

Impact Assessment of an Income-Generating Project

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Abstract. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness and sustainability of income-generating projects designed to provide beneficiaries with essential needs as outlined in the project plan. The study focuses on key areas such as monitoring, evaluation, and financial management to assess project sustainability. A comprehensive data collection process involved semi-structured interviews with project proponents. The data was then meticulously analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis identified several key themes: dissemination of information about the product's introduction, measurement and evaluation, monitoring, stakeholder engagement, sustainability and effectiveness, and unique experiences. These themes were used to develop recommendations and conclusions regarding the projects' overall impact and sustainability.

Keywords: Income-generating project; Impact assessment; Project monitoring; Project evaluation; Financial management.

1.0 Introduction

Income-generating programs (IGPs) are initiatives designed to provide long-term income for individuals, families, and communities, particularly in areas where poverty is widespread and access to essential needs like food, housing, and healthcare is limited. IGPs have positively impacted poverty alleviation, economic growth, and social development. They contribute to the long-term prosperity of individuals and communities by reducing reliance on external assistance and promoting self-sufficiency.

Low-income rural and urban populations often face significant challenges, including limited income opportunities, high levels of poverty and inequality, low educational attainment, and restricted access to socioeconomic services. To address these challenges, households frequently need to find additional sources of income. In such contexts, income-generating activities are crucial in restoring and enhancing livelihood systems. These activities help disadvantaged populations generate sustainable income to meet their basic needs despite potential obstacles like resource shortages, limited market access, and social and cultural barriers.

In the Philippines, schools encounter various challenges, such as limited financial resources, inadequate facilities, and unequal resource distribution, which hinder providing inclusive and high-quality education. IGPs offer a potential solution by supplementing limited financial resources, improving sustainability, and promoting innovative teaching approaches. Understanding the socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional factors shaping the educational landscape in the Philippines is essential to comprehend the impact of IGPs.

Assessing the impact of IGPs provides valuable insights into their success and effectiveness in achieving goals like financial sustainability, skill development, and community engagement. Impact assessment helps identify best practices, challenges, and areas for improvement, thereby informing evidence-based decision-making and

strategic planning. Moreover, it enhances accountability and transparency by demonstrating the benefits and added value IGPs provide to stakeholders, including students, educators, parents, and the broader community.

Many schools need more budget constraints and funding, which impede their ability to deliver essential services and high-quality education. IGPs can provide schools with a reliable income source to cover operational costs, invest in infrastructure improvements, and support educational programs. By diversifying their income sources, schools can reduce dependence on government subsidies and external funding, ensuring financial stability even in challenging economic conditions.

IGPs offer students experiential learning opportunities that complement academic curricula and classroom instruction. Whether through school gardens, cafeteria management, or handicraft production, students gain hands-on experience in entrepreneurship, marketing, financial management, and teamwork. These experiences prepare students for future careers and business ventures, enhancing academic achievement and essential life skills.

IGPs can also strengthen the connection between schools and their surrounding communities, fostering collaboration and mutual support. Involving local stakeholders in project planning, implementation, and decision-making builds trust, encourages civic participation, and meets community needs. Additionally, IGPs can serve as platforms for social impact activities, such as cultural preservation, poverty alleviation, and environmental conservation, empowering students to become agents of positive change in their communities.

Many IGPs in Philippine schools focus on promoting cultural heritage, traditional crafts, and indigenous practices, contributing to cultural preservation and heritage conservation efforts. By reviving traditional practices, schools celebrate local culture and instill pride and appreciation for cultural diversity among students. IGPs centered on cultural heritage can also facilitate intergenerational learning, where elders share their knowledge and wisdom with younger generations, ensuring the continuity of cultural practices.

School income-generating ventures aim to provide students with entrepreneurial skills by integrating technical knowledge with business techniques and management. These initiatives also generate funds to support the financial sustainability of schools (Kipkoech, 2018). Odundo and Rambo (2013) noted that funds from school-based IGAs were used for staff motivation, building maintenance, infrastructure development, and procuring instructional resources. However, these initiatives often need more financing, better record-keeping, and a lack of skilled staff.

