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A Right or Just Another String Attached?
Problematizing the Process of Participation in the Philippine Conditional Cash Transfer Program

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List of Acronyms

CCAGG	Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government, Inc.
CCT	Conditional cash transfer
CSO	Civil society organization
DepEd	Department of Education
DOH	Department of Health
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
FDS	Family development session
GDP	Gross domestic product
HRBA	Human rights-based approach
PPIS	Pantawid Pamilya Information System
RECITE	Responsible Citizens and Empowered Communities in Solidarity for Social Change
RA	Republic Act
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
YCCAGG	Young Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government, Inc.
4Ps	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program

Abstract

With a new theory of change that sees poverty as a human rights issue, human rights-based approaches (HRBAs) are now a rising discourse in poverty alleviation. One of the elements of these HRBAs is participation, hence the increasing attention to the integration of participatory channels in poverty alleviation programs like CCTs. With this being a new element, what it offers development as a result remains uncertain. The purpose of the study is then to problematize the process of participation in one case that has recently included participatory channels: the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program of the Philippines. This is in order to offer insights on whether participation of cash transfer beneficiaries indeed brings transformative and sustainable effects on poverty alleviation or simply reinforces instances of exclusion. Employing mixed methods, this study sets the policy context through a descriptive analysis of quantitative data; and gathers insights on the conceptualization, recent practices, and narratives of participation by means of in-depth qualitative interviews. In problematizing the process, the study finds that the highly normative conceptualization of participation is at odds with poverty as a human rights issue and even translates to power abuses by local elites. Recent practices of participation, meanwhile, reinforce gendered roles of women and perpetuate vulnerabilities of the more marginalized groups in the community. Conflicting narratives on the transformative effects and sustainability of participation also tell us about limitations of short-lived poverty interventions shaped by power elites and raises questions on whether participation is an exercised right or just another string attached. Lastly, while this study offers new insights on the right to participation in CCTs, moving forward includes reconciling the tensions between targeted social protection schemes and the principles of HRBAs.

Relevance to Development Studies

Poverty as a human rights issue is not yet a widely accepted reality. The increasing attention to it, however, has informed some recent policymaking orders to adopt human rights-based approaches. Social protection schemes are among these orders, hence the integration of participation – a key element of human rights-based approaches – to programs like CCTs. As this is a relatively new discourse, this research attempts to provide new insights on the effects of participation in poverty alleviation. Its multi-stakeholder approach explores the power dynamics in which key actors operate, thus seeking to analyse whether participation addresses or perpetuates forces that drive poverty.

Keywords

For the strong women of Tayum, Abra
Who, by letting me into their lives,
Unknowingly touched mine
In ways no one else can

Chapter 1 Introduction

Poverty strips individuals of many things: certain opportunities, privileges, and power to alter their state. It, however, should not take away rights that are inherent in human beings. Among these rights is the right of people to participate in political and public affairs affecting their lives. In this chosen case of the Philippine conditional cash transfer (CCT) program, participation is aimed at demanding better social protection services, and by extension, some civil, political, and social rights to break out of poverty. Given the interplay of rights and power dynamics, however, the process by which development interventions seek to amplify the voices of the marginalized must be carefully examined. To do so, emphasis is given to the conceptualization and recent practices of participation of CCT grantees[1], as well as conflicting narratives of stakeholders in Tayum, Abra.

To proceed, the paper is organized as follows: Chapter 1 presents the problem statement, justification, researcher's positionality, ethical concerns, and research goals and core question. Chapter 2 brings together a theoretical framework guiding the study. In Chapter 3, I continue by contextualizing the researched area and the policy in question. In Chapter 4, I justify my methodological approach. Chapter 5, meanwhile, follows with a discussion of findings. Lastly, Chapter 6 consists of conclusions drawn from the study, as well as key reflections on the conduct of this research and the future of human rights-based approaches to poverty alleviation programs like CCTs.

1.1 Problem Statement

With increased recognition of the synergies of poverty and human rights (Pogge 2005; Osmani 2005; Pogge 2007; Ferraz 2008; Lister 2013), there is an urge to implement poverty alleviation programs following a human rights-based approach (HRBA) (Sepúlveda 2014: 1). As Khan explains, the core of this approach is shifting the role of the poor from beneficiaries to rights holders and of governments from service providers to duty bearers (2009: 13-14). In this shifting of roles, the innate right of people to participate in political and public affairs affecting their development is a crucial element. In the context of social protection, Sepúlveda says that participatory channels are meant to address abuse by local power elites and exclusion of marginalized sectors (2014:11). Molyneux et al., meanwhile, recognize increased attention to participation through social accountability practices in social protection (2016: 3). In support, Barrientos and Villa draw attention to the inclusion of marginalized groups in social protection programs like CCTs in recent years (2016: 10). In these discussions, the question of whether participation has transformative and long-term effects is highlighted. While participation has been identified as part of a human rights-based approach, it is not certain whether this works effectively in poverty alleviation. Furthermore, the process by which it occurs remains to be analysed.

Considering the abovementioned state-of-the-art literature on social protection and poverty alleviation, the purpose of this research is to problematize the process of participation in the Philippine flagship CCT called the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps). By focusing on the conceptualization, practice, and perceptions on participation, it seeks to analyse how different stakeholders of the program situate themselves in relations of

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[1] According to Republic Act 11310, known as "An Act Institutionalizing the Pantawid Pamilyang Program", a grantee is "the most responsible adult member of the household-beneficiary authorized to receive the conditional cash transfer". Refer to https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2019/04apr/20190417-RA-11310-RRD.pdf.

power embedded in participatory channels. By doing so, it attempts to determine whether participation, as a core element of HRBAs, can indeed lead to transformative and long-term poverty alleviation or in contrast perpetuate power abuses and instances of exclusion.

1.2 Justification

It is admittedly true that CCT programs were not originally conceptualized to promote the right of people to participate in political and public affairs. As popular targeted social protection initiatives, they primarily aim to address current poverty through transferring income to the poorest households and to break inter-generational cycles of poverty through investment in human capital (Ibarrarán 2017: 1). However, with the adoption of a human rights-based approach to alleviating poverty – as this paper substantiates in the next chapter – an evolution towards more participatory CCT programs is considered possible. It is therefore relevant to look at a specific CCT program with elements of participation, examine its process, and present it in debates surrounding its effectiveness and/or transformative effects.

1.2.1 The case selection

The 4Ps, translated into English as "Bridging the Filipino Family Program", is regarded as the flagship poverty alleviation program of the Philippines. Qualified household beneficiaries are selected by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the lead implementing agency of the program, using the Listahanan or the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction. The program is defined as:

> "a social protection scheme that invests in the health and education of children 0-18 years old from eligible poor households. It provides cash grants to the household beneficiaries in exchange to their compliance to the conditionalities set by the program (DSWD 2018: 7)."

Filipino families enrolled in 4Ps are given cash grants on the condition of utilizing education and health services. Apart from meeting conditionalities relating to school attendance and health check-ups, 4Ps grantees must also attend family development sessions (FDS). The FDS is a conditionality of the Philippine CCT in which participatory channels are introduced. It is a monthly gathering of the primary grantees[2] of each household whose goal is "to enhance their parenting capabilities and encourage them to be more active citizens of the society" (DSWD 2018: 6). The World Bank notes this as an innovation which in recent years was done only in the Philippines (2014: 2). The FDS manual consists of three modules with the third one entitled, "Participation of the Filipino Family in Community Development". As the title suggests, this module discusses ways by which "beneficiaries can participate actively in community development" (Dizon et al. 2017: 10).

While all municipalities implementing 4Ps conduct FDS, this research is only limited to Tayum, Abra. Firstly, it is due to my previous work experience in the municipality as a project facilitator. Secondly and more importantly, Tayum was among the 20 municipalities in Northern Luzon which piloted a four-year parallel project called, "Project I-Pantawid: Guarding the Integrity of the Philippine Conditional Cash Transfer Program". Designed "to develop a model for civil society-government partnership for transparent and accountable implementation of 4Ps", Project I-Pantawid aimed to mobilize grantees to demand better social protection services from local governments (Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good

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[2] To follow the program definition, the term "grantees" is used to refer to 4Ps beneficiaries involved in this study. Other members of the household who benefit from the transfers are referred to as "beneficiaries".

Government 2018: 10). Under this parallel project, the FDS was enhanced. As described by the Partnership for Transparency Fund, the enhanced FDS centred on active citizenship lessons and training for beneficiaries to "engage with government, to claim their rights, and to actively participate in community affairs" (Partnership for Transparency Fund 2018). According to Roussam Dilig, member of one of the civil society organizations (CSOs) involved, what distinguishes enhanced FDS from the regular FDS is its comprehensive active citizenship module. While the regular FDS module of the 4Ps contains community participation lessons, these are only discussed in two sessions and are not as comprehensive (R. Dilig, personal communication, 9 May 2019). As the FDS was enhanced in Tayum, it can be inferred that participatory channels were given more emphasis in the municipality.

Being that the Project I-Pantawid only served as a pilot project, it makes sense to take a critical pause after the intervention ended. By doing so, its potentials and limitations can be explored. Such critical examination is relevant not only to the researched area but also to the rest of the Philippines as the 4Ps continues to be implemented and expanded throughout the country, especially after the signing into law of Republic Act (RA) 11310 known as "An Act Institutionalizing the Pantawid Pamilyang Program".

1.2.2 Theoretical contribution

This research offers new insights from a theoretical standpoint. Firstly, by employing a multi-stakeholder analysis, it investigates the subjectivities of grantees, development workers, government agency workers, and local government officials and situates them in the power dynamics in which they operate. Secondly, by exploring the intersection of poverty and human rights, it contributes to the scarce literature on the right to participation and HRBAs recently introduced in CCTs.

1.3 Researcher's Positionality

Positionality is where a researcher stands in relation to the socio-political context of a study which in turns affects the entire research process (Rowe 2014: 20). In my experience, identifying my positionality involved a tale of two processes: first, of wearing different hats and then having to drop one; and second, of going against the grain. It became a personal and sometimes painful journey that pushed me to revisit, rethink, and confront my old beliefs in order to see fresh perspectives. Such personal account of my experiences served as what Ng describes as an "internal dialogue of the researcher to understand the world she is studying by intersecting her stories" (2011: 441).

To begin telling my stories, my interest in CCTs sprung from my previous affiliation with the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government (CCAGG) and its youth arm, the Young CCAGG (YCCAGG). The former served as the lead implementing CSO of Project I-Pantawid in the whole of Northern Luzon. The latter, meanwhile, provided needed technical assistance to grantees strictly in the municipality of Tayum. While affiliated to both, I had to wear the hat of a development worker in charge of facilitating, evaluating, and monitoring the implementation of the 4Ps. I encountered grantees as we trained parent leaders[3] and observed them in cascading lessons of enhanced FDS to their members. I also expanded my network to other organizations, government agencies, local government units, and some donors concerned. This informed my multi-stakeholder approach, illustrating that one's positionality influences all stages of the research process, which includes the identification of a problem and participants among others (Rowe 2014: 2).

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[3] Parent leaders are 4Ps beneficiaries who are chosen to lead fellow grantees (called members) in their villages.

While playing my previous role, I understood 4Ps from the perspective of those who crafted and supported it. For the same reason, my views on the program got heavily influenced by the circle I belonged in. These views included support for the Philippine CCT and its promise of empowerment, without paying attention to the many arguments problematizing both, which I would later in this journey stumble upon. I previously went to communities armed with a set of guidelines embedded in the project design without having a shade of doubt about the process.

As I worked on and presented the design of this research in May 2019, my previous role surfaced as a possible barrier in advancing a genuinely critical academic paper. Although the importance of the topic and its potential were acknowledged, it was pointed out that the framing of my research appeared as if I were still writing for the program. Admittedly, it required a period of reflection and a great deal of effort to attempt detaching myself from my previous role. Given how much my past experiences influenced my knowledge of the topic, I inevitably found myself in a tight spot. I imagined being "embroiled in a series of junctures and crossroads during the research" (Ng 2011: 439). Nonetheless, I realized that to be able to maximize the potential of this study, I had to drop an old hat and wear another: that of a critical academic researcher.

