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Community Livelihood Programs and Local Government Unit Support in Barangay Ramon Cruz Sr., General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite: Basis for Enrichment Framework

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed community livelihood programs and Local Government Unit (LGU) support in Barangay Ramon Cruz Sr., General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite, as the basis for an Enrichment Framework. A quantitative descriptive design with comparative and correlational analyses involved 372 respondents composed of 318 community residents and 54 LGU employees. Community residents were selected through simple random sampling, while LGU employees were purposively selected based on their involvement in livelihood implementation. Data were gathered using a researcher-developed questionnaire that underwent expert validation and pilot testing. Percentage, weighted mean, independent-samples t-test, and Pearson product–moment correlation were used. Community livelihood programs were generally evident ($M = 3.60$), led by skills and training ($M = 3.82$) and market access and opportunities ($M = 3.77$), while community and family support was the lowest-rated dimension ($M = 3.39$). LGU support was likewise evident ($M = 3.85$), with community engagement and collaboration receiving the highest rating ($M = 4.01$). Significant differences were found between residents' and LGU employees' assessments across all livelihood dimensions. Community livelihood programs and LGU support had a very strong positive relationship, $r = .8311$, $p < .001$. Respondents identified irregular training, limited financial accessibility, weak collaboration, insufficient participation, and inadequate technical support as continuing concerns. The proposed Enrichment Framework was rated highly acceptable ($M = 4.41$). The findings show that sustained, transparent, and collaborative LGU support is essential to improving livelihood implementation, household economic opportunities, and community participation.

Keywords: *community livelihood programs, local government support, community development, financial inclusion, stakeholder collaboration, enrichment framework*

INTRODUCTION

Community livelihood programs are important instruments for reducing economic vulnerability and improving the capacity of individuals and families to participate in productive activities. Beyond providing temporary assistance, effective livelihood interventions develop practical skills, widen access to resources, encourage enterprise formation, and strengthen household resilience. National development strategies increasingly emphasize that employment, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and market participation must be addressed together to create sustainable opportunities for low-income communities (National Economic and Development Authority [NEDA], 2023; Philippine Institute for Development Studies [PIDS], 2020).

In the Philippines, Local Government Units (LGUs) hold a central responsibility for promoting social welfare and local economic development. The Local Government Code authorizes LGUs to design and implement programs responsive to community conditions, while the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act supports coordinated training, financing, infrastructure, and market development for livelihood activities (Republic Act No. 7160, 1991; Republic Act No. 8435, 1997). These mandates position local governments not only as sources of assistance but also as organizers, coordinators, and monitors of community-based development.

Livelihood effectiveness depends on several interconnected dimensions. Skills and training influence participants' technical competence and adaptability; access to financial resources determines whether beneficiaries can start or expand activities; community and family support affects persistence and participation; market access shapes product viability; and household income contribution reflects whether livelihood activities translate into meaningful welfare gains. Evidence also shows that beneficiaries require continuing mentoring, market linkage, and institutional guidance because one-time training or financial grants may be insufficient for long-term sustainability (Ballesteros et al., 2021; Gazeaud et al., 2023; McKenzie, 2021).

LGU support operates through leadership and governance, capacity building and technical assistance, administrative and network linkages, and community engagement. Collaborative arrangements among government offices, civil society, educational institutions, cooperatives, and community groups can improve resource use and make programs more responsive to local needs (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Craig et al., 2020). However, weak coordination, irregular monitoring, limited transparency, and insufficient participation may reduce trust and prevent beneficiaries from fully using available opportunities.

Barangay Ramon Cruz Sr. in General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite has implemented livelihood activities intended to strengthen income generation and community welfare. Despite these efforts, local concerns remained regarding the regularity of training, accessibility of financing, market opportunities, technical guidance, and the continuity of community support. Existing Philippine studies have examined livelihood outcomes and individual program implementation, but context-specific evidence linking the quality of community livelihood programs with the support provided by the LGU remains limited (Castillo & Mantillas, 2024; Sanglay & Abanto, 2024).

This study therefore assessed community livelihood programs in terms of skills and training, access to financial resources, community and family support, market access and opportunities, and household income contribution. It also assessed LGU support through leadership and governance, capacity building and technical support, administrative and network linkages, and community engagement and collaboration; compared the assessments of community residents and LGU employees; tested the relationship between the two major variables; identified implementation problems; and developed and evaluated an Enrichment Framework.

