

A Qualitative Study on the Impact of the 4P's Program in Lingayen, Pangasinan

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Abstract- *This research is a qualitative study on the impact of the 4Ps program in the Municipality of Lingayen, Pangasinan's Capital town. It aimed to find out its effect and impact in alleviating poverty and to determine if the program objectives have been achieved. The descriptive qualitative method of research was applied using in-depth interviews, focus groups and content analysis as research designs. Ten 4 Ps. beneficiaries were randomly selected from the 32 barangays of Lingayen. One household with a PWD, a Pregnant woman and those families with more than three children were likewise selected. The findings revealed that all 32 barangays of Lingayen are covered by the 4Ps program; 6 barangays are classified as the poorest; there are 4560 active household beneficiaries; 304 with a Person with disability (PWD); 798 with a pregnant woman; 3006 with 3 children or more; 10,235 schoolchildren aged 0 to 18 years old; 1806 are enrolled in SUCs; 5430 are PhilHealth beneficiaries. A total of P7.18 Million cash grants were disbursed in 2017, P3.56 Million for education and P3.62 Million for health. Compliance rates with conditions set for entitlement to cash grants were very high, with deworming getting the highest compliance rate, although in all conditions all results were within the (90% to 100%). The worst effect of the 4Ps is the refusal of beneficiaries to be subjected to farm work which gives them oppressive wages; mendicancy and corruption of local officials and loan sharks who take advantage of beneficiaries and the "one day millionaire attitude". As to its general impact, the 4Ps reduced poverty by 1.4%300 to 500 less poor Lingayenenses from 2017 to May 2018. 87% of 4Ps parents are now more optimistic about their situation and their children's futures. As to health, there is a reduction in severe stunting among beneficiary children; lower maternal mortality in the past five years because more mothers deliver babies in health facilities (7/10 live births); drastic decrease in alcoholism in 4Ps households (spending on vices was lower by 39%); 4Ps beneficiaries consume more rice and cereals than non-beneficiaries. As to education, there is an increase in the number of schoolchildren attending high school by 7.8% and 3.4% among 4Ps beneficiaries and near universal school enrolment of elementary age children for 4Ps households (98%). As to local economies, 4Ps households invest more in working assets (livestock, machineries) than non-beneficiaries and they spend more on basic needs such as food, education and medicine that stimulate the growth of the local economy. It was concluded that Under the management of Department of Social and Welfare Development (DSWD), the 4Ps is widely known to be the lynchpin of the government's anti-poverty efforts. Data have shown that it has decreased the poverty incidence rate lowering the population of the poor in the country. Like other programs, it has downsides and negative effects, nevertheless these are outweighed by its benefits and advantages, which has mostly been for the children and the youth, focusing on basic services like health, education and nutrition. It was recommended that Access to the other factors of production and growth will also need to dramatically improve for the vast majority of the population; more jobs must be created and more entrepreneurship encouraged to spur economic development; to sustain if not continuously improve the Impact Evaluation Evidence and a selection process that is transparent and not politicized.*

Keywords- *4Ps Program, Impact, LGU-Lingayen, Pangasinan*

INTRODUCTION

The Pantawid Familyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) is a human development measure of the national government that provides conditional cash grants to the poorest of the poor, to improve the health, nutrition, and the education of children aged 0-18. It is patterned after the conditional cash transfer (CCT) schemes in Latin American and African countries, which have lifted millions of people around the world from poverty. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is the lead government agency of the 4Ps ⁽¹⁾

The 4Ps objectives as the flagship poverty alleviation program of the Aquino administration are social assistance by giving monetary support to extremely poor families to respond to their immediate needs; and social development, breaking the intergenerational poverty cycle by investing in the health and education of poor children through programs such as health check-ups for pregnant women and children aged 0 to 5; deworming of schoolchildren aged 6 to 14; enrollment of children in daycare, elementary, and secondary schools; and family development sessions. The 4Ps also helps the Philippine government fulfill its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—specifically in eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, in achieving universal primary education, in promoting gender equality, in reducing child mortality, and in improving maternal health care ⁽²⁾

The 4Ps operates in all the 17 regions in the Philippines, covering 79 provinces, 143 cities, and 1,484 municipalities. Beneficiaries are selected through the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR), which identifies who and where the poor are in the country. these criteria must be satisfied to become eligible for the program: residents of the poorest municipalities, based on 2003 Small Area Estimates (SAE) of the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB); households whose economic condition is equal to or below the provincial poverty threshold; households that have children 0-18 years old and/or have a pregnant woman at the time of assessment and

households that agree to meet conditions specified in the program.

