of cash, training, and job connections. But these are not always enough. According to Aldaba (2008), many national programs fall short not because they are bad ideas, but because there is often weak coordination between agencies, and they are not always adapted to fit the real situation in specific barangays. Payatas is one of those places. What started as a settlement near Metro Manila's old dumpsite evolved into a large, densely populated community of people hoping to find work and build a life. But the area has not kept up with that growth. There are still problems with sanitation, education, and safe housing. Cabalfin (2016) noted that families face daily risks, from garbage-related health issues to flooding, that make escaping poverty even harder. Most people earn money through informal work such as selling, driving pedicabs, or scavenging. These jobs are unstable and do not always provide enough to support a family.

There is no easy fix to this, but past research can offer some direction. For example, Arcilla (2019) and Ibrahim et al. (2017) both said that if you want to help poor families improve their lives for good, you cannot just give money or short-term support. You also need to build up social networks, train people, make sure they have access to services, and involve them in decisions that affect their lives. This is where the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) comes in. Scoones (1998) and later DFID (1999) developed the SLF as a way to look at poverty from different angles. It does not just ask how much people earn. It also asks what resources they have, such as skills, connections, land, or tools, and how systems like local government, policies, and the environment help or hurt their chances. There are five types of assets in this framework: human, physical, financial, natural, and social. All of these are affected by major factors such as climate, politics, and economics, as well as everyday access to opportunities.

In Payatas, the SLF gives us a useful way to understand how people survive, adapt, and try to move forward. It helps explain why some programs might work for one group but not another, and where gaps in support still exist. The Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) was launched by the DSWD in 2011 to help address this. It has two parts: one is the Microenterprise Development Track, which gives training and funding to people who want to start small businesses; the other is the Employment Facilitation Track, which helps connect people to jobs or skills training. The idea is to give poor families a more stable source of income. But even good programs can struggle if they do not get enough support, or if the systems around them, such as local offices or partner agencies, are not working together well (DSWD, 2024). That is why this study looks specifically at how the SLP is being carried out in Brgy. Payatas. Instead of just measuring how many people were trained or funded, it looks deeper into how the community sees the program, what barriers they face, and whether the support they get matches what they actually need.

Literature

This review of related literature presents key studies on poverty and unemployment, the vulnerability context in the Philippines, livelihood assets of the urban poor, and the relevance of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) as a tool for poverty alleviation initiatives.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (2023) reported a poverty incidence rate of 18.1% in 2021, affecting 19.99 million Filipinos, short of the government's target. In a 2023 survey conducted by OCTA Research, it was found that 50% of families considered themselves poor, while 16.4% lacked sufficient income for basic needs ("13.2 million Filipino families consider themselves poor — OCTA," 2023). Contributing factors include low human capital, poor natural resource management, limited education, and a weak economy (Suryaningrum et al., 2021). Unemployment, although declining to 3.1% in 2023 (Desiderio, 2024), remains higher in urban areas, such as the National Capital Region. Youth joblessness is also tied to mental health and social exclusion (Villanueva, 2020). Quezon City, with nearly 3 million residents, continues to have a large urban poor population, notably in Payatas (Children of the Dump, 2024). Economic and non-economic factors increase poverty vulnerability, with income shocks and natural disasters as frequent risks (Albert & Vizmanos, 2018). Urban poor communities are particularly exposed to environmental hazards and climate change impacts, further destabilizing their livelihood security (Saifullah et al., 2021). Institutions such as microfinance groups, civil society organizations, and local governments play crucial roles in providing credit, skills training, and infrastructure for the urban poor (Eshun & Denton, 2022). Community participation in planning and decision-making is key to sustainable, locally driven poverty alleviation (Draçi & Laska, 2023). The urban poor often lack critical assets—financial, human, physical, social, and natural capital—limiting their ability to overcome poverty (Sabino et al., 2020). This highlights the importance of asset-building initiatives such as the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP). The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) offers a holistic approach to poverty reduction by examining how poor households access, utilize, and sustain livelihood assets amid various risks (DFID, 1999). It is a useful framework for assessing and improving programs like the SLP, particularly in vulnerable urban areas such as Brgy. Payatas.