According to Ugwu and Nebedum (2018), income-generating activities help schools increase revenue outside of statutory allocations, enhancing school finances without adding to parents' financial burdens. School-based IGPs can help schools absorb macroeconomic shocks and maintain financial stability. However, there are no policy standards for initiating, operating, evaluating, and reporting on IGPs, leading to varied performance across schools (Kiarie et al., 2019). Therefore, regular monitoring and evaluation, financial management training, technical assistance, and recognition for successful IGP implementation are essential for maximizing the benefits of these programs.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach. Creswell and Poth (2016) state that a phenomenological study describes the meaning of lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon for several individuals. Similarly, Mortazavizadeh, Nili, Isfahani, and Hassani (2017) emphasize that phenomenology seeks to describe and interpret specific experiences from the perspectives of those who have lived them. Savage-Austin and Honeycutt (2011) add that phenomenology involves gathering and exploring live experiences. This study investigates the lived experiences of participants in implementing an income-generating project. It aims to determine their coping mechanisms in addressing the challenges encountered during the project's implementation and to identify insights that can be shared with the academic community about income-generating projects.

2.2 Research Participants

A purposeful sampling technique was used to select participants for this study. This approach identified and selected learners who benefited from the income-generating "Kakanin ng Kinabukasan" project at Buguis Elementary School. It also selected teachers who were involved in implementing the project. Four proponent teachers participated in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). These teachers, who were willing to share their practices, were the program holders of the project. Triangulation enhanced the study's credibility by incorporating multiple data sources or methodologies for data analysis.

2.3 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher and participants convened virtually to discuss the study's purpose, potential benefits, logistical details, and schedules for interviews and FGDs. Participants in the FGD were provided with a consent letter. The researcher conducted the actual interviews and discussions at agreed-upon times. Video recordings of the sessions were reviewed and transcribed, ensuring robust and meaningful data collection while prioritizing participants' well-being.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved three key steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During data reduction, the participants' recorded responses were transcribed and interpreted, and decisions were made on coding and categorizing the data. For data display, the researchers presented the information thematically, drawing themes from participants' narrations. In conclusion, drawing/verification, initial patterns, and themes were identified. Transcripts were studied and re-read, and notes were taken as themes and ideas developed. The analysis identified common themes that addressed participants' experiences and the challenges encountered during the project's implementation.

2.5 Trustworthiness of the Study

Trustworthiness in qualitative research ensures that the findings accurately reflect the participants' lived experiences (Curtin & Fossey, 2007). Gunawan (2015) emphasizes the importance of triangulation in reducing investigator bias and ensuring reliability. This study employed member checking, triangulation, and systematic coding to maintain rigor and consistency.

Member Checking. Used to confirm the accuracy of participants' responses during the interviews. Anney (2014) states that confirmability involves showing that data and interpretations are derived from the data and not the inventions of the researcher. Experts reviewed the data to ensure accuracy and integrity.

Credibility. Evaluate whether the data representation fits the participants' views and whether the findings are true (Hannes, 2011). Techniques used include member checking, peer debriefing, attention to negative cases, independent data analysis, and verbatim quotes.

Dependability. Assesses whether the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented. Anney (2014) notes that dependability involves evaluating findings, interpretations, and recommendations to ensure they are supported by the data. The researcher documented the methods used to allow readers to assess the study's appropriateness.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The researcher signed a confidentiality agreement with the informants via email, assuring them that their critical information would remain confidential and used solely for the research study. Informants were asked for permission to use their real names. The researcher formally approached the informants regarding appointments, personal information, and cooperation for the study's success.

3.0 Results and Discussion

The following themes emerged from the analysis:

Theme 1: Dissemination of Information Regarding the Product's Introduction

A significant challenge encountered during the project implementation was disseminating information about the product's introduction. It was essential for a broader audience to witness the demonstration, as increased visibility would likely motivate more participants to engage with and complete the project at home, potentially leading to

wider adoption of the product. Additionally, the program faced logistical hurdles during its execution. One such challenge involved obtaining a permit from the district nurse to reproduce and display the products at the school canteen. Although permission was eventually granted, it came with certain restrictions. Expressly, the display and sale of kakanin, such as banana cue, were limited to three times a week, a condition that all stakeholders agreed upon. Teacher 1 highlighted this issue in the following statement:

"We would have liked to sell in the canteen more frequently, but the district nurse-imposed restrictions. We are only allowed to sell maruya, hotcakes, or any sweet products three times a week."