Literature Review

Community Livelihood Programs and Capability Development

Sen's (1999) Capability Approach explains development as the expansion of people's real opportunities to pursue lives they value. Within livelihood programming, this means that success cannot be measured only by the distribution of assistance. Programs should increase beneficiaries' knowledge, skills, confidence, access to productive resources, and capacity to make sustainable economic choices. Training and enterprise support are therefore valuable when they enable participants to become more self-reliant and resilient rather than continuously dependent on external assistance.

Skills development is a foundational component of this capability-building process. Community-based training that is practical, needs-responsive, inclusive, and accompanied by follow-up assistance can improve productivity and the application of learned competencies. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2023) emphasizes the value of employability and livelihood-oriented competencies, while Naganag (2022) found that beneficiary readiness, technical skills, and continuing guidance affect the sustainability of livelihood activities.

Philippine program evaluations similarly show that skills training, financial support, and enterprise assistance can strengthen income generation, but outcomes are weakened by insufficient capital, inconsistent monitoring, and limited access to markets (Ballesteros et al., 2021; Sanglay & Abanto, 2024). These findings support an integrated view of livelihood development in which training is linked with financing, market exposure, coaching, and institutional coordination.

Financial Access, Market Opportunities, and Household Outcomes

Financial inclusion gives individuals and small enterprises access to savings, credit, payment systems, and other tools needed to manage risk and invest in productive activities. The Global Findex evidence indicates that formal financial access can improve resilience and enable households to plan, save, and respond more effectively to shocks (Demirgüç-Kunt et al., 2022). The World Bank (2022) likewise emphasizes that inclusive support systems are especially important for vulnerable populations whose limited assets restrict participation in livelihood opportunities.

Financial assistance is more effective when combined with training and business support. Integrated interventions that pair grants or credit with capacity building have produced stronger effects on income, consumption, and economic stability than isolated forms of assistance (Banerjee et al., 2021; Gazeaud et al., 2023). McKenzie (2021) further notes that management training, mentoring, and follow-up support can improve business practices and help small enterprises translate available capital into sustainable performance.

Market access determines whether livelihood products can generate reliable income. Entrepreneurial knowledge, pricing, product development, promotion, transport, and linkages to buyers help beneficiaries respond to demand and expand their customer base (Department of Trade and Industry [DTI], 2023; Mariotti & Glackin, 2018). When these conditions are present, livelihood income can contribute to food, education, health, housing, and savings; when they are absent, participants may remain economically vulnerable despite receiving initial support (Boudreaux et al., 2021).

Community, Family Support, and Participation

Community livelihood initiatives are sustained not only through material resources but also through relationships of cooperation, trust, shared responsibility, and mutual assistance. Social capital allows beneficiaries to exchange information, pool resources, solve problems, and maintain participation during difficult periods. Halstead et al. (2022) found that community participation and strong social relationships improve the continuity of rural development initiatives, while Kenny et al. (2017) emphasize empowerment and collective action as central elements of community development.

Family support also influences whether participants can devote time, effort, and resources to livelihood activities. Encouragement, shared responsibilities, emotional support, and participation in planning can reduce the burden carried by individual beneficiaries. Community extension initiatives that combine skills development with cooperation and institutional assistance have been associated with improvements in income, participation, and quality of life (Borbon & Ylagan, 2021).

Participation should extend beyond attendance in activities. Beneficiaries need meaningful opportunities to express concerns, influence decisions, monitor implementation, and evaluate whether programs remain aligned with actual needs. Weil et al. (2018) explain that inclusive community practice strengthens ownership and accountability, which can improve both program legitimacy and sustainability.

LGU Support and Collaborative Governance

Collaborative Governance Theory proposes that public programs are more effective when government agencies and non-government stakeholders participate in structured, consensus-oriented processes (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Applied to livelihood development, LGUs provide direction, mobilize resources, coordinate partners, establish administrative mechanisms, and create opportunities for residents to participate in planning and implementation. Strong governance therefore combines leadership with transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and shared decision-making.

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Institutional linkages can connect communities to financing organizations, cooperatives, schools, non-government organizations, technical experts, and markets. The Asian Development Bank (2021) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2021) emphasize that coordination and stakeholder participation improve the delivery and accountability of development programs. The Department of Labor and Employment (2023) similarly highlights the importance of mentoring, monitoring, and interagency collaboration in livelihood assistance.