Several studies have already applied the SLF to assess poverty programs, especially in areas where communities face deep-rooted vulnerability. In these cases, the framework has been effective in showing how development interventions need to adapt to the realities of the people they aim to serve. The SLF has been used in various global settings to map the strengths and weaknesses of livelihood programs, especially where poverty intersects with environmental risks, institutional fragmentation, and socio-political exclusion (United Nations Development Programme, 2017). In the case of the Philippines, local adaptations

of the framework help emphasize the role of participatory governance and inter-agency cooperation (Ballesteros & Ancheta, 2021). Draçi and Laska (2023) pointed out in their study that community organizations can have a positive impact on improving the livelihood conditions of the urban poor by strengthening citizen rights, influencing policy-making, and enhancing local governance. By influencing policy-making, community organizations can advocate for initiatives that address the needs of the urban poor, leading to more inclusive and sustainable development strategies. Their research suggested that effective community organization can enhance local governance by fostering transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to the needs of marginalized populations, such as the urban poor. Programs like the SLP can only reach their full potential if beneficiaries are included in decision-making, if agencies coordinate effectively, and if the programs address not just income but long-term security, capacity-building, and resilience.

This highlights the persistent challenges of poverty and unemployment in the Philippines, especially in urban poor communities like Brgy. Payatas. It underscores the complex vulnerabilities faced by the poor, the vital role of institutions, and the importance of strengthening livelihood assets. Thus, to address these challenges, the Department of Social Welfare and Development launched the Sustainable Livelihood Program, with two tracks, the Microenterprise Development Track and the Employment Facilitation Track, as part of its poverty alleviation strategies. The Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP), guided by the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF), emerges as a relevant intervention in addressing these issues and improving the socio-economic conditions of marginalized communities.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are the following: (1) determine the susceptibility of the program to the variables employed in this study, (2) to identify how improvements are susceptible to the variables employed in this study, (3) to evaluate and assess the challenges and how these challenges affect the goal of the program, and (4) provide recommendations to further strengthen the link between the urban poor and the program in improving livelihood conditions.

METHODOLOGY

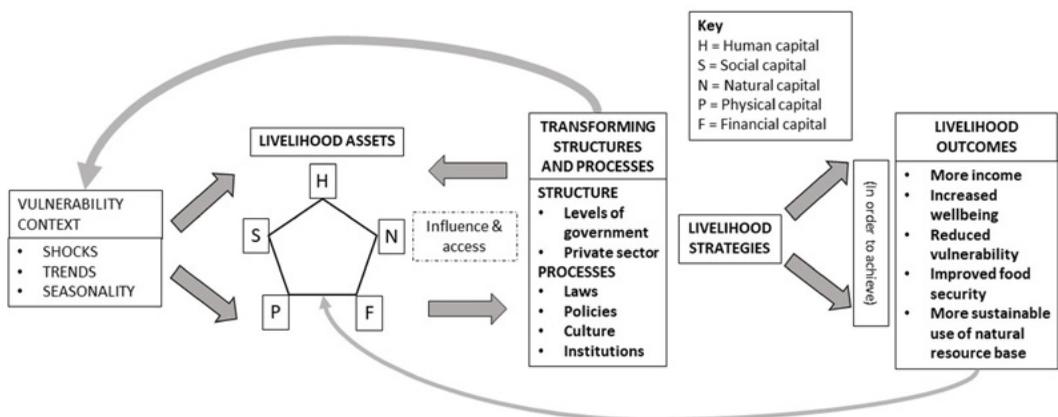
This study utilized the Explanatory Sequential Design of Mixed-Method Research Design, wherein the data presentation and analysis from the quantitative phase were followed by the qualitative phase. Due to constraints associated with the data privacy of the target respondents, researchers used a non-probability sampling, convenience sampling, to collect the data for the quantitative phase wherein surveys, through a 4-Point Likert Scale, were conducted with the residents of the barangay—to establish the context for the need of