Theme 2: Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are essential components of project management as they allow for assessing a project's effectiveness and determining whether it has met its objectives. According to Patangay et al. (2017), project measurement and evaluation involve the systematic collection and analysis of data to assess progress and identify areas for improvement. With your active participation, the school-based Management (SBM) committee will measure and evaluate the project's outcomes. The project will be deemed successful if evidence of school supplies purchases is produced and audited. The committee will monitor and continue the project to see if it is effective, sustainable, and beneficial.

Monitoring enables educational institutions to track the development and performance of their income-generating projects (IGPs) in real time. By gathering and analyzing data on various factors, including financial performance, production output, sales income, and customer satisfaction through methods such as surveys, financial reports, and sales records, educational institutions can identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Monitoring allows prompt interventions to address issues, optimize processes, and capitalize on opportunities, enhancing the project's efficiency and effectiveness. It also fosters a culture of learning and continuous development within educational institutions. Lessons learned from monitoring and evaluation processes inform future decision-making and curriculum adjustments. Over time, institutions can develop knowledge, capability, and resilience by reflecting on successes and failures, identifying best practices, and sharing experiences. The literature underscores the importance of monitoring and evaluation for project sustainability. According to Lui and Chan (2015), regular monitoring and evaluation help project managers identify areas for improvement and ensure long-term sustainability. Teacher 4 mentioned during the interview:

"We have a School-Based Management Team that monitors the project's progress every month."

In close collaboration with the SBM committee, the proponents ensured that the project was meticulously monitored. The product was distributed to the school canteen of Buguis Elementary School, and a product launch and demonstration were conducted for stakeholders and pupils to encourage them to generate income by making the product. A key element of beneficiary assessment is understanding the needs and priorities of project beneficiaries. Chambers (1997) emphasizes that understanding the perspectives and experiences of beneficiaries is crucial for developing effective and impactful projects. This involves engaging beneficiaries in the project's design and implementation.

After seven months of operation, the proponents audited their income and found they had earned a profit of one thousand five hundred pesos. This profit was used to purchase school supplies distributed to recipients in April 2024. The project, which is expected to run for a total of three years, is currently in the product-selling phase, with income being saved to procure school supplies for the upcoming school year. If these procedures are followed and continued until the end of the targeted implementation period in 2026, it can be concluded that the program effectively aided the beneficiaries. Teacher 3 shared the project's positive outcome after seven months of operation:

"After seven months of operation, we made a profit, which we used to buy school supplies for our ten beneficiaries."

Theme 3: Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is a critical element for ensuring the sustainability of a project. According to Bierbaum et al. (2013), involving stakeholders in the design and implementation phases aligns the project with their needs and priorities, building support and increasing the likelihood of long-term success. Effective stakeholder

engagement fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among all parties involved. When stakeholders actively engage in planning and decision-making, they are more likely to feel invested in the project's success and motivated to contribute their time, energy, and resources toward its sustainability.

Building partnerships and collaborations with stakeholders helps create a supportive ecosystem that extends beyond the school, ensuring the long-term viability and impact of the income-generating project. Stakeholder engagement provides valuable feedback loops, enabling schools to monitor progress, evaluate outcomes, and adapt strategies in response to changing circumstances. By soliciting input from stakeholders throughout the project's lifecycle, schools can identify emerging challenges, seize new opportunities, and make informed decisions to optimize the project's impact and sustainability.

Fostering an open communication and collaboration culture empowers stakeholders to co-create solutions, share best practices, and collectively address possible obstacles. Teacher 3 emphasized the importance of stakeholder engagement with the following statement:

"We need to engage our stakeholders so they will be more inclined to support our income-generating project. If they do not participate, the project is unlikely to succeed."

Theme 4: Sustainability and Effectiveness

School-Based Management (SBM) and Income-Generating Projects (IGPs) are two strategic approaches that can significantly enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of educational institutions. According to Dimmock and Walker (2005), SBM empowers school stakeholders to participate in decision-making processes and allocate resources more effectively, while IGPs generate income and profits to support school operations and improve facilities and programs. Combining SBM and IGPs can potentially increase a school's financial sustainability. Mukunya (2016) notes that IGPs can provide additional income for schools, funding activities such as teacher training, infrastructure development, and student programs.