The 4Ps has two types of cash grants that are given out to household-beneficiaries: the health grant: P500 per household every month, or a total of P6,000 every year and the education grant: P300 per child every month for ten months, or a total of P3,000 every year (a household may register a maximum of three children for the program) ⁽³⁾

To be able to receive the subsidies, these conditions must be met: pregnant women must avail of pre- and post-natal care, and be attended during childbirth by a trained professional; parents or guardians must attend the family development sessions, which include topics on responsible parenting, health, and nutrition; children aged 0-5 must receive regular preventive health check-ups and vaccines; children aged 6-14 must receive deworming pills twice a year; and children-beneficiaries aged 3-18 must enroll in school, and maintain an attendance of at least 85% of class days every month ⁽⁴⁾

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study intends primarily to determine the impact of the 4P's program in the Municipality of Lingayen in terms of the program's ability to achieve its objectives in alleviating poverty; identify poverty incidence rate after the institution of the 4Ps; issues and challenges in its implementation; its effect and future implications on the education, health and nutrition of children.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The descriptive qualitative method through in-depth interviews, focus groups and content analysis were used. The results of qualitative methods are more descriptive and the inferences can be drawn quite easily from the data that is obtained ⁽⁵⁾.

The proponent conducted interviews with 10 beneficiaries from the 32 Barangays of Lingayen and chose one family each with more than 3 children; a family with a Person with Disability (PWD) and one with a pregnant woman as focus groups in those Barangays

identified by the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office as the poorest. Content analysis was applied for literature and additional data on the 4Ps especially its impact in the national scale.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is premised on the Theory of Development. Development thinking has evolved from an early paradigm that focused on savings

and capital investment to subsequent arguments favoring the inclusion of human capital policy, technical change and finally to the inclusion of the role of institutions and good governance ⁽⁶⁾.

This evolution of development though describes a conceptual framework that can guide development practitioners in prioritizing, sequencing and characterizing all interventions aimed at reducing poverty ⁽⁷⁾

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1

**General Information on the 4P’s in Lingayen
(as of December 2017)**

Number of barangays Covered	32 Barangays
Number of Poorest barangays as identified by the MSWDO	6 Barangays
Number of Household Beneficiaries	4,560 active household beneficiaries
Number of Households with a PWD	304
Number of Households with Pregnant women	798
Number of Households with 3 Children or more	3006
Number of schoolchildren aged 0-18 years old	10, 235
Number of beneficiaries enrolled in SUCs	1806
Number of PhilHealth beneficiaries	5430

Table 1 discloses general information on the 4Ps in Lingayen as of December 2017. It is revealed by these data that all 32 barangays in Lingayen are covered by the 4Ps Programs; six (6) Barangays are considered the poorest according to the MSWDO, having a poverty incidence higher than the provincial threshold. There are 45609 active household beneficiaries; 304 with a PWD; 798 with a pregnant woman; 3006 with 3 children or more. There are 10,235 aged 0 to 18 years old schoolchildren beneficiaries; 1806 are enrolled in SUCs; There are 5430 beneficiaries of PhilHealth

Table 2

**Cash Grants given to 4 P’s Beneficiaries
(as of December 31, 2017)**

Cash Grants Disbursed to 4Ps	Amount
Total Cash Grant Disbursed	P 7.18 Million
Education	P 3.56 Million
Health	P 3.62 Million

Table 2 exhibits the Cash grants disbursed to 4 Ps beneficiaries.

As of December 31, 2017, a total of P 7.18 Million cash grants was disbursed to the beneficiaries, in which P 3.56 Million was paid for education while P 3.62 Million was given as health grants.