awareness with the vulnerability and need of the accessibility to the livelihood assets and livelihood strategies, as well as the involvement of structures and processes utilizing the four variables of the SLF. This approach allowed the researchers to grasp a more comprehensive and unbiased representation within the community, which supports the claims of this study while also ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings. For the qualitative phase, the researchers utilized semi-structured interviews to support the quantitative findings and further delve into the underlying issues of the program implementation, although limited, through the perspective of the implementing agency as well as the perspective of the barangay council. As to the statistical treatment of the quantitative phase results, the Kruskal-Wallis Test was utilized to determine whether there is a significant difference in the respondents' perceptions of the four components of the SLF in the context of the urban poor living in Brgy. Payatas, the need for livelihood programs, and the need for the involvement of the structures and processes.

Furthermore, the study employed the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework by Scoones (1998), where the framework demonstrates relationships and factors influencing the livelihood of the people, as well as assesses the new activities or the contribution of existing activities related to development (DFID, 1999). In addition, ethical considerations are needed to ensure the protection of the participants and the integrity of the study. According to Resnik (2020), following ethical principles in research fosters the advancement of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, and the accuracy of research data. Hence, the researchers guarantee that the well-being of the participants is consistently prioritized and respected by ensuring confidentiality and acknowledging their autonomy.

Figure 1.

Sustainable Livelihoods Framework



Note. Adapted from Natarajan et al. (2022); redrawn from DFID (1999).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from residents and program implementers in Brgy. Payatas, Quezon City. A mixed-method approach was applied, integrating quantitative data from the administered survey with qualitative insights from key informant interviews. The findings are interpreted in light of relevant literature, grounded in the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (Scoones, 1998), to further understand how a sustainable livelihood program can contribute to improving the livelihood conditions of the urban poor.

Quantitative Phase

Survey results provided insight into the perceptions of beneficiaries regarding the relevance of four key variables—vulnerability context, livelihood assets, structures and processes, and livelihood conditions of the urban poor.

Table 1

Guide for Interpretation

Mean Range	Verbal Interpretation	Description
1.00-1.75	Strongly Disagree	Majority of the respondents strongly disagree; very low alignment
1.76-2.50	Disagree	Majority of the respondents disagree; low level of alignment
2.51-3.25	Agree	Majority of the respondents agree; moderate level of alignment
3.26-4.00	Strongly Agree	Majority of the respondents strongly agree; high level of alignment

Table 2

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents in Terms of Their Employment Status

Employment Status	Frequency	% of Total
Employed (Full-time)	99	24.80%
Employed (Part-time)	82	20.50%
Full-time Student	9	2.30%
Retired	23	5.80%
Self-employed	142	35.50%
Unemployed	44	11.00%
Working Student	1	0.30%

Table 2 highlights that the majority of the respondents came from the self-employed bracket with 35.50% or 142 respondents, while the least were from the working student bracket with 0.30% or 1 respondent. In a report by the Philippine Statistics Office (2024), the employment rate in the Philippines increased slightly by 0.8 percentage points from 95.3 to 96.1.

The statistics also showed that labor force participation, either from employed or unemployed individuals, decreased to 65.3 percent from 66.0 percent (PSA, 2024). The slight decrease might show improvement, but it still translates to the fact that after a few years of initiatives by the government in providing opportunities to the marginalized and vulnerable groups, gaps are still persistent; thus, the need for strict and efficient implementation of measures to alleviate poverty and lead the concerned individuals to development remains.

Table 3

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents in Terms of the Source of Income of the Family

Source of Income of the Family	Frequency	% of Total
None	36	9.00%
Pension	19	4.80%
Remittances	2	0.50%
Salary	211	52.80%
Self-Employment Income	132	33.00%

Based on the results shown in Table 3, the majority of the family’s source of income comes from salary, which translates to 52.80% or 211 respondents, followed by the self-employment income bracket with 33.00% or 132 respondents. These data show that having a stable means to earn for the family is very much needed, regardless of its nature, especially for the marginalized and vulnerable groups. According to the International Labour Organization (2020), employment and entrepreneurship play a significant role in sustaining households to support their demands in the continuously changing world and economy.