Truthfully, it cannot be claimed that I completely erased whatever I got out of my previous engagement, which in the first place may be impossible to do. As O'leary notes "we are a product of the social forces that surround us" (2004: 43). The biases we formed out of books we read, people we met, and environments we grew up in cannot be totally taken away by merely reading new books, meeting new people, and being in new environments. These new experiences, however, prompt us to re-evaluate our views and see new perspectives; and this is precisely what happened when I did my fieldwork. It was a defining moment as juggling my identities turned out to be an asset in understanding my subject (Ng 2011: 439).

Going back to where I used to work as a researcher and an average citizen allowed me to take some critical distance. This gave me the freedom to deconstruct preconceived notions, challenge old assumptions, and see things from another standpoint. As I was no longer involved in the program, I had more room to ask questions and critically approach issues. This, however, also involved not only a high degree of difficulty but also disappointment and pain for I had to go against the grain. On the hardest days, problematizing the very aspect of this program that I advocated for even made me question or dislike my past. Dealing with complexities implied by this was not an overnight process. It continued from fieldwork to the writing period. I, however, found value in my reflexive position. As Callaway notes, a reflexive position is a "continuing mode of self-analysis" (1992: 33) which researchers must reflect on and include in the conduct of research (McDowell 1992: 409).

Lastly, one other key aspect is how my research focus changed as I embraced my positionality. Before fieldwork, I was interested in studying a more linear input and output effect of enhanced FDS on the level of participation of 4Ps beneficiaries. However, as I learned more about 4Ps and as I went back to the field wearing my new hat, a significant shift occurred. I became intrigued by how participation was shaped, facilitated, and viewed. I felt the urge to problematize the process itself – which I did not do during my previous role nor during the design of this research – instead of simply quantifying its effects. This led me to studying a more normative approach, as I looked for answers and engaged with different narratives.

1.4 Ethical Concerns

In completing this study, I had to deal with several ethical concerns which turned out to be in line with my reflexive position. This goes to show even more clearly that being both an insider and an outsider has its advantages and disadvantages in the research process (McAreavey and Das 2013: 123).

Firstly, most of the grantees whom I interviewed still identified me with my previous role. This created an "imbalance of power" which usually happens when a researcher is considered by her respondents as an expert (O'leary 2004: 46). At some point, I felt that my previous role caused some to hesitate to speak about the project truthfully and critically. Before starting interviews and whenever hesitations became evident, I mentioned my role as no longer a development worker monitoring their activities but rather a student researcher. I believed that presenting myself as such could put me in a position of minimal power (O'leary 2004: 46) in order to build more rapport with my respondents. I, however, did not insist on them to answer if they did not want to even after the reiteration of my new role.

Secondly, gaining the trust of grantees who did not know me also emerged as a significant concern. While I previously worked in monitoring the program, I did not visit all 11 villages at the time. Having said so, it was not surprising to have a few grantees unfamiliar with me and therefore suspicious of my motives. To deal with this, a gatekeeper stepped in. As noted by McAreavey and Das, researchers rely on gatekeepers to access research subjects (2013: 116). When the grantees agreed to proceed, the gatekeeper became actively involved in the interviews and had the ability to influence "whether individuals opt in and out" (McAreavey and Das 2013: 116). It is, however, recognized that the gatekeeper might have influenced some interviewees' answers.

Moreover, talking to former grantees who had expectations regarding their re-enrolment in the program or the improvement of their current state became one of the most burdensome ethical concerns. While I quickly understood the need to state my limited role as researcher clearly, I found this to be more complicated as soon as I went to the field and encountered people. To be specific, I talked to two types of former grantees: delisted and graduated. While the latter are expected by the government to be in a better economic position, I found both in a similar situation of vulnerability. By encountering them, I witnessed the hardships they faced. I also observed that they saw me as someone with the power to influence their life chances. I realized that even student researchers can be viewed with power, however minimal, because of our education and position to do research (O'leary 2004: 43). I then felt that my presence in the field gave them false hopes, which made me question whether I was still doing the right thing. Balancing my level of involvement and detachment to my respondents surely touched upon my ethics as a researcher (Contractor 2008: 23) for I wanted to remain compassionate yet manage people's expectations. Although not easy, I dealt with this by using a straightforward and assertive yet unoffensive language. I explicitly explained to former grantees that while I empathized with them, I could not re-enrol them in the program or change their current economic state.

Other ethical concerns include ensuring that all respondents gave their informed consent. Obtaining informed consent involves making participants fully aware of their involvement in the research (O'leary 2004: 53). To address this, I first introduced myself and purpose to my identified key informants and respondents. Asking for consent included giving them the option not to participate at all, which in some cases, happened. For respondents who agreed to participate, I took note of requests for confidentiality which aims at "protecting the identity of those providing research data" (O'leary 2004: 54). Grantees and some other participants made such request, and it explains why I opted to use some

pseudonyms[4] and codes[5] in Chapters 4 and 5. Besides, when I had the chance to record interviews, I asked for my respondents' permission. I also let them know that I could stop recording at any point of discomfort.

Furthermore, I also made sure that none of my research participants felt harmed. I took seriously the responsibility of making respondents feel safe. However, putting a premium to the safety of respondents often makes researchers' safety less important (Roguski and Tauri 2013: 24-26). Some risky experiences in the field reminded me that a researcher's safety is also an important ethical consideration. In one incident, for example, my driver and I found ourselves attacked by a random individual. Although the attack had nothing to do with my research, I was advised to request local officials to accompany us when interviewing respondents. However, I was well-aware that some questions on political participation could be sensitive. Although I was then concerned about my safety, I also did not want to put any of the grantees in jeopardy. To "stress the dual importance of researcher and participant safety" (Roguski and Tauri 2013: 26), I discussed other options with my network to avoid such incident from happening again.

Lastly, I had an internal debate on whether I should share this work with the research participants in the event of undesired results or critique. I, however, came to see value in critique as it is not condemnation but rather an opening to change structural injustices (Li 2008: 115-116). This work is, therefore, an offering or a gift to people involved in the 4Ps.

1.5 Research Goals and Questions

Problematizing the process of participation in this chosen case involves meeting the following objectives:
1. To analyze the conceptualization of participation in Tayum, Abra;
2. To examine recent practices of participation;
3. To engage with different narratives on participation of grantees, local government officials, government agencies, and civil society organizations involved

In line with these objectives, the core question that guides this study is: **With Project I-Pantawid of the 4Ps, how is participation of grantees conceptualized, practiced, and perceived by 4Ps stakeholders in Tayum, Abra?** Sub-questions, meanwhile, are as follows:
1.1   How did Project I-Pantawid of the 4Ps conceptualize participation?
1.2   What participatory activities are/were grantees exposed to?
1.3   How do key 4Ps stakeholders perceive participation of grantees?

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[4] Preceded by *
[5] Interviewee A-S. Refer to Appendix 1 for fieldwork notes.

Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 A New Theory of Change? Poverty as a Human Rights Issue

Through the years, ending poverty has been at the core of development interventions in the Global South (Laderchi et al. 2003: 243). There is, however, no universal definition of poverty. In Poverty as Ideology, Fischer emphasizes that the money-metric approach remains the most popular way of defining and measuring it (2018: 60). It speaks about well-being quantified by economists through income, consumption, and welfare. Following this approach, Wagle explains that poverty is classified as absolute and relative. Being in absolute poverty involves living on the $1 a day of income poverty line, hence not having the basic means to survive; while being in relative poverty means lagging the income of other people in a particular community (Wagle 2018: 184-186).

With a tangible and easily measurable proxy to wellbeing, which is money, it makes sense why the money-metric approach is dominant in policymaking. As it is the dominant approach, it is logical why economic growth is regarded as a key determinant to alleviate poverty (Marks 2017: 2). What is problematic, however, is that this approach reduces the meaning of wellbeing to money. What is lacking in poverty as an economic issue are the human faces behind, the more in-depth stories that tell us more about poverty.

Irene Khan stresses that poverty is beyond economics and struggles of the poor like voicelessness and exclusion should be framed as human rights issues (2009: 8). As Bantekas and Oette emphasize, human rights are inherent, equal, and inalienable (2016:17). This means that according to the letter of the law, there are no prerequisites to having certain rights besides being human; and that these rights are interconnected. Specifically, Articles 1 and 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)[6] outline that people are born free and equal, all with the right to a dignified life; while Article 25 codifies the right to an adequate standard of living. When people live in poverty, however, they lack the means to assert these fundamental rights. Because of the disadvantages of being poor, they lack the power to claim what is rightfully theirs in the first place. What keeps them poor, therefore, is not just lack of money but an outright deprivation of human rights. For this reason, Khan insists on framing poverty as a human rights issue and alleviating poverty by addressing human rights. Doing so creates a framework where poor people have a voice to claim human rights from a government whose duty is to fulfil them (2009: 13).

This gradual understanding of poverty as a human rights issue can be dated back to the establishment of the mandate on extreme poverty by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 1998 and its transition to the Human Rights Council in 2006[7]. In recent years, however, various scholars have framed poverty as a human right violation (Pogge 2007; Chong 2011; Papandreou 2016). While some international organizations like the United Nations and some scholars support Khan's framework, Donald and Mottershaw emphasize that governments are rarely guided by human rights principles when tackling poverty (2009: 6) possibly because the money-metric approach is still dominant.

Poverty as a human rights issue, therefore, is admittedly not yet a widely accepted approach. It is, however, a new theory of change that has increasingly informed human rights advocates but more importantly governments in their implementation of social protection

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[6] Refer to https://www.ohchr.org/en/udhr/documents/udhr_translations/eng.pdf.
[7] Refer to https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Welcomepage.aspx.

policies and programs. Recognizing poverty as a human rights violation puts people – not economic outcomes – at the core of the fight against poverty. Framing it as a serious human rights issue potentially makes a much stronger case to hold signatories of the UDHR accountable, which gives more power to the poor to demand what is due them. While this is a new paradigm, its gained support so far has informed some recent policymaking orders including social protection.

2.2 Targeted Social Protection to Reduce Poverty

Social protection "encompasses a sub-set of public actions, carried out by the state or privately, that address risk, vulnerability, and chronic poverty" which is usually classified into three components: social insurance, social assistance, and (labour market) regulation (Slater 2008: 9). It must be made clear that not all social protection systems aim at reducing poverty. With that said and having established alleviating poverty as a central development objective, this paper focuses on social assistance which more closely contributes to it. As stated by Slater, social assistance comes in the form of targeted transfers based on one's poverty or vulnerability (2008: 9). Conditional cash transfers are famous examples of which, and the next section engages with the logic that guides these programs.

2.2.1 The logic of CCTs: Deserving poor, women at the centre of the poverty agenda, graduation

Originating from Latin America, cash transfers rose during the global economic crisis in the 1990s and have now been disseminated to other countries (Hanlon et al. 2010: 38). Part of such dissemination is the attachment of conditions to the transfers, hence the name CCTs. These programs are among famous targeted social protection schemes, specifically social assistance, that "link safety nets directly to human capital development, by making receipt of the transfer conditional on school attendance and health-care check-ups" (Handa and Davis 2006: 513).

Perhaps the most persuasive argument in support of CCTs relates to how they potentially hit two birds with one stone. Ibarrarán notes that they address both current and future poverty (2017: 1). It has also been widely reported that over the last two decades, CCTs have positively contributed to household consumption, education and health outcomes, and reducing poverty (Fiszbein and Schady 2009: 12-16). Furthermore, proponents claim that the added value of CCTs today is an empowerment component. According to Casco et al., "the scope of CCTs is not limited to giving financial aid to the extremely poor, but also in empowering poor households through social activities that would help them mitigate poverty in the future" (2015: 12). Despite these praises, CCTs remain heavily criticized. Criticisms deemed necessary in this study, however, do not aim to debunk reported quantifiable effects of CCTs. Instead, the norms behind these programs are challenged.

Firstly, this paper focuses on the notion of "deserving" versus "undeserving" poor that arises when targeting is applied in CCTs. Targeting is "any mechanism for identifying eligible (or 'needy') individuals and screening out the ineligible (or 'non-needy') for purposes of transferring resources, typically by defining eligibility criteria" (Devereux 1999: 61). In support, Jaramillo and Miranti argue that targeting works in maximizing resources by allocating them to the neediest (2015: 2). This explains why CCTs are often targeted to those whom policymakers regard as "poorest of the poor". To critics of targeting, this act of discriminating between the poor and the non-poor results to segregation, inclusion and exclusion errors, as well as high administrative costs (Srivastava 2004; Mkandawire 2005).