Local studies reinforce the value of continuous government support. De Castro (2021) identified leadership, funding, technical assistance, and monitoring as important conditions for livelihood sustainability, while Castillo and Mantillas (2024) reported that LGU leadership and resource support contributed to beneficiary outcomes but required stronger monitoring and management. These findings indicate that the LGU's role should continue throughout the program cycle rather than end after the initial distribution of assistance.

Theoretical Synthesis and Research Gap

The Capability Approach and Collaborative Governance Theory provide complementary explanations of livelihood development. The former emphasizes the expansion of beneficiaries' skills, resources, choices, and well-being, whereas the latter explains how coordinated public leadership and stakeholder participation create the institutional conditions needed for those capabilities to develop. Together, they suggest that strong livelihood outcomes emerge when individual empowerment is supported by transparent, inclusive, and sustained local governance.

The reviewed literature consistently identifies training, financial access, market linkage, social support, technical assistance, and collaboration as important. Nevertheless, these factors are often examined separately, and fewer studies compare the assessments of beneficiaries and implementers within one community. Differences in these perspectives may reveal implementation gaps that are not visible when only one respondent group is considered.

The present study addressed this gap by assessing both community livelihood programs and LGU support among residents and LGU employees in Barangay Ramon Cruz Sr. It also used the results to develop a locally responsive framework. Dela Cruz (2022) notes that community interventions are more acceptable when they are relevant, practical, clearly communicated, and aligned with beneficiaries' needs, providing a basis for evaluating the proposed framework.

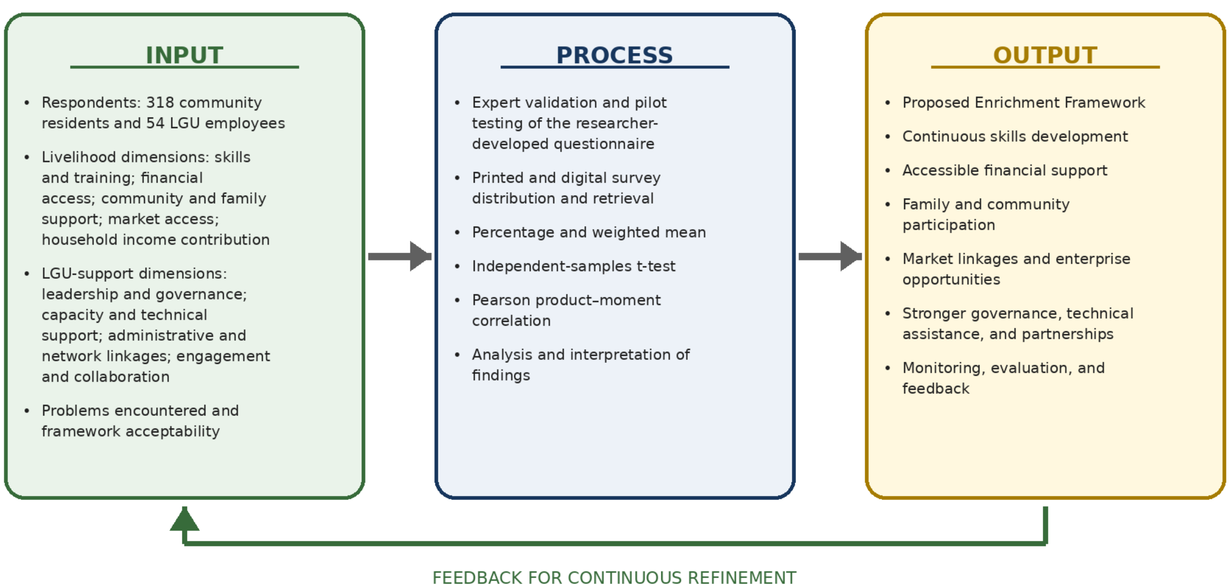

Figure 1. *Research paradigm of the study.*

METHODS

Research Design

The study used a quantitative descriptive design with comparative and correlational analyses. The descriptive component determined the levels of community livelihood programs, LGU support, problems encountered, and framework acceptability. The comparative component tested differences between community residents and LGU employees, while the correlational component determined the association between livelihood programs and LGU support. This approach was appropriate because the variables were measured as they existed without experimental manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Barangay Ramon Cruz Sr., General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite. The locale was selected because community livelihood activities were being implemented with the participation of residents and the municipal and barangay government, making it appropriate for examining the interaction between program implementation and LGU support.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The respondents were 372 individuals: 318 community residents (85.48%) and 54 LGU employees (14.52%). Community residents were selected through simple random sampling so that eligible residents had an equal chance of participation. LGU employees were selected purposively based on their position, involvement, and experience in livelihood program planning, implementation, monitoring, or support. Purposive selection was appropriate for obtaining information from personnel with direct knowledge of the programs (Campbell et al., 2021).