Table 4

Respondents’ Level of Agreement in Terms of the Variables Employed in the Study

Variables	Mean Score	Interpretation
Livelihood Strategies	3.99	Strongly Agree
Structures and Processes	3.98	Strongly Agree
Livelihood Assets	3.96	Strongly Agree
Vulnerability Context	3.95	Strongly Agree

The results reveal that respondents consistently recognize the importance of livelihood strategies (mean = 3.99), structures and processes (mean = 3.98), and livelihood assets (mean=3.96) in enhancing their socio-economic well-being. Additionally, the vulnerability context (mean = 3.95) received strong agreement, highlighting the community’s shared exposure to socio- economic disruptions. These findings suggest a comprehensive understanding among the respondents of the factors that sustain or weaken their livelihood conditions. As emphasized by UNDP (2017), processes play an important role in promoting different strategies that are related to improving the livelihood conditions of the poor, which allows the concerned parties to acquire equal access to resources. Additionally, households that are lacking in access to resources hinder their way towards development. This poses a risk to impoverished Filipino families to stay poor with inadequate capacity and opportunity (Albert & Vizmanos, 2018). Additionally, Arcilla (2019) noted that the observation addressing systemic vulnerabilities is crucial in empowering marginalized communities toward sustainable development.

Table 5 shows the significant differences in the perceptions of the respondents, in which the responses are compared based on their employment status and source of income through the Kruskal-Wallis Test.

Table 5

Significant Difference in Perceptions of the Respondents

Variables	Employment Status (X^2, p)	Source of Income (X^2, p)
Livelihood Strategies	3.38, 0.746	3.38, 0.666
Structures and Processes	8.36, 0.213	7.08, 0.132
Livelihood Assets	5.54, 0.476	4.22, 0.377
Vulnerability Context	3.33, 0.766	3.38, 0.496

As shown in Table 5, no statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$) were found across employment statuses and source of income. This indicates a consistent experience of livelihood struggles and opportunities among the respondents, regardless of their employment status or sources of income, further suggesting that urban poor communities, such as in Brgy. Payatas share common vulnerabilities and livelihood challenges, illustrating that economic hardships are often collective experiences rooted in structural issues (Boysillo, 2017; Makapela & Mtshelwane, 2021).

Qualitative Phase

The qualitative phase data were derived from semi-structured interviews conducted by the researchers with program implementers and implementing partners to further explore the context, processes, and challenges surrounding the DSWD's Sustainable Livelihood Program. Emerging themes include the vulnerability of the urban poor, the livelihood activities and support provided, the application procedures, the challenges encountered, and the coherence of opportunities presented by the program.

Vulnerability Context of the Urban Poor in Barangay Payatas

Payatas is known for being built near the old dumpsite, and that history still affects the people living there. Residents brought up common problems: overcrowded homes, unstable jobs, lack of clean water, and poor sanitation. A lot of families rely on informal or irregular work, which means their income is not stable. Even a small problem, like getting sick, can make a huge impact in their daily survival. These living conditions make it harder for people to even think about starting a small business or finding better jobs.

A key informant under this theme highlighted how financial constraints challenged their commitment to improve the overall livelihood condition. *“Paano naman sila makakapag-start kung wala silang financial?” “Unang una ang livelihood po ay wala namang funds.”* This challenge affected the residents' ability to further their income-generating activities. While it is commendable that the program provides assistance to the poor as start-up capital, the amount is often inadequate in meeting the necessities of the beneficiaries, which also makes it difficult for the concerned individuals to sustain their livelihood. Evidently, Lin et al. (2024) emphasized the need for funding to achieve the long-term success of community-driven initiatives. Thus, without sufficient support from the implementing agency and the implementing partner, such a goal might be impeded.

In addition, the key informant also emphasized the vulnerability of the residents in Brgy. Payatas:

Yes, kasi nung una ang Payatas ay may ari ng mga lupa. Dinayo, pinasukan, naging informal settlers. Yung bilis ng pagtaas ng bilihan, that affects them kasi wala na yung dumpsite na pinagkakakitaan nila. Vulnerable rin sila sa sakit kasi thickly-populated. 300,000 na ang population natin dito.