Hanlon et al. (2010) also add that targeting entails both an economic and political choice. The former is concerned with whom to give transfers to in order to best meet policy goals, while the latter is informed by the more popular decision (Hanlon et al. 2010: 98). Viewing poverty as a human rights issue, however, this paper perceives the targeting dilemma beyond these administrative costs, selection errors, and economic or political choices. More seriously, it sees it as a human rights dilemma. On one hand, even if targeting claims to reach the poorest, there is no guarantee that CCT beneficiaries exercise as much rights than non-beneficiaries. On the other hand, targeting also does not reach every poor individual, which lessens their chances of enjoying certain rights that others enjoy.

Secondly, this work examines CCTs' gender component as women are placed at the centre of the poverty agenda. Not only are CCTs targeted to the so-called poorest of the poor. They are also customarily targeted to women (Molyneux 2006; Molyneux and Thomson 2011; Sepúlveda 2014). This is for they are viewed as responsible individuals who care for their children's health and education; and directly receiving transfers should empower them (Holmes et al. 2010: 3). These two points, however, are strongly disputed. Molyneux believes that targeting women reinforces traditional gender roles (2006: 440), which involves confining women to mothering their children and being the sole providers of care. Jenson supports this by saying that while targeting women shows gender awareness, this does not translate into gender equality (2009: 472). Like Jenson, this research sees value in the effort of CCTs to at least include gender awareness. Women's vulnerability informs a poverty agenda where they are effectively located at the centre. What seems problematic, however, is how CCTs suggest that the only way to keep women at the centre of it is to re-institutionalize gendered roles that make them vulnerable, to begin with.

Thirdly, this paper critically approaches the notion of graduation. It must be stressed that CCTs are not permanent entitlements to the "deserving poor". As Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler explain, "graduation means leaving a social protection program after reaching a wellbeing threshold" (2015: 1). Graduating or exiting a program can happen when beneficiaries of the transfers reach a certain age or finish school, when selection systems no longer identify households as poor enough to qualify, and/or when households receive other sustainable social protection services (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2015: 2-3). Kidd argues that the idea of graduation reflects how governments see transfers: handouts (2013: 3); which informs policymakers' fear of creating dependency from social assistance (Daidone et al. 2015: 100). Given these remarks, graduation seems as problematic as targeting. It goes back to the notion of "deserving" and "undeserving" poor; only this time, people need to prove that they are "deserving" to stay in the program. Some may ask: Why would people want to stay in such program? This research argues that seeking permanence in the program is not a case of dependency, but rather a rightful claim. The UDHR's codification of the right to an adequate standard of living, which CCTs help achieve, does not discriminate between the "deserving" and the "undeserving". This also applies to other rights which everyone is entitled to. The concept of graduation then brings into question how certain rights seem to end when people graduate from CCT programs.

2.2.2 Moral obligation of the poor attached to CCTs

As already established, CCTs are targeted to the "deserving poor" who – in the normative understanding of these programs – happen to be mostly women. Next to identifying them, the normative nature of CCTs points to having them meet obligations in order to remain "deserving" of the transfers until they graduate. These obligations are known as conditionalities, which, as mentioned earlier, usually involve making mothers responsible for keeping children healthy and in school. Hanlon et al. contest imposing such conditionalities, believing that they are in place "because of an implicit or explicit assumption that poor people

do not act in the best interests of themselves and their children and must be pressured to do so" (2010: 137). This argument has a logical basis, as Fiszbein and Schady justify making use of conditionalities by saying that people do not invest in human capital enough and that interventions leading to a so-called good behaviour are more likely to be supported (2009: 8-9).

Pondering on these conditionalities, a moral conceptualization of poverty appears. It is as if poverty existed because of the moral failings of the poor, which Sepúlveda (2014) and Wacquant (2009) heavily criticize. Sepúlveda agrees that this prejudice against the poor informs imposing strict policy requirements, which in turn reinforces not only poverty but also a denial of dignity (2014: 5-6). Wacquant also believes that by viewing poverty as a moral failing, the state takes on a paternalistic role which involves closely regulating the poor and providing sanctions if necessary (2004: 59). Agreeing with these two critics, such moral conceptualization of poverty has serious implications for poverty alleviation. This approach to poverty divides the population into "deserving" and "undeserving", according to the logic of CCTs. Beyond the weeding out of the "undeserving", the paternalistic state seems punitive as it works by ensuring that conditionalities are met and that those who do not fulfil them are removed from the program. Against this backdrop, this work critically examines the normative approach dominant in CCTs and whether it views poor people as citizens with rights or simply beneficiaries with obligations to fulfil.

2.3 Elements of Participation and Power in Human Rights-Based Approaches

The fundamental theory guiding this study is that poverty is a human rights issue. As it is such, there is a need to address it using HRBAs in which participation and power are key elements. Before explaining in detail these two key elements, it is important to discuss what HRBAs entail; as they might help integrate rights to poverty alleviation strategies. Gauri and Gloppen define HRBAs as "principles that justify demands against privileged actors, made by the poor or those speaking on their behalf" (2012: 3). In support, Rand and Watson believe that this approach involves "building rights holders' capacity to claim their rights and duty-bearers' ability to meet their obligations" (2007: 4). In the context of social protection, Sepúlveda argues that HRBAs include transparency and access to information so that beneficiaries can directly participate in various aspects of a program (2014: 12). What all these suggest is that for HRBAs to be effective in poverty alleviation, it requires a kind of partnership between stakeholders that sees beneficiaries first with human rights and second with a legitimate reason to claim them.

Approaching poverty as a human rights issue, this work finds value in HRBAs and more value in their integration in the poverty agenda. These approaches debunk the notion of "deserving" and "undeserving" poor as they are deeply rooted in human rights principles that do not discriminate between the two. The role of HRBAs in the context of poverty alleviation is to make beneficiaries capable of rights promotion amidst risks of challenging power structures; and this can be facilitated when people are seen as "active agents of their own development" (Rand and Watson 2007: 16-20). Being active agents in one's development includes taking on a role not only in programs but also in political and public affairs that have significant implications for one's life. HRBAs, by putting people at the centre, potentially provide insight into the lived experiences and stories of those living in poverty. This is, of course, a potential outcome. While HRBAs address human rights principles in theory, its effectiveness in practice specifically in social protection systems remains uncertain.

2.3.1 Participation and its different typologies

Besides being an element of HRBAs, it must be stressed that participation is a human right to begin with. When exercised, it potentially leads to people's ability to inform policies and decisions crucial in the fulfilment of their other rights. While this work agrees with Sepúlveda's claims on the importance of participation in HRBAs, it also agrees with Molyneux that participation is not only meant for program-based affairs (2017: 102). For possibly better outcomes, it is worthy to consider participation of beneficiaries beyond specific programs.

The right to participation in political and public affairs, at least in theory, addresses the voicelessness of marginalized groups including those that are living in poverty. The UDHR, which preceded the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Cultural, Social Rights (ICESCR), is in place to guarantee that everyone has a voice. Specifically, Article 21 of the UDHR explicitly states the right to take part in government, the right to freedom of opinion and expression (Article 19), and the right to assembly and association (Article 20).[8] Article 25 of the ICCPR[9] and the Human Rights Committee in General Comment 25[10] also codify this right. These provisions attest that "individuals have a right to express their views freely, to organize, to assemble peacefully, and to make their views known" (Khan 2009: 14). These views pertain to what people have to say about policies and decisions being made on their behalf. Such views, however, cannot be translated into claims without participatory channels which the public can navigate through.

Participation is seen as both as a means and a goal. Participation is a means during consultation and implementation of programs; and a goal when the process leads to people empowerment (de Wit 2001: 4). Aside from its codification in the UDHR, participation has become a development buzzword. Perhaps the strongest argument explaining its popularity is the poor's transformation as "champions of development" (Berner and Phillips 2003: 2); hence the need for their participation not only within programs but also in other affairs affecting them. This work does not contest such claim, let alone the positive and hopeful impacts that the theory of participation brings. However, in analysing participation of grantees in political and public affairs affecting their lives, it is the practice that deserves critical attention. It is no longer a question of who knows the problems best, but a matter of making sure that the process by which participation is done does not make societal problems worse. In the context of poverty alleviation, the debate on the effectiveness of participation is concerned with its ability to address forms of exclusion that perpetuate poverty. This is why problematizing the process of participation in poverty alleviation programs is essential.

In their critique of the participatory theory, Gomez et al. (2010) classify participation as ritualistic, exploitation, exclusive, and substitute. Participation is said to be ritualistic when it is done only to formally impose decisions already made by experts (Gomez et al. 2010: 15). In exploitative participation, people participate by means of contributing with money or labour (Gomez et al. 2010: 16). Exclusive participation, meanwhile, involves only a few people representing the rest of the community (Gomez et al. 2010: 16). Lastly, substitute participation pertains to having hierarchical intervention which must veer away from manipulation in order to reflect the views of the community (Gomez et al. 2010: 17). With the concept of participation still relatively new in the implementation of social protection schemes like CCTs, it is uncertain what typologies are in practice. If the process of participation resembles one of these, then HRBAs are undermined as these typologies of

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[8] Refer to https://www.ohchr.org/en/udhr/documents/udhr_translations/eng.pdf.
[9] Refer to https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/ccpr.pdf.
[10] Refer to https://www.equalrightstrust.org/ertdocumentbank/general%20comment%2025.pdf.

participation are all problematic in significant ways. Ritualistic, exploitative, exclusive, or substitute, participation might fail to reflect people's views if manipulation by more powerful actors occurs. Participation might also constitute an additional burden to those who participate in these programs and even reinforce forms of exclusion, thus failing to deliver the promise of empowering marginalized groups. CCT beneficiaries also carry the moral obligation to fulfil conditionalities of the program. If participation becomes one of these conditionalities, it is hard to assess whether participation is genuine or something that is only forced. Finally, it is worth considering the reconciliation of the concept of graduation from social assistance and sustainability of participation. Targeted beneficiaries are expected to exit the program one day, which is at odds with the notion of sustainability of participation. Participation could be considered sustainable when grantees are still part of the process even after exiting the program.

2.3.2 Power dynamics

This work finds relevance in using Gaventa's power cube in analysing the power dynamics in a multi-stakeholder intervention like CCTs. Understanding power through this cube involves making sense of the interplay of its forms, levels, and spaces (Gaventa and Martorano 2016: 15). While the theory of participation claims to put voices of the people at its core, HRBAs also recognize that they are not the sole actors involved. In CCTs, there are governments, policymakers, donors, development workers, and beneficiaries interacting with one another. It can be inferred that stakeholders make use of the complex language of power as they engage themselves in different typologies of participation.
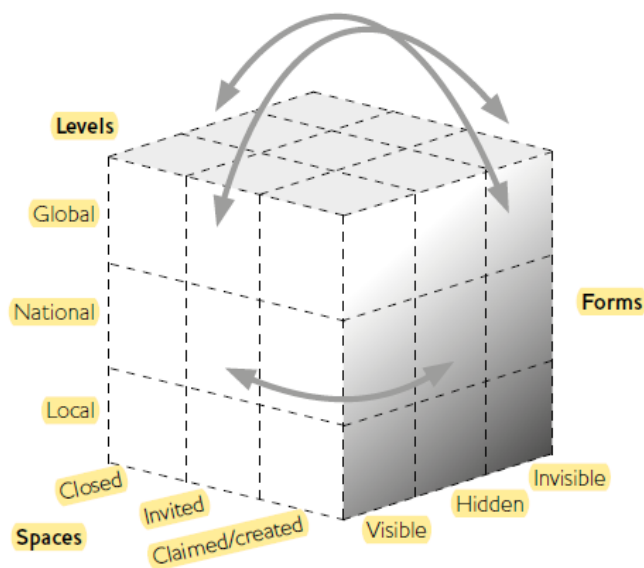
Figure 2.1 The Power Cube

Source: Gaventa (2006)

In terms of form, power can be distinguished as visible, hidden, or invisible. Visible power is "what can be seen in the more open and observable aspects of the political process" (Gaventa and Martorano 2016: 15). CCT beneficiaries may exercise visible power when they engage in program-related activities, as well as processes of elections and other institutionalized affairs. Hidden power, meanwhile, involves key actors "shaping what issues and decisions enter the public arena" (Gaventa and Martorano 2016: 15-16). In CCTs, for instance, the creation of targeting mechanisms, the identification of conditionalities, and the whole logic of CCTs can be considered as decisions by power elites made away from the

public eye. This work also argues that even the use of social accountability measures in participation came into force through the exercise of hidden power. Through the invisible form of power, which includes "how (power) affects people's perceptions of what constitutes a legitimate grievance or issue for action" (Gaventa and Martorano 2016: 16), CCT beneficiaries are made to adopt the thinking shaped by power elites, e.g. international financial organizations such as the World Bank. In beneficiaries' practice of social accountability, for example, airing grievances regarding governments' service delivery has a lot to do with the influence of some other stakeholders' perceptions. While this example may be positive in terms of achieving HRBAs' goal of building a partnership between right holders and duty bearers, the exercise of hidden and invisible power becomes problematic when the shaped norms are flawed.