Research Instrument

A researcher-developed survey questionnaire was constructed from the objectives, variables, and related literature. It contained five parts covering respondent profile; community livelihood programs; LGU support; problems encountered in livelihood programs and LGU support; and acceptability of the proposed Enrichment Framework. The livelihood-program dimensions were skills and training, access to financial resources, community and family support, market access and opportunities, and household income contribution. LGU support was measured through leadership and governance, capacity building and technical support, administrative and network linkages, and community engagement and collaboration.

The instrument was reviewed by two graduate-school professors, one research professor, and the thesis adviser to establish clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. Pilot testing was conducted among individuals who were not included in the final sample to assess reliability and comprehensibility before administration. Responses were recorded through five-point Likert scales with verbal interpretations appropriate to evidence, problems encountered, and program acceptability.

Data Gathering Procedure

Formal permission was obtained from the barangay and the LGU before data collection. After coordination with responsible officials, printed and digital questionnaires were distributed to the selected respondents. The purpose and instructions were explained, completed instruments were retrieved, and responses were checked, sorted, tallied, encoded, and organized according to the research questions. Statistical treatment and interpretation were undertaken with the assistance of the statistician and research adviser.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage described the respondent groups and demographic characteristics. Weighted means summarized assessments of community livelihood programs, LGU support, problems encountered, and framework acceptability. Independent-samples t-tests determined whether the assessments of community residents and LGU employees differed significantly. Pearson product–moment correlation tested the relationship between community livelihood programs and LGU support. Hypotheses were evaluated at the .05 level of significance.

Ethical Consideration

Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed that the information collected would be used only for academic purposes. The survey instructions assured confidentiality, and the reported results were presented in aggregate form rather than identifying individual respondents. Permission from the concerned barangay and local government offices was secured before the questionnaires were administered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Assessment of Community Livelihood Programs

The combined assessment showed that community livelihood programs were Evident overall (M = 3.60). Skills and training obtained the highest composite mean (M = 3.82), followed by market access and opportunities (M = 3.77) and access to financial resources (M = 3.52). Household income contribution (M = 3.49) remained Evident but was comparatively lower, while community and family support (M = 3.39) was only Moderately Evident. The pattern indicates that the programs were most visible in training and market-related activities but less consistent in generating sustained family support, savings, and reliable household income.

Table 1. Summary assessment of community livelihood programs

Dimension	Residents M (VI)	LGU Employees M (VI)	Composite M (VI)	Rank
Skills and training	3.41 (E)	4.23 (HE)	3.82 (E)	1
Market access and opportunities	3.41 (E)	4.12 (E)	3.77 (E)	2
Access to financial resources	3.20 (ME)	3.83 (E)	3.52 (E)	3
Household income contribution	3.11 (ME)	3.87 (E)	3.49 (E)	4
Community and family support	3.26 (ME)	3.52 (E)	3.39 (ME)	5
Overall	3.28 (ME)	3.92 (E)	3.60 (E)	—

At the indicator level, the strongest results included livelihood income helping families meet daily needs (M = 4.25) and product promotion through community fairs or exhibits (M = 4.22). By contrast, financial support reaching the families who needed it most (M = 2.81), livelihood income increasing savings and security (M = 2.88), and income being steady and reliable (M = 2.92) were weaker. These findings are consistent with studies showing that training and initial assistance can improve participation, yet long-term outcomes depend on targeted financing, continuous mentoring, and sustained market connections (Ballesteros et al., 2021; Gazeaud et al., 2023).

Differences Between Community Residents and LGU Employees

LGU employees consistently assigned higher means than community residents. All five differences were statistically significant because the computed t-values exceeded the critical value of 1.96. The largest difference occurred in skills and training, followed by market access and opportunities. These differences suggest that implementers perceived program availability and performance more favorably than the residents who experienced the services as beneficiaries. The gap highlights the importance of beneficiary feedback, transparent communication, and outcome-based monitoring rather than relying only on implementation records.