By implementing SBM, schools can ensure that the income generated from IGPs is used effectively and efficiently, with all stakeholders having a say in its allocation. Efficient IGPs enable educational institutions to maximize revenue production by optimizing existing resources and assets. Schools can generate value from underutilized assets through sustainable IGPs, such as renting unused facilities, utilizing local resources for agricultural or artisanal ventures, or monetizing skills and expertise within the school community.

Sustainable IGPs can provide long-term benefits for communities, students, and schools beyond immediate financial gains. Investments in infrastructure improvements, capacity-building efforts, and skills development programs can create long-lasting assets and capacities that contribute to educational excellence and community development. Moreover, sustained IGPs can serve as examples of innovation and best practices, inspiring other schools to replicate successful projects and drive positive change throughout the education sector.

Teacher 2 emphasized the importance of the sustainability and effectiveness of the project with the following statement:

"It is crucial for the income-generating project to be sustained so that more needy students can be helped and supported."

Theme 5: One-of-a-Kind Experience

Projects like these must prioritize the needs of our most important clients: the students. As future school leaders, we need to recognize the value of Income-Generating Projects (IGPs) and similar initiatives that foster partnerships between the community and stakeholders. It's essential to think creatively to develop engaging projects and programs that generate income for the benefit of the school and its stakeholders. Involving teachers and parents in designing such programs is crucial since they are closely connected to the learners and can identify their needs and the types of programs that will address them.

Participating in the project allows students to engage in experiential learning opportunities beyond the traditional classroom setting. Through hands-on activities, students develop practical entrepreneurship, financial

management, marketing, and teamwork skills. This project encourages students to adopt an entrepreneurial mindset, leading to the identification of opportunities, the taking of measured risks, and the development of innovative solutions to real-world problems.

IGPs that promote creativity, resilience, and problem-solving skills enable students to think critically, adapt to changing situations, and seize growth opportunities. Successful project execution helps students realize their potential, develop a sense of agency and autonomy, and gain self-confidence. Overcoming challenges, achieving significant milestones, and seeing the tangible results of their efforts instill self-assurance, perseverance, and a belief in their ability to effect positive change in their lives and communities.

This was affirmed by one of the students who participated in the project:

"I really enjoy selling kakanin because I learned about business, even in small ways. The profit we make helps meet my needs."

4.0 Conclusion

The findings underscore the significance of IGPs in positively influencing the lives of beneficiaries, emphasizing the individualized impact. Understanding these impacts is crucial for school-based management (SBM) initiatives to address the diverse needs of schools and learners. While the research revealed positive and negative outcomes across all participants, it underscores the broad-reaching effects of IGPs beyond a select group of beneficiaries.

Implementing IGPs represents a promising avenue for providing financial assistance to students, equipping them with practical skills, and fostering entrepreneurial spirit. This research contributes to the broader understanding of IGPs' efficacy in addressing educational and financial challenges, highlighting their relevance in enhancing student well-being and academic success.

In conclusion, this study on impact assessment of income-generating projects advances the field of education by offering insights into effective financial strategies, fostering community engagement, promoting innovation, and influencing educational policies. This research is instrumental in the development of educational systems that are more sustainable, resilient, and impactful, thereby benefiting students, educators, and communities. It provides insights into how schools can generate additional income through various projects and how this income can be effectively managed and reinvested to improve educational outcomes. This knowledge is crucial as many educational institutions globally face financial constraints and need sustainable funding sources. Further studies are suggested to explore how to maintain the sustainability of income-generating projects in schools.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

Throughout the process, all authors are given equal credit for their contributions to this collaborative endeavor. The final product was a cohesive and well-rounded result, as each individual contributed to every aspect of the project. Additionally, all authors were actively engaged in the review process, meticulously analyzing the content and offering valuable feedback to enhance and fortify the manuscript. The final version of this work was unanimously endorsed by all contributing writers as a result of the comprehensive review process and combined effort.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest about the publication of this paper.

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