Levels of power, meanwhile, pertain to where power is exercised; and it ranges from local, national, to global (Gaventa and Martorano 2016: 17). In line with Gomez et al.'s critique of participation having a hierarchy, stakeholders in CCTs experience power in different levels. Given the role of international finance in shaping and disseminating CCTs, their global power is recognized especially by policymakers and government agencies whose level of power ranges between national and local. While this work expects voices of CCT beneficiaries to be amplified beyond the local level, it also recognizes that participation being new in this context does not guarantee it. When beneficiaries are made to accept the notion of "deserving" and "underserving poor", the gendered roles of mothers, and their moral obligation, then it undermines the potential of participation to address the vulnerabilities of marginalized groups.

Lastly, the spaces of power can be closed, invited, and claimed. In closed spaces, decisions are in the hands of power elites without the public knowing (Gaventa and Martorano 2016: 19). Related to hidden power, this means decision-making behind closed doors which again does not necessarily reflect people's views on issues. In invited spaces, "the public and policymakers come together for consultation and public dialogue" (Gaventa and Martorano 2016: 20). While this work sees potential in such engagement, it also recognizes limitations in levelling the playing field and ensuring that the public's involvement translates into relevant policy implications. Finally, power can also be claimed by people in spaces where they can create a social movement themselves (Gaventa and Martorano 2016: 20). Gaventa and Martorano believe that people claim space when invited spaces are not enough to address their concerns (2016: 20). In CCTs, it is uncertain whether HRBAs can lead to beneficiaries claiming power to such extent or to invited spaces being effective enough that no need for claimed spaces arises. All these uncertainties speak about the value in problematizing the process of participation in this policy in question.

This research flags the value in the integration of HRBAs and inclusion of participatory channels in poverty alleviation. It is also not dismissive of the potentials of the participatory theory. However, given the normative nature of CCTs, it finds intriguing how participation can meet the goals of HRBAs in practice. Beneficiaries – mostly women – having to fulfil conditionalities is a normative approach that indicates power of other stakeholders over them. Power, therefore, is central to HRBAs and its emphasis on participation. It determines who participate, why they participate, and how they do it. If we think about power, the moral obligations attached to CCTs, and emphasis on graduation, it can be said that the genuineness and the sustainability of participation are uncertain. This brings into question the process of participation, as participation could either be a genuine exercise of a human right or simply another string attached to CCTs. If it is the latter, participation – given its different typologies and the logic of CCTs presented – might not be sufficient to addresses exclusion and could further reinforce powerlessness of marginalized groups. It is then no longer a matter of identifying whether programs like CCTs increase participation, but an investigation of how

it is done and what it leads to. It is the process of participation itself which needs to be problematized. By doing so, this research engages with the potentials of participation that could be maximized and what limitations should be addressed.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Identifying the Who, Where, When, How, and What of Data Collection and Empirical Analysis

Answering the fundamental questions of who, where, when, how, and what contributes to a clear methodological plan (O'leary 2004: 94). Guided by this, I justify in this chapter the methodological choices that I made as I saw fit in the given context.

Who: I identified the following four groups to be interviewed: 1) current, former, and likely grantees of the program; 2) municipal and village leaders; and 3) representatives of the involved government agencies namely DSWD, Department of Health (DOH), and Department of Education (DepEd); and 4) representatives of involved CSOs. I selected these heterogeneous groups to help me advance comparison in line with my multi-stakeholder approach to answering my research questions.

Firstly, as defined by law, grantees are "the most responsible members of the qualified household-beneficiary authorized to receive the CCT" (Republic Act 11310 2019: 3). While grantees are not the sole beneficiaries of the program, they are the ones who primarily take on the role of meeting conditionalities. For this reason and a limited amount of time, I decided to stick to interviewing grantees instead of including other beneficiaries. Secondly, I considered that the potential contribution to the research by the second group would be telling the perspectives of the local government unit concerned. As these officials may be considered the local elites, I figured that engaging with them would help in exploring power relations affecting participation. The third and fourth groups that I identified involved representatives of government agencies and CSOs. I regarded interaction with them as significant as it would allow for understanding the position of those who plan, coordinate, implement, and monitor the program.

In terms of sampling strategy, I struggled with identifying grantees. As I failed to gain access to the country's Listahanan or obtain from DSWD a list of grantees, I relied on the information readily available through my network. I used hand-picked sampling which is a non-random sampling technique involving "the selection of a sample with a particular purpose in mind" (O'leary 2014: 190). With 29 parent leaders on the said list, I chose 11 possible respondents to start with, having the purpose of getting all 11 villages represented. While I planned before fieldwork to identify samples based on factors like the number of children, level of education, marital status, and main occupation, it did not materialize as I did not have such information. Instead, I decided based on my familiarity with the parent leaders. Of those I hand-picked, only six agreed to participate in the study.

From that starting point, I used snowball sampling, which is another non-random sampling technique that "involves building a sample through referrals" (O'leary 2014: 190). I used this technique because the population or "the total membership of a defined class of people" (O'leary 2014: 182) turned out to be difficult to identify and access. I then asked every respondent to recommend fellow grantees who can also participate in the study. This technique pointed me to current and former grantees alike. Without information pertaining to likely grantees, I decided to drop the group and limit the first group of potential respondents to only current and former grantees. Given the referrals, I continued hand-picked sampling informed by the roles of grantees (parent leader or member) and their locations.

I interviewed 23 respondents: 13 total grantees (eight current and five former), five local government unit officials, three representatives of involved government agencies, and two

members of involved civil society organizations. Of the 13 grantees, all are women which reflects the program logic as discussed in Chapter 2.

Where: It must be mentioned that before fieldwork, I planned to refrain from conducting house-to-house interviews. This was an attempt to anonymize grantees whose status in the program might be affected by participating in the study. Given the size of the villages and preference of grantees, however, this did not materialize. In some instances, I met with grantees in public places like a community waiting shed, gymnasium, park, and canteen. Nevertheless, in most cases, I travelled to different villages to reach grantees' and even some local leaders' houses or workplaces.

When and How: Timeframe indeed needs to fit one's research methods (O'leary 2004: 95). As I only had two months to spend in the Philippines, it was crucial to employ doable methods to collect data. For my empirical analysis, meanwhile, I made use of mixed methods: quantitative and qualitative. For the quantitative part, I did a descriptive analysis of secondary data on economic growth and poverty trends in the Philippines, as well as the coverage of the program. Presented in Chapter 4, this was done to set the context of poverty informing the need for social assistance and situate the national policy in question. For the qualitative part as shown in Chapter 5, I drew secondary data from relevant policy documents and reports to further the analysis. Besides, I made use of primary data in the form of semi-structured and in-depth interviews with 23 respondents to capture narratives related to my research questions. While I mostly did face-to-face interviews, it must also be noted that two interviews took place over the phone via video chat.

What: To operationalize participation in political and public affairs, I decided to structure interviews with the first group in such a way that could capture the following elements: specific activities during enhanced FDS and regular FDS, as well as their main takeaways from these; their participation in elections and experience in consultative processes, debates, and dialogues with government officials; and involvement in community-based assemblies and associations. I chose the said proxies for participation in political and public affairs for they are in line with Article 25 of the ICCPR which was elaborated in General Comment 25 by the Human Rights Committee. However, to avoid limiting participatory terms only to these activities which may appear as a way of imposing such idea to the grantees, I asked them to mention other means of participation which they value and find essential to their development. For the second and third group, meanwhile, interviews were designed for them to describe the participation of grantees, their relationship with grantees, and their insights on and response to acts of participation taken. This was done to test power relations embedded in participatory channels in place.

3.2 Navigating Fieldwork Challenges with Multiple Researcher Identities

The success of fieldwork depends on access to data, key informants, and respondents. Having been previously affiliated with the program, I was initially confident of my ability to achieve these essential things. When I started my fieldwork, however, it turned out to be more challenging and complicated than expected.

Doing my fieldwork involved wearing different hats and carrying multiple identities. I dealt with being a former facilitator of the program, a researcher, and an average citizen. Although at times uncomfortable, making use of these helped me navigate challenges that I faced in the field (Ng 2011: 452) so that I could meet the needs of both myself and my respondents (Lavis 2010: 328).

Being an average citizen made it easier for me to empathize with grantees. However, it delayed my research process in terms of gaining access to information and reaching

respondents. For instance, it took me a month to navigate the bureaucratic processes involved in researching with DSWD. They also denied me access to the list of 4Ps grantees in Tayum, Abra which put me in a position of not knowing whom to interview until I used my network. Because of my previous role, I gained access to my former organization's list of grantees from which I identified my respondents. It was also through the gatekeeping of my network that I easily interviewed local government officials. It is important to flag the kind of information I could access and the people I could talk to because of my previous engagement. Had I been solely an average citizen or a researcher, my methodology would not have been as doable as it turned out.

Nevertheless, despite having multiple identities playing to my advantage, some fieldwork challenges seemed beyond my control. I managed to conduct interviews with only 23 individuals against the target of 30. I also covered only 10 out of 11 villages. The main issues that affected reaching the target number were potential respondents' non-availability and non-willingness to participate, striking of typhoons during the fieldwork, and security threats in some areas. I reached out to grantees either via telephone or house-to-house visits. Some refused to participate as they had work to do; while some former grantees said no as they noted that they no longer belonged in the program. I also failed to interview some grantees due to poor weather conditions during my fieldwork. Moreover, security threats like shooting incidents[11] and recent election-related violence[12] made me drop risky locations including one entire village.

While I do not claim that my methodological approach led to something representative of the whole population, it resulted in different narratives on participation which became essential in advancing my intended multi-stakeholder analysis. Lastly, the variance of respondents and richness of data gathered made up for missed interviews; hence the decision to end fieldwork and proceed with the available information.

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[11] Refer to https://www.rappler.com/nation/237599-shootings-separate-incidents-abra-august-10-11-2019.

[12] Refer to https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/05/12/19/10-election-related-incidents-recorded-in-abra-police-military-on-full-alert.

Chapter 4 Zooming in on the Case

Knowing where the Philippine stands in terms of economic growth and poverty incidence helps in making sense of why social assistance like CCTs is needed. In addition, the policy context can be better set and understood by explaining both 4Ps and Project I-Pantawid in Tayum, Abra.

4.1 Economic Growth and Poverty in the Philippines
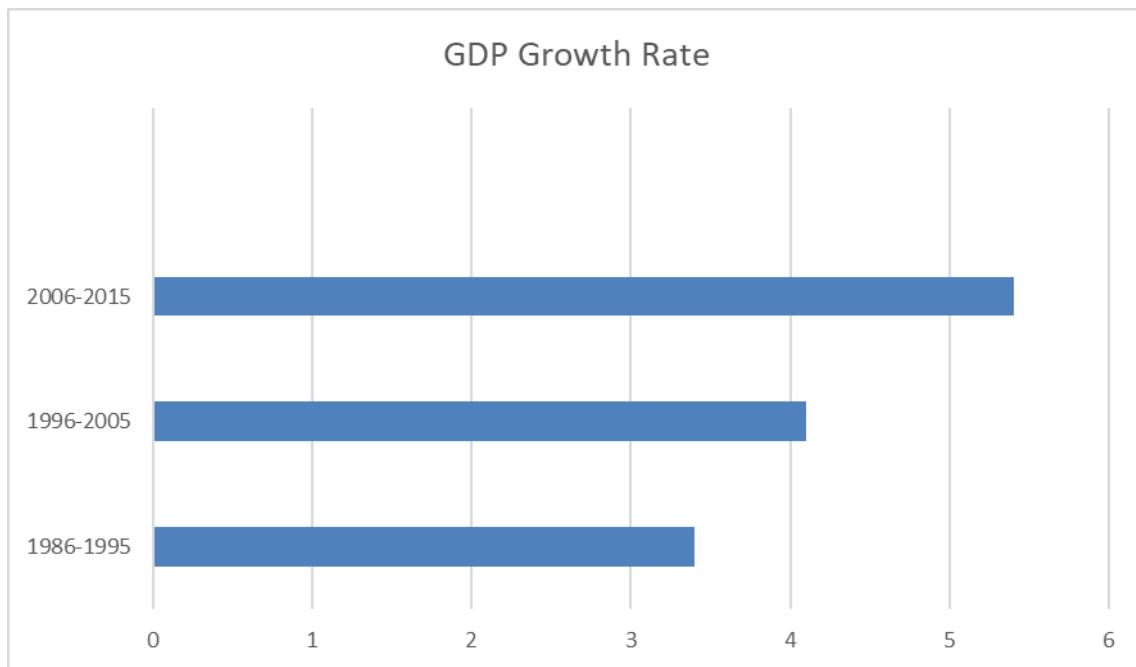
Figure 4.1 GDP Growth Rate

Data Source: World Bank (2018)

The Philippines has experienced sustained economic growth over the past decades. The World Bank notes that in the 2006-2015 period, the GDP reached 5.4 per cent which is higher than 3.4 per cent in 1986-2995 and 4.1 per cent in 1996-2005 (2018:18). This economic growth is said to have been boosted by the country's higher international reserves, healthy current account surpluses, stable inflation, and declining debt ratios (World Bank 2018: 18). As an effect, there has been a decrease in the poverty rate which is attributed to factors like increase in wage income and movement of employment out of agriculture, remittances from domestic and foreign sources, and government transfers which mainly include transfers from the 4Ps (World Bank 2018: 4). While it is true that the economy is faring well and the poverty rate decreased, the poverty incidence remains high.