Table 2. Differences in assessments of community livelihood programs

Dimension	Residents M	LGU M	t	Decision
Skills and training	3.41	4.23	6.21	Significant
Access to financial resources	3.20	3.83	5.48	Significant
Community and family support	3.26	3.52	3.89	Significant
Market access and opportunities	3.41	4.12	6.02	Significant
Household income contribution	3.11	3.87	4.77	Significant

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Assessment of Local Government Unit Support

LGU support was Evident overall (M = 3.85). Community engagement and collaboration ranked first (M = 4.01), followed by administrative and network linkages (M = 3.97), capacity building and technical support (M = 3.78), and leadership and governance (M = 3.65). The findings show that the strongest contribution of the LGU was its ability to mobilize participation and build partnerships. Leadership and governance, although still evident, required greater attention to inclusive participation, confidence-building, clarity of direction, and transparent use of resources.

Table 3. Summary assessment of Local Government Unit support

Dimension	Residents M (VI)	LGU Employees M (VI)	Composite M (VI)	Rank
Community engagement and collaboration	3.48 (E)	4.54 (HE)	4.01 (E)	1
Administrative and network linkages	3.48 (E)	4.46 (HE)	3.97 (E)	2
Capacity building and technical support	3.26 (ME)	4.30 (HE)	3.78 (E)	3
Leadership and governance	3.19 (ME)	4.11 (E)	3.65 (E)	4
Overall	3.35 (ME)	4.35 (HE)	3.85 (E)	—

The highest individual LGU-support indicators included active encouragement of participation (M = 4.37), linkages that strengthened livelihood sustainability (M = 4.32), and partnerships with schools, non-government organizations, or cooperatives (M = 4.26). Lower ratings were obtained for encouraging participation from all community members (M = 3.14), inspiring confidence (M = 3.23), and making technical support available when families faced difficulties (M = 3.48). Collaborative governance literature similarly stresses that partnerships are valuable only when they are accompanied by inclusive decision-making, accountability, and sustained technical assistance (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Craig et al., 2020).

Relationship Between Livelihood Programs and LGU Support

Community livelihood programs and LGU support had a very strong positive relationship, $r = .8311$, $p < .001$. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The result indicates that communities reporting stronger leadership, technical support, partnerships, administrative coordination, and engagement also reported better livelihood-program implementation. This relationship does not by itself establish causality, but it provides strong evidence that institutional support and program performance move together in the study setting.

Table 4. Relationship between community livelihood programs and LGU support

Variables	r	Interpretation	p	Decision
Community livelihood programs and LGU support	.8311	Very strong positive	< .001	Reject H_0

The finding supports the proposition that livelihood opportunities become more sustainable when communities receive coordinated institutional assistance. The World Bank (2022) and Asian Development Bank (2021) similarly emphasize that inclusive governance and institutional support improve access to opportunities and strengthen resilience. Local evidence also identifies leadership, monitoring, technical assistance, and resource coordination as essential to program continuity (De Castro, 2021).

Problems Encountered in Program Implementation

Problems related to community livelihood programs were Encountered overall (M = 4.01). The most serious concern was that training sessions were not always regular or sustained (M = 4.42). Other concerns involved weak product promotion, limited family participation, financial aid not consistently reaching those most in need, difficult loan requirements, weak cooperation, generalized training, and transport or logistics constraints. These issues explain why the favorable ratings for skills training and market activities did not always translate into stable household income and savings.

Problems related to LGU support were Moderately Encountered (M = 3.30). The highest concerns were irregular or poorly matched training programs (M = 3.45), limited involvement of community members in planning and decision-making (M = 3.43), and inadequate technical support when livelihood challenges arose (M = 3.42). Weak network linkages, limited collaboration, insufficient transparency, unclear direction, and complicated administrative procedures were also noted. These findings demonstrate the need for continuous rather than episodic assistance and for participatory monitoring that can detect implementation problems early.