According to the Asian Development Bank (2022), the multiple dimensions of poverty have largely shaped the vulnerability of the urban poor; hence, most people are more likely to be poorer and fall into poverty because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with these, the need for resilience was also highlighted.

Brgy. Payatas' vulnerability stems from its historical development as a dumpsite community, leading to poor living conditions, unstable income sources, and heightened health risks. Informal settlers, many of whom rely on waste-picking, face compounded socio-economic challenges due to limited access to education, healthcare, and stable housing.

Arcilla (2019) highlighted that housing insecurity perpetuates poverty among the urban poor, making sustainable interventions necessary. Thus, the vulnerability of Payatas residents underscores the urgent need for targeted, community-based livelihood programs.

Livelihood Activities and Interventions

Livelihood efforts in Brgy. Payatas have been driven by partnerships and community initiatives. The SLP collaborated with organizations such as the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and the Microfinance Council of the Philippines Inc. (MCPI) to enhance financial support and market accessibility (DSWD, 2021). The revitalization of the Payatas Livelihood Center stands as a major achievement, transforming underutilized spaces into hubs for income-generating activities such as sewing, plastic weaving, and urban gardening. This was supported by the key informant's answer:

Oo, that time nung nag start na ako dito sa, in my one year advocating livelihood in barangay, sarado yung livelihood center. Nung nagvisit ako sa mga facilities maraming nakatagong gamit, nakatiwangwang. Binuksan ko ulit yung livelihood center to inspire people, to set. Binuksan ko yung pastry, yung mga makina galing DOST sininop namin kaya may tahanan.

These initiatives demonstrate the importance of resource maximization and entrepreneurship, aligning with Child Hope Philippines' (2024) findings that skills training and market access are crucial in combating poverty. Enhancing collaborative efforts and focusing on strengthening livelihood activities and interventions can result in significant improvements. This is a form of effort by the local government officials, especially those working in the barangay, where they can easily reach their residents and determine their struggles as well as their needs in order to improve the livelihoods of the urban poor. In Payatas, the diverse initiatives show promise, but they also highlight the need for ongoing support, mentoring, and follow-up to truly institutionalize these livelihood paths.

Application Procedures of the Program

The SLP employs a systematic beneficiary selection process based on socio-economic assessments and general assemblies in the poorest barangays. Priority is given to the most vulnerable families, as determined by the SLP Means Test (DSWD, 2023). Beyond

selection, social preparation, including livelihood and financial literacy training, is mandatory before grant disbursement. This participatory approach ensures that beneficiaries are adequately prepared for entrepreneurial endeavors, reflecting the department's emphasis on capacity-building and sustainable development (DSWD, 2024).

Program Implementation Challenges

Despite its achievements, the SLP faces several challenges in Brgy. Payatas: Limited Resources: Constraints in funding and manpower hamper the program's effectiveness; Weak Coordination: Disjointed efforts between national and local implementing agencies lead to inefficiencies; Low Beneficiary Participation: Some community members prefer pursuing independent livelihoods rather than joining group-based initiatives, resulting in lower engagement in SLP Associations. The lack of capacity is an important issue for the municipalities, which usually results in various administrative dysfunctions and hinders the capacity to plan for development due to inadequate staffing (Makapela & Mtshelwane, 2021). Furthermore, one of the key informants has emphasized the lack of resources in terms of manpower and finance by stating that *"When it comes to ano naman sa staff, sa staff siguro, understaffed kami sa dami ng kliyente natin... Logistic, minsan kinakapos, kasi minsan tight yung supply namin, ganito lang dumating."*

Hence, the relevance of identifying these challenges in program implementation is crucial for improving the program to serve its true purpose for the general welfare of the people. Its full potential will be reached once it has successfully adopted all the recommendations suggested by the people and by various studies for the program to be more effective, equitable, and sustainable.