Figure 4.2 Poverty Incidence
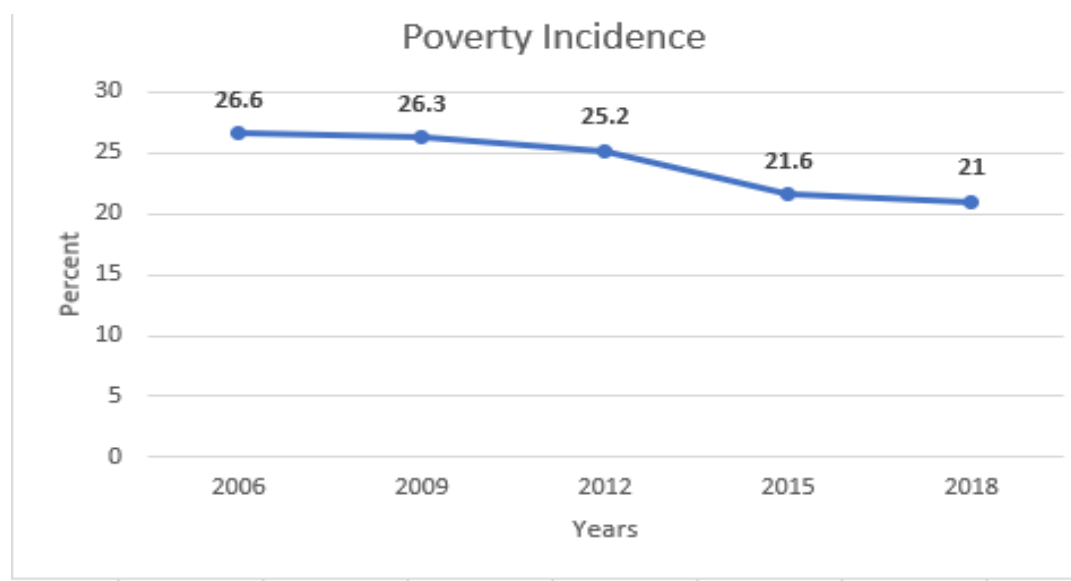
Data Source: Philippine Statistics Authority

As seen in Graph 4.2, the poverty incidence in the Philippines declined by almost 6 per cent in the past 12 years. However, 21.0 per cent of the population still living below the per capita poverty threshold has serious policy implications. While these recent trends show that poverty reduces as the economy rises, there is more work to do to lift people out of poverty. One of those strategies adopted by the government and supported by this paper is the expansion of poverty alleviation programs like cash transfers.

4.2 The 4Ps Explained

Piloted in 2007, the 4Ps is now one of the largest CCTs worldwide as it covers more than 4 million households (Tsai 2018: 6). From an initial budget of Php 4 million in its pilot year, it increased to Php 62.2 billion in 2014 (Acosta and Velarde 2015: 1). It was also reported that DSWD proposed a budget of Php 89 billion for the program for the 2018 period (Maribojoc 2017). As the program is now institutionalized by virtue of RA 11310 signed in April of 2017, it is expected of the 4Ps to reach more households that meet eligibility requirements outlined in the law.

As stipulated in RA 11310, otherwise known as An Act Institutionalizing the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, household beneficiaries must meet the following conditionalities to receive cash grants and keep their enrolment in the program:

"(a) Pregnant women must avail of prenatal services, give birth in a health facility attended by a skilled health professional, and receive post-partum care and post-natal care for her newborn;

(b) Children zero (0) to five (5) years old must receive regular preventive health and nutrition services including check-ups and vaccinations;

(c) Children one (1) to fourteen (14) years old must avail of deworming pills at least twice a year;

(d) Children three (3) to four (4) years old must attend daycare or pre-school classes at least eighty-five percent (85%) of their time;

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(e) Children five (5) to eighteen (18) years old must attend elementary or secondary classes at least eighty-five percent (85% of their time; and

(f) At least one responsible person must attend family development sessions conducted by DSWD, at least once a month" (RA 11310 2019: 7).

As also stated in the said law, the following schemes shall be observed as household beneficiaries comply with the abovementioned conditionalities:

"(a) Conditional cash transfer grant per child enrolled in daycare and elementary programs shall not be lower than Three hundred pesos (Php 300.00) per month per child for a maximum of ten (10) months per year;

b) Conditional cash transfer grant per child enrolled in junior high school shall not be lower than Five hundred pesos (Php 500.00) per month per child for a maximum of ten (10) months per year;

c) Conditional cash transfer grant per child enrolled in senior high school shall not be lower than Seven hundred pesos (Php 700.00) per month per child for a maximum of ten (10) months per year; and

d) Health and nutrition grant shall not be lower than Seven hundred fifty (Php 750) per month for a maximum of twelve (12) months per year" (RA 11310 2019: 5)".

In case of non-compliance, qualified household-beneficiaries shall be notified. If they persist in failing meeting the conditionalities within a year of receiving formal notice, they shall be officially removed from the program (RA 11310 2019: 7). The FDS, meanwhile, is said to be attached to the health component of the program. While grantees do not receive cash transfers from their attendance of the FDS nor get delisted from the program in the event of non-attendance, their attendance is required to be entitled to their cash transfers related to health (*M Barcelo 2019, personal communication, 28 August).

4.3 Brief Background of Tayum, Abra[13]

The municipality of Tayum is located in the west-central part of the landlocked province of Abra in Northern Philippines. In terms of political subdivision, Tayum has 11 villages[14] with one categorized as urban (Poblacion) and 10 classified as rural. According to the census by the Philippine Statistics Authority, its population size in 2015 reached 14,467. The total number of households recorded in the same year was 3,140 with an average household size of 4.61≈ 5 members. It is also on record that since the first census in 1903 to the latest one, the population has been increasing annually by 1.08 percent or 90 persons per year on average. This makes Tayum among the five most populated municipalities in Abra.

While it is only considered a fifth class municipality[15], it is faring better than its neighbours in terms of poverty incidence. It recorded 23.38 percent in 2012, lower than in previous years and significantly lower than the provincial poverty incidence of 37.40. This indicates that about 2 out of 10 people are considered poor. This is among the lowest in Abra, hence Tayum is considered among the least poor municipalities in the province.

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[13] All information in this section was drawn from Tayum's Comprehensive Land Use Plan for 2016 to 2025, Municipality of Tayum, Abra, The Philippines (unpublished).
[14] Locally known as "*barangay.*"
[15] This is the classification for municipalities with an average annual income of at least Php 30,000,000 but less than Php 40,000,000.
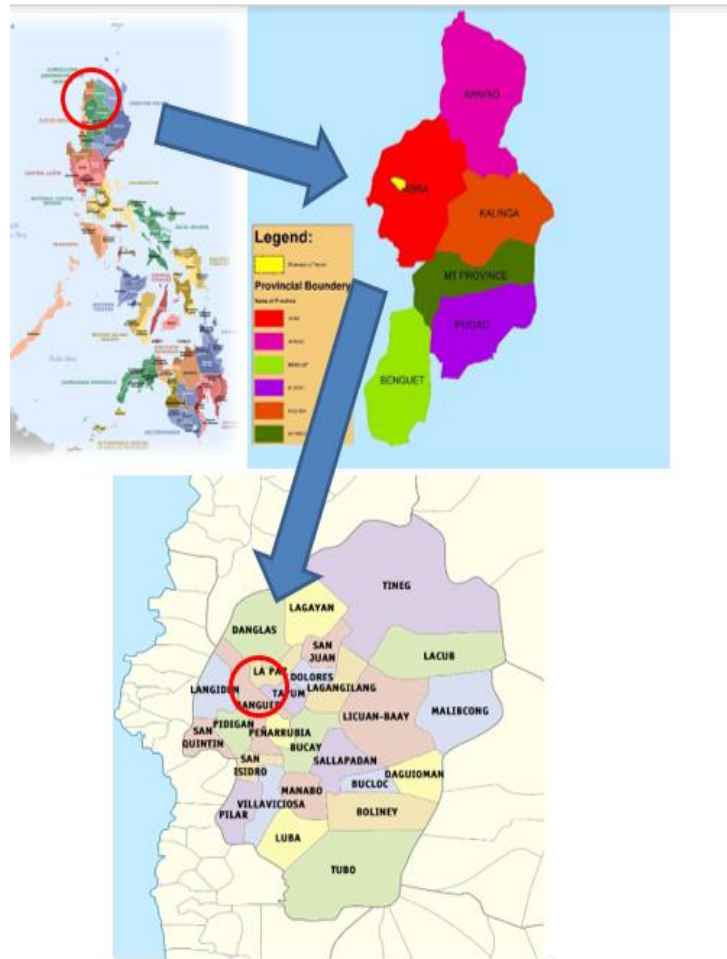
Map 4.1 Location Map of Tayum, Abra

Source: Tayum Municipal Planning and Development Office
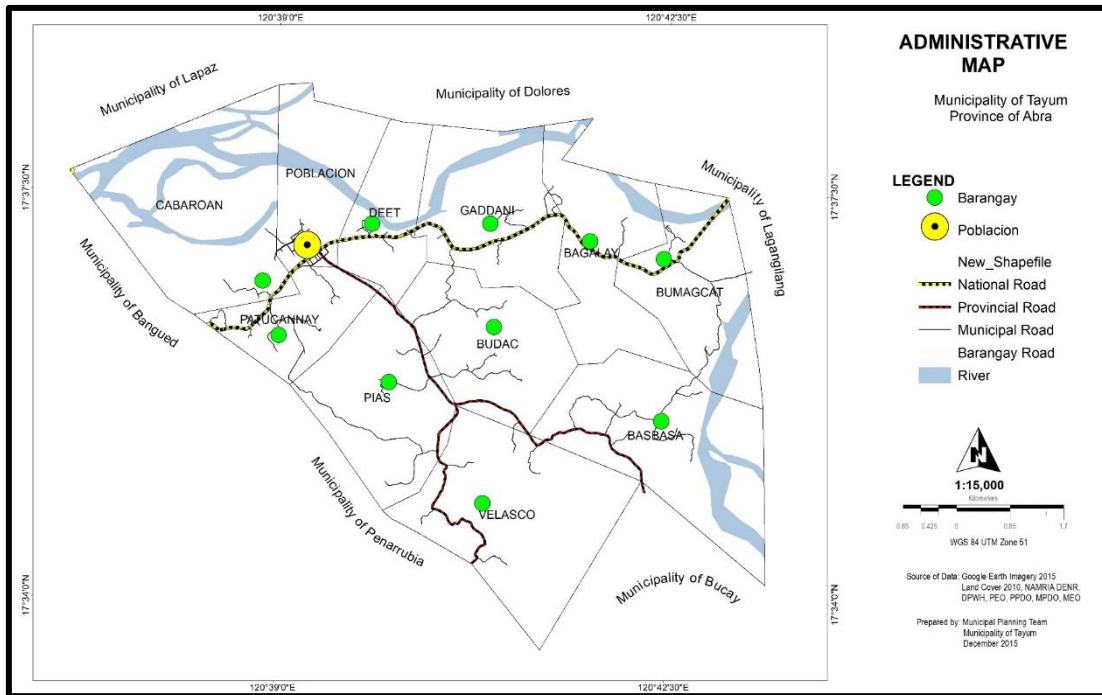
Map 4.2 Administrative Map of Tayum, Abra

Source: Tayum Municipal Planning and Development Office

4.4 The 4Ps and Project I-Pantawid Implementation in Tayum, Abra

Based on DSWD's Pantawid Pamilya Information System (PPIS), a total of 716 households in Tayum are enlisted in the program as of 31 August 2019 (DSWD Cordillera, personal communication, 20 August 2019). Illustrating this paper's explanation of targeting mechanisms customarily catering to women, Table 4.1 shows that there are indeed more female than male grantees. Out of 716 in total, 490 households have female grantees (68 percent) while only 226 (32 percent) have male ones.