Table 3

Compliance Rate to the Conditions Set to Receive Cash Grants/Subsidies

Conditions to be Met	Compliance Rate
1. Deworming of children aged 6-14	99.91%
2. School attendance of children aged 6-14	98.99%
3. School attendance of children in daycare aged 3-5	98.33%
4. School attendance of children aged 15-18	97.05%
5. Health visits of pregnant women and children aged 0-5	95.95%
6. Attendance in family development sessions	94.84%

Table 3 presents the compliance rate of 4Ps beneficiaries in Lingayen in meeting the conditions set to entitle them to the cash grants and subsidies.

It can be gleaned from the findings that compliance rate is very high with deworming as the highest at 99.91% while attendance in family development sessions may be the lowest yet still within the 90% to 100% range.

The Adverse or Negative Effects of 4Ps

After a thorough interview with respondent beneficiaries, they expressed the following adverse effects of the 4Ps program, to wit:

1. It has an adverse effect on rural productivity because of the refusal of the 4Ps beneficiaries to undertake hard farm work because they have monthly financial support from government. It is an indication of the emancipation of the farm workers and fisherfolks from the hard farm work which offers oppressive wages.
2. It could be a danger sign of a growing mentality of mendicancy on the part of poor families who receive monthly allowances and now an additional amount for their rice allowance.

3. The program has also offered an avenue for corruption especially in many poor areas where the beneficiaries' ATM cards are controlled by local officials or loan sharks who offer "cash advances" to the families and later would get a "cut" of the poor families' money.
4. Families who line up in front of the Land Bank of the Philippines to withdraw their cash dole-outs from the ATM would later be seen in Jollibee and the department stores buying cellphone loads.

The General Impact of the 4Ps Program

This study determined that the program has led to a poverty reduction of 1.4 percentage points per year or 300 to 500 less poor Lingayenenses from 2017 to May 2018

Household heads, spouses, and other adults are more encouraged to work and set up their own businesses 87% of 4Ps parents are now more optimistic about their situation and their children's futures

A. Health

- Reduction in severe stunting among beneficiary children

- Lower maternal mortality in the past five years because more mothers deliver babies in health facilities (7/10 live births)
- Drastic decrease in alcoholism in 4Ps households (spending on vices was lower by 39%)
- 4Ps beneficiaries consume more rice and cereals than non-beneficiaries

B. Education

- Increase in the number of schoolchildren attending high school by 7.8% and 3.4% among
 - Near universal school enrolment of elementary age children for 4Ps households (98%)

C. Local Economies

- 4Ps households invest more in working assets (livestock, machineries) than non-beneficiaries
- 4Ps households spend more on basic needs such as food, education and medicine that stimulate the growth of the local economy

** These findings were obtained during the in-depth interviews and focus groups*

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Under the management of Department of Social and Welfare Development (DSWD), the 4Ps is widely known to be the lynchpin of the government's anti-poverty efforts. Data have shown that it has decreased the poverty incidence rate lowering the population of the poor in the country. Like other programs, it has downsides and negative effects, nevertheless these are outweighed by its benefits and advantages, which has mostly been for the children and the youth, focusing on basic services like health, education and nutrition

It is recommended that a healthy and educated human capital is not enough. Access to

the other factors of production and growth will also need to dramatically improve for the vast majority of the population—such as through microfinance and lending to SMEs (improving access to capital); and true agrarian reform (access to land). While the 4Ps prepares future workers; but it does not in itself create jobs. It is imperative that more jobs are created and more entrepreneurship encouraged in order to spur economic development that is inclusive for the vast majority of the youth. The 4Ps is among only a small number of government programs that are actually evaluated for their impact. In fact, the impact evaluation evidence suggests that the design of the 4Ps seems to successfully mitigate any possible dependency effects—poor families actually further increase child investments, over and above the cash transfer itself. This impact evaluation as a tool for M and E should be sustained if not continuously enhanced. The DSWD should ensure that the selection process is accurate and the beneficiaries should be those who meet the criteria for eligibility. They should not allow the selection process to be politicized.

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