Opportunities Provided by the Implementing Agency and Patterns

Strong inter-agency collaboration and the proactive role of barangay councils are vital to the success of sustainable livelihood programs. Even with the difficulties, there have been promising efforts. Collaborations with barangay leaders, non-government groups, and private partners have helped extend the program's services to more families and brought in new resources that the government alone could not provide. Aldaba (2018) emphasized that coordinated efforts between national and local actors improve program delivery and community engagement. Moreover, Biasi et al. (2022) argued that equipping beneficiaries with skills and supporting continuous learning fosters economic resilience. Partnerships with private and government institutions expand resource access, create employment opportunities, and enhance program sustainability, consistent with the findings of Martinez et al. (2022).

CONCLUSION

This paper highlights the broader significance of strengthening poverty-alleviation programs such as the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP). As emphasized in the discussions of this paper, several challenges were experienced not only by the implementing agency but also by its implementing partner and target beneficiaries, in which it seeks policy enhancement to actualize the goals of the programs, and, later on, translate them to tangible improvement in the livelihood conditions of the marginalized and vulnerable groups. Major challenges include the susceptibility of the urban poor in Brgy. Payatas to various vulnerabilities; limited access to essential resources necessary for improving their livelihood conditions, such as start-up capital for businesses and skills training; lack of coordination between offices within the implementing agency and its partners; and low participation from the target beneficiaries. These challenges indicate policy implications centered on enhancing the implementation of the program and how it is delivered to the concerned communities. That said, beyond the usual immediate assistance, these initiatives must be designed and implemented in ways that promote sustainable and inclusive development and equitable opportunities for marginalized communities. Empirically, ensuring adequate resources, effective and efficient governance, and collaborative partnerships remain essential to empower vulnerable and marginalized communities and to address systemic challenges.

Furthermore, SLP and other similar government initiatives should be regarded not just as a mechanism but as an integral component to attain sustainable development. For communities, such as those in Brgy. Payatas, Quezon City, understanding their specific needs and available resources are essential to improving their livelihood conditions. As shown in the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework by Scoones (1998), effectiveness of government interventions depends on their alignment with the local context, including the pre-existing assets, vulnerabilities, and livelihood strategies of the communities, with that, in connection with the following objectives, which are to determine the susceptibility of the program to the variables mentioned under the theoretical framework, the researchers conducted interviews in line with the qualitative phase of the study in order to tackle various themes—specifically the variables used.

While the study may have presented recommendations, the data and information provided are limited only to the following: (1) profile of the respondents, (2) perception of the respondents with regard to the significance of assessing vulnerability context, the need for sufficient and of quality livelihood assets, importance of structures and processes, and livelihood strategies to improve the livelihood conditions of the urban poor, and (3) to the information and other data provided to the researchers obtained through the entirety of the accomplishment of this study. Thus, in consideration of the limitations and restrictions in this

paper, the researchers encourage future scholars to further explore the implementation of the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) and its relevance to the persisting issue of poverty in the Philippines.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With that, the researchers recommend and emphasize the relevance of community efforts and strengthening partnerships with the inter-agencies and private sectors. By strengthening the communication channels as a means to share information among the implementing agencies, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, its implementing partners, and the marginalized communities, the program can be efficiently delivered to the target communities, and along with it are briefings, orientation sessions, and continuous assessment on the progress of the recipients. As a lack of coordination between the implementing agency and implementing partners was highlighted, reinforcing a robust collaboration with other inter-agencies, including Barangay Councils, Local Government Units (LGUs), along with DSWD Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), is crucial for greater impact and sustainability. Through collaborative efforts, the government can fulfill its goals for the urban poor.

Additionally, establishing formal collaborations with the local government units (LGUs) would provide assistance in the efficient forwarding of the program, as social issues, such as poverty, must be considered as a shared responsibility not only by the national government but also by the local government. To ensure that the implementing officials from the implementing partners are forearmed and to address future skills mishaps, capacity-building activities are recommended, which warrant preparedness, such as equipping these officials with skills in resource management, program execution, and communication. These activities would not only strengthen local capacities but also allow localized program management that is more responsive to the needs of specific communities. Additionally, collaboration with private organizations should be pursued, especially given the resource limitations of the government. Private sector engagement can provide additional financial support, manpower, and logistical aid, helping the SLP expand its reach and sustain its activities.