Table 5. Summary of major implementation problems

Area	Overall M	Interpretation	Highest-rated problem	Problem M
Community livelihood programs	4.01	Encountered	Irregular or unsustained training	4.42
LGU support	3.30	Moderately encountered	Training not consistently matched to needs	3.45

Proposed Enrichment Framework and Acceptability

The Enrichment Framework was developed to address the identified weaknesses through coordinated and community-centered actions. Its priority areas included continuous and needs-based skills training; accessible financial assistance and financial literacy; family and community participation; product promotion and wider market linkage; transparent leadership and simplified administration; technical assistance and partnerships; and regular monitoring, evaluation, and feedback. Representative activities in the original framework included community cooperation and family-support projects, savings and income-management activities, market-promotion initiatives, technical-guidance programs, and governance and networking interventions.

Table 6. Priority components of the proposed Enrichment Framework

Priority area	Core strategies	Intended result
Skills development	Regular needs-based training, mentoring, and follow-up technical assistance	Improved competence and sustained application of skills
Financial access	Targeted assistance, savings groups, financial literacy, and affordable credit linkages	Fairer access to capital and stronger financial resilience
Community and family participation	Assemblies, support groups, recognition, and shared responsibilities	Stronger cooperation, ownership, and participation
Market opportunities	Product development, fairs, buyer linkage, pricing, transport, and promotion	Expanded market reach and improved income potential
LGU governance and partnerships	Transparent decisions, simplified processes, interagency networks, monitoring, and feedback	More responsive, accountable, and sustainable implementation

The framework received a Highly Acceptable overall rating (M = 4.41). Respondents gave the highest rating to its provision of comprehensive knowledge for corrective action (M = 4.56), followed by its usefulness in developing and enhancing policy guidelines (M = 4.54). The item on completeness of facts was the lowest but remained Acceptable (M = 4.12). The results indicate that both residents and LGU employees considered the framework relevant, practical, and responsive. This aligns with Dela Cruz (2022), who found that interventions gain acceptance when activities are clearly connected to beneficiaries' needs and supported by participation and continuing assistance.

Table 7. *Acceptability of the proposed Enrichment Framework*

Indicator	Residents M	LGU M	Composite M	VI
Comprehensive knowledge for corrective actions	4.30	4.82	4.56	Highly acceptable
Guidance for policy development and enhancement	4.25	4.82	4.54	Highly acceptable
Identifies program and LGU-support weaknesses	4.31	4.32	4.32	Highly acceptable

Practical for adoption and implementation	4.11	4.38	4.25	Highly acceptable
Completeness of facts	4.12	4.11	4.12	Acceptable
Overall	4.22	4.59	4.41	Highly acceptable

CONCLUSION

Community livelihood programs in Barangay Ramon Cruz Sr. were generally evident and contributed to skills development, market access, financial opportunities, and household welfare. Their outcomes, however, were uneven. Community and family support, reliable income, savings, targeted financial assistance, and continuity of technical guidance remained weaker than the more visible training and promotion activities. The significant differences between residents' and LGU employees' assessments further show that program availability from the implementers' perspective did not always correspond to the experiences of beneficiaries.

LGU support was a central condition of program effectiveness. Its very strong positive relationship with community livelihood programs indicates that leadership, capacity building, partnerships, administrative coordination, and participation should be strengthened as an integrated system. The highly acceptable Enrichment Framework provides a locally grounded mechanism for addressing implementation gaps through continuous training, inclusive financing, market linkage, community participation, transparent governance, technical assistance, and monitoring. The study contributes evidence that sustainable livelihood development requires both expanded beneficiary capabilities and sustained collaborative governance.

Recommendation

1. The LGU and barangay may adopt the proposed Enrichment Framework through a phased implementation plan with clear responsibilities, timelines, resource requirements, and performance indicators.
2. Livelihood training may be scheduled regularly and based on documented beneficiary needs, with mentoring and technical follow-up after every training cycle to support actual application.
3. Financial assistance mechanisms may be made more targeted and accessible through transparent eligibility criteria, financial-literacy activities, savings groups or cooperatives, and partnerships with appropriate financing institutions.
4. Market support may be expanded through product development, pricing guidance, local fairs, digital promotion, buyer and supplier linkages, and coordinated transport or logistics assistance.
5. Consultation, feedback, monitoring, and reporting mechanisms may be strengthened so that community residents participate meaningfully in planning, resource allocation, implementation, and evaluation.
6. Partnerships with schools, national agencies, private organizations, cooperatives, and non-government organizations may be sustained to broaden technical expertise, financing, training, and market opportunities.
7. Future studies may use wider geographic coverage, longitudinal assessment, additional livelihood outcomes, and qualitative interviews to examine how the framework affects income stability, participation, and program sustainability over time.

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