Active Household Beneficiaries in Tayum, Abra by Sex of Grantees

Village	Female	Male	Grand Total
Bagalay	40	12	52
Basbasa	41	23	64
Budac	52	27	79
Bumagcat	24	12	36
Cabaroan	30	16	46
Deet	27	16	43
Gaddani	37	20	57
Patucannay	40	25	65
Pias	54	23	77
Poblacion	82	19	101
Velasco	63	33	96
Grand Total	**490**	**226**	**716**

Table 4.1 Total Beneficiaries According to Grantees' Sex

Data Source: DSWD's PPIS

Percentage of Grantees by Sex
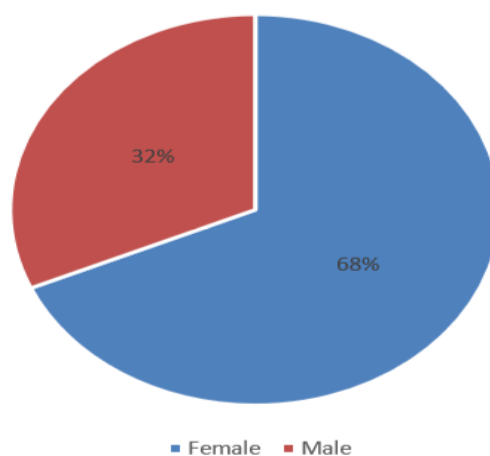
Figure 4.3 Percentage of Grantees by Sex

Data Source: DSWD's PPIS

While there are more female grantees, which again is the case in CCTs elsewhere, Table 4.2 shows that household beneficiaries in Tayum are predominantly headed by males. Out of 716 total households, 680 are considered male-headed while only 34 are headed by females. This is equivalent to a difference of around 95 per cent to 5 per cent, which speaks highly of the traditional position of women in households.

Active Household Beneficiaries in Tayum, Abra by Sex of Household Head

Village	Female	Male	Grand Total
Bagalay	4	48	52
Basbasa	1	63	64
Budac	2	77	79
Bumagcat		36	36
Cabaroan	3	43	46
Deet	4	39	43
Gaddani	5	50	57
Patucannay	2	63	65
Pias	2	75	77
Poblacion	7	94	101
Velasco	4	92	96
Grand Total	**34**	**680**	**716**

Table 4.2 Total Beneficiaries According to Sex of Household Head

Data Source: DSWD's PPIS

PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS BY SEX
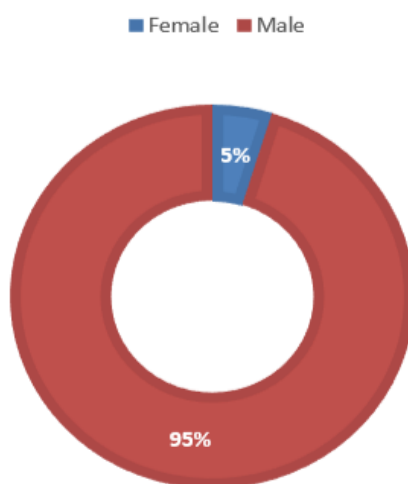
Figure 4.4 Percentage of Household Heads by Sex

Data Source: DSWD's PPIS

The abovementioned grantees, including the 13 women who took part in this research, experienced 4Ps differently with the implementation of Project I-Pantawid. The project, which amounted to a total grant of $800,000 from the World Bank, was in place in the municipality from November 20, 2015 until March 20, 2017 (Baltar 2019, personal interview)[16]. In a nutshell, the project development objective was to develop a model for civil

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[16] Personal interview with A. Baltar of CCAGG in Bangued, Abra, 22 July 2019

society and government partnership for the transparent and accountable implementation of the 4Ps (CCAGG 2018: 1-9; PTF 2018: 9). The Responsible Citizens and Empowered Communities in Solidarity for Social Change (RECITE), one of the partner organizations, expounds by enumerating the following as end of program objectives: 1) Strengthened integrity of the 4Ps; 2) Civil society and government partnership model; and 3) Established and functional constructive engagement between local government units, civil society organizations, and beneficiaries (RECITE 2018: 5).[17]

Of the four components of the project[18], it was Component 2 (Mobilization of Household Beneficiaries to Engage in Applied Social Accountability) that aimed to engage grantees in participatory processes. It was designed to "enhance the capacity of the parent leaders to become community mobilizers, organize the grantees to undertake social accountability activities, and engage with local governments to demand better social protection services" (CCAGG 2018: 10). In this context, social accountability was regarded as "an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, namely a situation whereby ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations participate directly or indirectly" in the process (World Bank n.d.: 3; RECITE 2018: 1).

In simpler terms, the key difference of the program (4Ps) and its parallel project (Project I-Pantawid) points to how FDS was conducted. As the Partnership for Transparency Fund (2018) mentions, the enhanced FDS was in place to mobilize grantees to "engage with government, to claim their rights, and to actively participate in community affairs". The FDS conducted by the (DSWD) in the whole 4Ps covers broader topics on family development while the enhanced FDS conducted by CSOs during Project I-Pantawid gave emphasis on social accountability and active citizenship (*Borja 2019, video interview)[19]. In addition, trained parent leaders facilitated FDS in Project I-Pantawid, which did not happen prior to the project (*Barcelo, video interview)[20].

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[17] RECITE (2018) 'Project Completion Report: Applied Social Accountability at Community Level' (Unpublished)
[18] Refer to Appendix 2.
[19] Video interview with *L. Borja of DSWD, 30 August 2019
[20] Video interview with *M. Barcelo of DSWD, 28 August 2019

Chapter 5 Findings and Discussion

To meet this research's goals, this quantitative analysis aims to address the core question: **With Project I-Pantawid of the 4Ps, how is participation of grantees conceptualized, practiced, and perceived by 4Ps stakeholders in Tayum, Abra?** The three sub-sections correspond to the three sub-questions; with the first concerned with the conceptualization of participation, the second with recent practices of participation, and the third with the perception of stakeholders on grantees' participation.

5.1 Analysing the Conceptualization of Participation

As mentioned earlier, the FDS is a component of the 4Ps in which participatory channels are introduced. In Tayum, where Project I-Pantawid enhanced the FDS, I found hints of the World Bank's idea of social accountability contributing to the conceptualization of participation by local stakeholders (See RECITE 2018). Based on RECITE's Project Completion Report (2018), it can be inferred that such idea of social accountability informed the design of the enhanced FDS by local CSOs who later partnered with grantees, local government units, and government agencies. With these sessions used to encourage 4Ps grantees to exercise their right to participate, it is important to examine the actual lessons given and how they illustrate the norms guiding the process of participation. Table 5.1 presents all topics covered throughout the project with their corresponding objectives.

Enhanced Family Development Sessions Modules

Month	eFDS Topic	Strengthened integrity of the 4Ps	Civil society and government partnership model	Engagement between LGUs, CSOs, and beneficiaries
1	How Pantawid Helps	✔		
2	Community Envisioning		✔	✔
3	Human Rights and Social Accountability		✔	✔
4	Citizen Participation in Governance		✔	✔
5	Social Contract			✔
6	Signing of the Social Contract			✔
7	Barangay (Village) Budgeting		✔	✔
8	Health is Wealth	✔	✔	✔
9	Interface Meeting on Health	✔	✔	✔
10	Importance of Education	✔	✔	✔
11	Interface Meeting on Education	✔	✔	✔
12	Moving out of Poverty			✔
13	Sharing of Good Character Habits			✔
14	Model Citizen, Model, Community			✔
15	Right to Vote			

Table 5.1 Enhanced Family Development Sessions Modules

(RECITE 2018: 6)[21]

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[21] Translated from local language

Figure 5.1, meanwhile, shows the cascading pattern involved. As I understood from RECITE's Project Completion Report (2018), after the crafting of these modules by involved CSOs, they were shared with parent leaders during monthly Parent Leader Training Activity. To continue, the parent leaders cascaded the modules to their member groups during monthly enhanced FDS. RECITE emphasizes that only those trained by the in-charge organization could do so (2016: 20). During these sessions, parent leaders were monitored, observed, and evaluated to ensure a "successful" transfer of lessons. When asked whether the grantees had a say in the modules, the organizations involved revealed that the modules were already prepared before project implementation. This means that the grantees did not have a say about the topics at all (Madriaga 2019, personal interview)[22]. While the parent leaders had the liberty to contextualize the lessons, "the core message was already presented to them" (Baltar 2019, personal interview).

Figure 5.1 Flow of Enhanced FDS in Project I-Pantawid

(RECITE 2018: 6)

Lastly, another key factor that speaks of the conceptualization of participation is the signed Social Contract in Session 5 of the enhanced FDS. When I asked how this came about, I was told that the content was based on the Community Vision that the grantees crafted in Session 4; only that it was YCCAGG who wrote it due to its technical form (A. Baltar, personal communication, 15 September 2019). Confirmed by a representative, YCCAGG consolidated and prepared the Social Contract before select parent leaders presented it to the local government unit of Tayum (M. Barbon, personal communication, 18 September 2019). Examining the document[23], I found that conceptualizing participation is geared at demanding basic social services. What is interesting besides this is that while participation in political and public affairs is framed as a right, good character and conduct are also deemed important in the idea of participation (See Table 5.2).

Reflecting on the abovementioned findings, I first recognize the potential integration of an HRBA by means of forging a partnership among different 4Ps stakeholders. Such display of partnership can be seen specifically in the conduct of interface meetings, dialogues, and the signing of a Social Contract. In line with Rand and Watson's (2017) and Khan's (2009) HRBA framework, I see a possibility for these activities to turn grantees into rights holders and the local government into duty bearers. However, I also flag some elements of this conceptualization of participation that undermine such potential.

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[22] Personal interview with L. Madriaga of YCCAGG in Bangued, Abra, 6 August 2019
[23] Refer to Appendix 3.

Firstly, there is power. The formulation of the enhanced FDS lessons and the process of cascading shows Gaventa's (2016) forms, levels, and spaces of power. Given how much World Bank was referenced by local organizations, it appears that they – with global and hidden power – greatly shaped the conceptualization of participation before it was introduced to the public. Such initial conceptualization seems to have been passed on to CSOs and policymakers, whose local and invisible power, made it possible to impose the shaped approach top-down. Invited parent leaders, meanwhile, experienced the same level and form of power as they also imposed such norms to their members. I use the word "impose" here, as the CSOs themselves said that grantees had no say in the process at all besides cascading the already shaped norms of participation. I view this, as further argued below, as a barrier in breaking instances of voicelessness and exclusion.

There is no question that I recognize the effort of the program to use a human rights-based approach by means of including participatory channels. However, the abovementioned power dynamics serve as my basis to argue that such normative conceptualization led to problematic typologies of participation. While I do not question the good intentions of the intervention, the problem – which I observed from studying its conceptualization – is how it reinforced ritualistic and exclusive participation. Looking at the cascading flow (Figure 5.1), participation became ritualistic as organizations arrived in the community with a set of plans already designed beforehand. Having 'expert knowledge', they determined what grantees should know, what grantees should do, and how they should do it. I find this very ironic, as proponents of participation often silence critics by simply saying that people know better than development experts. This, however, does not seem to be the case given a normative and, at some stages, closed-door conceptualization of participation. This process also veers away from the idea of transparency which Sepúlveda's HRBA framework puts forward and even shows limitations of social accountability measures which the program itself advocates for. Besides these ironic discoveries, I also came across participation becoming exclusive, specifically when grantees were divided into parent leaders and members. It must be flagged that allowing only a select few to take part as if suggests that some people have more rights than others.