Meanwhile, to improve the monitoring and evaluation system of the program, the researchers affirm that there should be a joint monitoring team composed of representatives from the DSWD and LGUs to assess the performance of the program and address possible threats alongside it. It is achievable that the Sustainable Livelihood Program will widen its services by meeting its goals to help the urban poor and foster sustainable economic development in Brgy. Payatas, when all of these coordination issues are addressed carefully. That said, it is ideal that direct feedback, for a stronger monitoring framework, from the

beneficiaries be incorporated. This ensures that the adjustments made to the implementation and planning processes to improve the program reflect their actual needs and realities. Such a system would make the SLP more adaptive, transparent, and responsive, thereby enhancing its long-term impact. This ensures that the adjustments made to the implementation and planning processes better reflect the beneficiaries' actual needs and realities

It is notable to understand that urban poverty presents a different set of challenges compared to the problems encountered in the rural setting. In Brgy. Payatas, Quezon City, urban poor households continue to face many constraints, including limited access to agricultural land, a lack of affordable workspaces for microenterprises, and higher costs of living in the city. Hence, the SLP must recalibrate its policies in order to address these urban-specific realities, to minimize its impact and sustainability and better suit the urban context, and align policies with urban livelihood realities—prioritizing urban-specific livelihood tracks such as employment facilitation with regard to service-oriented industries like food services, retail, logistics, and technology. Additionally, the program should also advocate and adopt urban development policies that will open different inclusive spaces for microenterprises. The establishment of community marketplaces where people can sell products at a minimal cost, or creating livelihood hubs wherein shared facilities, tools, and infrastructures are being offered, will address the systemic barriers faced by the marginalized in urban cities. With that, it will create an environment that enables and fosters innovation, collaboration, and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

For programs like this, it is essential for the implementing agency to guarantee that it reaches the target communities while also ensuring that the knowledge and information disseminated to the marginalized and vulnerable groups are consistent. As the DSWD Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) is the graduate program for beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), relaying such information is crucial to the target participants. This plays an essential role in increasing participation among target beneficiaries.

Overall, the need for an enhanced policy framework is evident. With this study identifying the key challenges encountered by the residents of Brgy. Payatas, Quezon City, and the program implementers of SLP, enhancing the policy framework becomes a crucial focus for DSWD-SLP in order to improve the program's accessibility to effectively break the cycle of poverty, promote long-term livelihood development, and improve the livelihood conditions of the urban poor. By addressing inter-agency coordination issues, strengthening monitoring systems, aligning policies with urban livelihood realities, fostering active engagement with target participants, and acknowledging program limitations, the Sustainable Livelihood Program can be made more accessible, inclusive, and impactful. Ultimately, these efforts will help break the cycle of poverty, empower marginalized communities, and promote long-

term livelihood development, particularly for the urban poor of Brgy. Payatas and similar communities across the country. However, as this study was conducted solely in Brgy. Payatas, Quezon City, with restrictions on the data available and provided, the findings may not fully represent the experiences of urban poor communities in other parts of Quezon City, or across the Philippines. Each community faces distinct socio-economic, cultural, and political conditions, which may influence the program's outcomes differently. Future researchers are encouraged to expand the scope to cover multiple areas for a broader perspective and to continuously engage in discussions and studies focused on poverty reduction programs to improve national government policies and enhance the efficient delivery of public services.

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Disclosure statement

The authors report that there are no competing interests to declare.

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Ethical Approval

This is to inform you that your submitted documentary requirements for your research project titled **DSWD'S SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM FOR THE URBAN POOR IN BRGY. PAYATAS, QUEZON CITY: TOWARDS AN ENHANCED POLICY (UREC-2024-1458)** passed the evaluation of the PUP Research Ethics Committee (REC) in accordance with the requirements set by the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB).

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