Furthermore, the highly normative conceptualization of participation is at odds with poverty being a human rights issue. As mentioned earlier in the paper, those who crafted Project I-Pantawid of the 4Ps aimed to mobilize grantees to demand their rights which are under the umbrella of human rights. Referring to the Social Contract (see Table 5.2), I find it positive how respect for human rights and the right to participate in political and public affairs are deemed important. However, some items like "Attend scheduled mass in the village" and be "Good examples and role models" hints poverty as a moral failing, hence the direction of participation leading to the correction of such failing rather than transforming people into right holders.

Participation in political and public affairs arranged by LGU
Respect for people's right to participation in affairs affecting them
Respect for human rights
Attend scheduled mass in the village
Local government officials as good examples and role models
Be good examples to children

Table 5.2 Excerpt of the Social Contract

(Social Contract 2016: 2-3)

5.2 Examining Recent Practices of Participation

As I sat with grantees during fieldwork, I came to know some practices of participation that they were exposed to. I heard voting during elections and attending village assemblies (Interviewees A-M) among the most frequent answers. More interestingly, one statement came up first in all interviews: "I participate by helping clean the surroundings" (Interviewees A-M). Three of them added that as 4Ps grantees, they always try to be present when community service is needed (Interviewee C; Interviewee F; Interviewee I).

While I do not perceive cleaning and rendering community service per se as bad practices, I argue that these recent practices of participation manifest a problematic norm of CCTs. As already established, women are at the centre of the poverty agenda since they are believed to be responsible providers of care. In this case, they do not just provide care to their homes but also to the community. Besides reinforcing gendered roles, this finding sees exploitative participation; as grantees are called to participate by means of contributing labour. Some embraced this as their responsibility, not as 4Ps grantees but as citizens (Interviewee M; Interviewee H). Others, however, hinted instances of powerlessness being re-institutionalized because of it. "When we invite non-beneficiaries of 4Ps to join, they say that it is our obligation since we are the ones receiving cash grants" (Interviewee E; Interviewee G; Interviewee J). While DSWD representatives assured me that grantees are not required to attend these type of activities (*Barcelo 2019, video interview; *Borja 2019, video interview), I got some contradictory answers from the field. Grantees revealed that attendance is always checked, hence the fear of being reprimanded if they do not participate (Interviewee K; Interviewee L). Worse, Interviewee B and Interviewee F shared that some local officials even threatened them of being denied of their cash grants.

An analysis of these recent practices of participation leads us back to problematic notions that arise from the norms of CCTs. Grantees, as they were identified by the state as "deserving" poor through targeting mechanisms, must fulfil obligations to prove themselves worthy of such regard. In this case of cleaning and rendering community service, grantees embraced their so-called obligation and were even made aware of consequences. By monitoring attendance and threatening to impose a sanction, facilitators of the program and local government officials took on a paternalistic role. "Obliging" grantees to do something and having them comply without resistance also tells us so much about the (invisible) power of local elites to shape norms. To be clear, I am not saying that grantees are not capable of resisting and making decisions for themselves. What I am trying to flag, however, is that shaped norms often give them less room to do so. Besides, it is not the "power to shape" per se that I heavily criticize. It is the actual norms that power elites shape – norms that perpetuate powerlessness and vulnerabilities of those living in poverty. If such is always the case, then I argue that participation of CCT grantees is not doing them as much good as desired by those who crafted Project I-Pantawid.

Besides cleaning and rendering community service, grantees also recalled participating in civic training by YCCAGG and DSWD, interface meetings with government officials (Interviewee A; Interviewee B; Interviewee C; Interviewee D; Interviewee F; Interviewee H; Interviewee I; Interviewee J; Interviewee M), and signing of the social contract with local government unit officials and YCCAGG (Interviewee I). With the framework of HRBAs leading to transforming grantees to rights holders and allowing them to navigate through power dynamics involved, I regard these practices of participation highly important. I view such participatory channels with potentials to bridge the gap of power elites and marginalized groups. For instance, by engaging in these participatory activities, grantees exercised visible power as they publicly participated in institutionalized affairs. Some of them also enjoyed

invited spaces of power when they engaged with government officials during interface meetings, other forms of dialogue, and civic leadership trainings.

Talking more to grantees, however, I discovered that all those who participated in what I regard as more relevant participatory activities all happen to be parent leaders. "I had the chance to engage with high ranking officials because of my role as parent leader. My members did not have the same chance" (Interviewee B; Interviewee I). Exploring this more with members, they explained to me that they, in a way, still knew what transpired in meetings or dialogues as their parent leaders relayed information to them (Interviewee E; Interviewee G; Interviewee K; Interviewee L). I, however, came across a heavy sentiment as one of the grantees reflected on members' non-inclusion in face-to-face meetings with local elites. "What for? We are not important" (Interviewee K).

Although I recognize the potential of certain participatory activities that occurred in terms of building a partnership between stakeholders, Interviewee K's sentiment also reveals elements of participation that do not completely reconcile with HRBAs. Clearly, exclusive participation took place. The classification of grantees into parent leaders and members made a difference in what participatory channels they could be part of. In this case, partnerships with local elites were forged only between them and the more powerful members of the community (parent leaders). I find it appropriate to say "more powerful" for parent leaders were chosen based on several factors, making them ahead of their groups in the first place. In 4Ps, a parent leader must be a high school graduate (at least), functionally literate, healthy, and seen with positive attitude and integrity (Barcelo 2019, video interview). I therefore argue that with these requirements, not all grantees – let alone the most marginalized – were included in the process. Following the norms of CCTs elsewhere, the program again divided the population into the "deserving" and the "undeserving"; only this time, "deserving" means possessing more knowledge and being "good enough" to face power elites. While it is positive that parent leaders were mobilized to engage with government officials, it is serious how participation did not necessarily give a voice to those who need it most. While I recognize the value of leadership, it is also crucial to flag that the process of participation might have failed to deliver its promise of "empowering" the most vulnerable members of the community.

5.3 Engaging with Conflicting Narratives on Participation of Grantees

Talking to various stakeholders of the program (grantees, local government officials, government agencies namely DSWD and DepEd, and CSOs) led me to conflicting narratives on participation. These contradictory narratives mainly revolved around perceptions on the transformative effects and the sustainability of participation of 4Ps grantees.

As I listened to 13 grantees, I understood that all of them learned more about their rights due to their involvement in participatory activities in Project I-Pantawid (Interviewee A; Interviewee B; Interviewee C; Interviewee D; Interviewee F; Interviewee H; Interviewee I; Interviewee J; Interviewee M). Specifically, they learned about their right to basic social services (Interviewee A; Interviewee I; Interviewee J), their children's right to education and health (Interviewee B; Interviewee M; Interviewee I), their economic and political rights (Interviewee A; Interviewee I; Interviewee J); and their right to participate in political and public affairs (Interviewee C; Interviewee F; Interviewee H). While I regard rights awareness as a building block of the success of HRBAs, the narratives unfortunately do not stop there. When I asked stakeholders whether grantees have used their knowledge of their rights and participation to make duty bearers accountable, I came across different stories from the field.

Representatives from DSWD and the CSOs involved expressed positive views. For example, from being timid, grantees became confident to speak up in public (Madriaga 2019, personal interview; Borja 2019, personal interview) and to even challenge some local leaders during village assemblies (Baltar 2019, personal interview). Another evidence named by DSWD is the inclusion of one parent leader, on behalf of all 4Ps beneficiaries in Tayum, in the Municipal Development Council (Barcelo 2019, personal interview). However, from the grantees' standpoint, I heard only a few incidents of demanding something from local officials, such as fiscal transparency (Interviewee F) and right of their children in school despite financial limitations (Interviewee I; Interviewee C). More alarmingly, I discovered some grantees' fear to assert anything (Interviewee G; Interviewee J; Interviewee A) with the belief that they are "not in a position to do so" (Interviewee K) and that they "might get into trouble with local officials again" (Interviewee F). These hesitations translated to their political presence not being felt by some local government leaders (Interviewee N; Interviewee P; Interviewee R) and to a DepEd representative's belief that they are "not yet a powerful group" (Interview S). Moreover, what made hearing all these accounts in the field even more painful is that while some local elites could not see grantees as transformed right holders, they were very clear in perceiving their participation as something else. According to some local government officials, they think of 4Ps beneficiaries first when participation in small communal activities like cleaning and community service is needed (Interviewee O; Interviewee P; Interviewee Q).

What do these conflicting – and at some point, disturbing – narratives tell us? Clearly, power dynamics are at play. While I at least recognize some visible exercise of power by some grantees, especially parent leaders, I am critical of the level at which this occurred. Hearing that power elites like government officials still do not see grantees' participation as a strong force, it seems that such exercise of power only remained at the very local level (between them and their members). A question of whether this is enough to inform local decisions, let alone national policies, then arises. The success of HRBAs depends so much on the kind of partnership that is created between right holders and duty bearers. An effective partnership entails seeing grantees as right holders, giving them a seat at the table, taking them seriously as partners for development, and not as providers of service to the community in exchange of cash grants. If 4Ps stakeholders manage to forge such partnership, then participation could be transformative and successful in addressing structural injustices that perpetuate poverty.

Adding to these stories, one DSWD representative also shared that they encouraged women to participate in the program for them to finally have a voice that did not exist before (Borja 2019, video interview). Years later, they now perceive grantees as empowered women due to their increased awareness of their and their children's rights, participation in community affairs, and their economic autonomy at home as holders of cash cards (Barcelo 2019, video interview). This brings us back to the logic of CCTs: women – even more specifically, mothers – at the centre of the poverty agenda. As argued earlier in this paper, I do not dismiss the effort of CCTs to "empower'" women. I, therefore, do not contest 4Ps' anchoring of participation to raising women's voices in the household and in the community. However, I believe that the program should be very careful in doing this. By attempting to "empower" women through recent participatory practices in 4Ps, a high chance of confining them into a very normative approach of participation arises. In which case, without deliberately trying, the program might make poor women even more vulnerable. If the program manages to perceive women as rightful citizens rather than mothers to be given a chance, then participation could be transformative. At this current state, there seems to be more serious work to do to achieve this.

Other than this debate on the transformative effects of participation, the idea of its sustainability also came up in the field. In my search for narratives, the positive perception of DSWD and CSOs on one hand and the scepticism of local government officials on the other surfaced as the biggest tension. DSWD representatives are hopeful that grantees will sustain their participation even after exiting the program, as they know of some former grantees who are still actively involved in their communities (Barcelo 2019, personal interview) and of some grantees' children displaying interest to also participate in other channels like youth civic participation training and related programs (Borja 2019, personal interview). Representative of the CSOs involved, meanwhile, perceive participation of grantees to be sustainable as they are now aware that it is their right (Madriaga 2019, personal interview); but at the same time recognize that it also depends on the openness of governments for public dialogues (Baltar 2019, personal interview). In contrast, "maybe not" (Interviewee N; Interviewee O; Interviewee P; Interviewee Q; Interviewee R) served as the unanimous answer of all local government officials involved in this study. Quickly going beyond just the issue of sustainability, one of them even continued by saying, "It is disgusting. It is useless for the local government to provide them assistance because they are already receiving monthly cash grants. They are very lazy and dependent" (Interviewee R).

Hearing these remarks required some time to process; and it pushed me to take a closer look on the people perceived by local elites as "lazy" and "dependent". During my fieldwork, I encountered 13 grantees – all women and all mothers, which again is a representation of the norms of CCTs. I found them in different villages, with some just near the centre and some way more remote. Some embraced me into their homes, while some allowed me to follow them in their activities elsewhere. They were not all the same, but I noticed one main thing in common as I paid attention to each one of them: they all worked. When asked about their main occupation, all of them instantly answered: housewife. I observed, however, that their worlds do not revolve just around the four corners of their own homes. I was told that some go house-to-house to do domestic work for additional income. Others, meanwhile, work at their children's school canteens or their villages' health centres. Some have livestock to raise or a small business to manage. In this case, what Interviewee R said supports the dominant discourse on poverty: that the poor are lazy, that the poor are dependent. Grantees are perceived as people sitting idly as they wait for their monthly cash grants. However, these 13 women all showed me a different narrative. While I do not claim this to be true about all beneficiaries of the program, it still disproves a harsh generalization against people living in poverty. Against these local elites' view, fieldwork made me discover this vivid picture: of women trying, but of women who cannot do it alone. Above all, these women are citizens whose demands for social protection do not tell narratives of dependence. These demands are rightful claims, to begin with.

Going back to the idea of sustainability, I found grantees to be generally positive about continuing to participate in political and public affairs even after the end of an intervention and/or exiting the program. Two other revelations, however, deserve serious attention as we critically approach the norms of CCTs. First, I learned from grantees (Interviewee A; Interviewee C; Interviewee F; Interviewee H; Interviewee I) that some participatory channels introduced during the pilot project, Project I-Pantawid, are no longer in existence. Examples of these are interface meetings with DSWD, DOH, and DepEd, as well as dialogues with local government officials. Second, former grantees of the program said that they no longer get invited to participate (Interviewee F, Interviewee K; Interviewee L).

Given these stories, I argue that sustainability of participation is questionable. I, however, do not see it as a result of the failings or dependence of the poor. Veering away from such normative understanding of both poverty and participation, I rather first link it to the power dynamics embedded in these participatory channels. Interventions like Project I-

Pantawid, no matter how good the intentions, are still heavily shaped by power elites like international funding organizations. As often is the case, the invisible power of CSOs to "influence" grantees also lessens or even ends when funding is no longer available. Aside from funding that fuels interventions like this, other power elites operating in the national or local levels and in closed spaces also have a lot of say in the continuation of some participatory activities. It must be stressed that it is not only the grantees deciding here, as they are situated in power relations in which they are not yet necessarily seen as equally or more powerful. Another way of looking at this is that with norms of participation imposed top-down, non-sustainability could be telling us about participation not being genuine or being just another string attached. In which case, participatory channels fail to amplify the "real" voices of the poor. Additionally, graduation from CCTs also plays a key role in the non-sustainability of participation among grantees. As argued earlier, certain rights seem to end when one exits the program. In this case of power elites no longer seeing former grantees as partners in participatory channels, it seems as though the right to participate is only recognized within the program. Again, this is at odds with human rights principles as the right to participate does not discriminate between current and former grantees of the program.

Chapter 6 Conclusions

This research problematized the process of participation in the Philippine conditional cash transfer program otherwise known as the 4Ps. Zooming in on the case of Tayum, Abra with Project I-Pantawid, it critically approached the conceptualization and recent practices of participation and also engaged with conflicting narratives by various stakeholders.

The conceptualization of participation by power elites turned out to be highly normative. While it posed potentials of HRBAs through the inclusion of participatory channels between and among various stakeholders, power dynamics leading to problematic typologies of participation still existed. The exercise of hidden and/or invisible power by international and local organizations made way for such a normative conceptualization of participation to be imposed top-down. This created ritualistic participation, as so-called experts seemed to already have had answers before they even asked questions; which is another way of saying that they already made decisions even before involving grantees in the process. Besides, by allowing only a few select grantees to facilitate enhanced FDS, participation became exclusive. I argue, therefore, that the process reinforced instances of exclusion and voicelessness of some grantees; which is in line with the results of Rossel et al.'s (2017) study of Uruguay's Family Allowances. It also appeared at odds with poverty being a human rights issue as it suggested shaping participation to correct perceived moral failings of those living in poverty.

Recent practices of participation like cleaning and community service, meanwhile, re-institutionalized the gendered role of women or mothers as providers of care and powerlessness of grantees. The presence of power elites assuming a paternalistic role, by monitoring attendance of grantees and providing possible sanctions in case of non-participation, also reinforced powerlessness of grantees. What turned out to be an exploitative form of participation existed as they were made to accept their moral obligation as perceived "deserving" poor. On the brighter side, other practices of participation allowed some grantees to enjoy invited spaces of power as they engaged with government officials and other power elites. This, however, also involved exclusive participation which again perpetuated vulnerabilities of the less powerful members of the community.

The multi-stakeholder analysis of perceptions on participation, meanwhile, flagged a serious tension. While DSWD and CSO representatives expressed positive remarks, even grantees were divided on the matter. Some revealed that participatory channels also ended as Project I-Pantawid ended. Moreover, while grantees are now more aware of their rights, they are still confined in spaces where claiming those rights is a not a norm. These speak highly of the limitations of both the transformative effects and sustainability of participation which local government officials are critical of. More than being critical of these potentials, they also still see grantees with narratives of dependence, thus implying that beneficiaries of CCTs are not necessarily seen as right holders.

What then does this case tell us about CCTs? Upon careful analysis, I view that the norms guiding the 4Ps – and CCTs in general – reflect the dominant discourse on poverty. It is a discourse that divides the population into "deserving" and "undeserving", that centrally engages mothers, and that pictures those living in poverty as morally deficient. While I find HRBAs to be persuasive and agree with the arguments of mainly Khan and Sepúlveda, I also see how extremely difficult it is to reconcile the tension that I stumbled upon in this study. This tension can be found between HRBAs, which centrally view people as rights holders, and poverty alleviation that relies on targeted interventions, which in turn do not seem deeply rooted in human rights principles. Confronted with this tension, I conclude that while

beneficiaries of cash transfers may indeed understand participation to be a right, its process embedded in institutionalized norms or logic of CCTs could also turn participation to just another string attached. In addition, as long as beneficiaries of CCTs are not seen by power elites as right holders, HRBAs to social protection could not be entirely effective in practice.

Additionally, while I flag the contribution of this work in terms of offering new insights on participation recently introduced in CCTs and a multi-stakeholder analysis of power dynamics embedded in participatory channels, I also recognize limitations that could inform future studies. Moving forward, I see value in engaging with more former beneficiaries of the program and other household-beneficiaries. Doing a further study on participation of former beneficiaries will further test theories on sustainability. Encountering narratives of other household-beneficiaries, meanwhile, will provide more insights on transformative effects of participation beyond just grantees.

To bring this paper to a close, I offer to all 4Ps stakeholders (including myself, for I wore my previous hat) this food for thought: Did we really empower people? Or did we even take power away from them? Moving forward involves pondering on this. We owe it to the women whose lives we "entered" and whose narratives we tried to shape.

Appendices

Interviewees

Interviewee A	Current Grantee
Interviewee B	Current Grantee
Interviewee C	Grantee
Interviewee D	Grantee
Interviewee E	Former Grantee
Interviewee F	Current Grantee
Interviewee G	Former Grantee
Interviewee H	Grantee
Interviewee I	Grantee
Interviewee J	Grantee
Interviewee K	Former Grantee
Interviewee L	Former Grantee
Interviewee M	Current Grantee
Interviewee N	Local government unit official
Interviewee O	Local government unit official
Interviewee P	Local government unit official
Interviewee Q	Local government unit official
Interviewee R	Local government unit official
Interviewee S	DepEd
Aniceta Baltar	CCAGG
Leticia Madriaga	YCCAGG
*M. Barcelo	DSWD
*L. Borja	DSWD

Profile of Grantees

Status in the programme		Marital Status	
Current 8	Former 5	Single	0
		Married	12
		Widowed	1
Years enrolled in the programme		Educational Attainment	
8 years (since beginning)	10	Elementary	4
7 years	1	High school	3
6 years	2	College	6
			*4 with BS degree
Role during Project i-Pantawid		Occupation	
Parent leader 9	Member 4	Housekeeper	7
		Health worker	2
		Domestic helper	2
		Manicurist	1
		Farmer	1

Age	
30-35	1
36-40	4
41-45	2
46-50	0
51-55	4
56-60	1
61-65	0
66-70	1

Location	
Urban	2
Rural	11

Gender	
Female 13	Male 0

Household head	
Female 1	Male 12

Appendix 2 Project I-Pantawid Components

Project Goal and Components

The project's aim is to develop a model for civil society-government partnership for transparent and accountable implementation of the 4Ps. The project consisted of 4 components, with each component assigned to the partner organizations, as follows --

1. Third party monitoring of 4Ps and Project Management (CCAGG)
2. Mobilizing Household beneficiaries in Applied Social Accountability at the Community Level (RECITE)
3. Building the Capacity of Civil Society organization (CSO) Members of the NLCGG (ANSA-EAP)
4. Knowledge and Learning (PTF)

Source: RECITE (2018) 'Project Completion Report: Applied Social Accountability at Community Level' (Unpublished)

KATULAGAN (Social Contract) ITI NAGBABAETAN TI MUNICIPAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT TI TAYUM, DAGITI MIEMBROS TI PANTAWID PAMILYA PILIPINO PROGRAM (4Ps), KEN TI YOUNG CONCERNED CITIZENS OF ABRA FOR GOOD GOVERNMENT (YCCAGG) TI DIVINE WORD COLLEGE OF BANGUED

A. **Dagiti Arapaap dagiti Umili iti Tayum** (Pinutar dagiti 4Ps Beneficiaries kabayatan iti panagatenderda kadagiti binulan a Family Development Sessions):

Dakami nga umili ken 4Ps beneficiaries kadagiti nadumaduma a barangay iti ili a Tayum, arapaapmi iti nadalus, nasalun-at, natalna ken naprogreso a panagbiag para kadakami ken kadagiti annakmi. Ammomi dagiti karbengan ken pagrebbenganmi iti komunidad ket sidadaankami a makitinnulong tapno dagitoy nga arapaapmi ket maipatungpal ken mapa-adda. Ngarud, gutogotenmi iti lokal a gobierno iti pannakapatanor kadagiti tumutop a programa tapno magun-od dagitoy nga arapaap ta pagaammomi nga ti kalidad ti panagbiag dagiti umili ket agbatay iti nasayaat ken napudno a panagdinnanggay dagiti agtuturay ken dagiti iturayanda. Iti kasta, igunamgunammi koma ti pannakaisayangkat dagiti sumaganad:

1) **Linak ken Talna**

- Ordinansa para iti curfew, panaglako ti arak, panagsugal, panag-videoke ken panangusar kadagiti computer shops (**Pias, Poblacion, Patucannay**)
- Nasayaat nga sports program wenno pagliwliwaan dagiti agtutubo tapno malapdan ti bisyo (**Pias, Poblacion, Patucannay**)
- Pannakapaadda ti streetlights kadagiti nasipnget a parte ti barangay (**Pias**)
- CCTV ti barangay (**Deet**)

2) **Salun-at**

- Maaddaan iti umanay ken tumutop a pannakataming dagiti agsakit ken umno nga agas para kadakuada
- Maaddaan iti botika ti tunggal barangay ken libre nga agas
- Bakuna para kadagiti makagat ti aso ken mabakunaan amin nga aso (anti rabies) [**Poblacion**]
- Adda nadalus a pagsakdoan iti danum a mainum
- Maituloy ti feeding program para kadagiti ubbing
- Regular a check-up dagiti ubbing ken ina a masikog

3) **Trabaho/Pagbiagan**

- Makapatakder ti bassit a kooperatiba
- Adda pagtrabahon tapno maliklikan ti bisyo
- Panagmula kadagiti nateng a mabalin a pangalaan ti pagbiag ken lako
- Adda mataraken nga animal (baboy, kalding, baka, etc.)
- Adda skills training para kadagiti awan pagsapulanna

4) **Infrastructure**

- Maaddaan iti bukod a barangay hall a pagtataripnongan ken pagmimitingan (**Poblacion, Basbasa**)
- Maituloy ken mapalawa dagiti barangay road
- Adda water system/pump para ti agtultuloy a supply ti danum kadagiti balbalay
- Motorized or rubber boat kadagiti barangay a malayus ken asideg ti karayan no tiempo ti tudo (**Deet, Bumagcat and Poblacion**)
- Barangay service vehicle para iti emergency (**Pias**)

5) **Agriculture**

- Bin-I ken bugaso para kadagiti mannalon
- Alikamen ti talon wenno farm implements
- Padanum iti amin a talon
- Maaddaan iti technical a mangisuro ti panagmula ti high yielding crops

6) **Edukasyon**

- Adda scholarship para kadagiti annak nga agbasa iti kolehio
- Agtultuloy ti alternative learning system (ALS)
- Panangtarabay ken panangbaon kadagiti annak a mapan agbasa iti inaldaw

7) **Panangsaluad ti Aglawlaw**

- Maaddaan iti pannakaammo ken teknolohiya iti recycling kadagiti plastic (straw, cellophane, etc.) tapno adda pay mainayon a pagsapulan
- Ordinansa para iti waste segregation ken recycling
- Adda maituding a pagibasuraan
- Panagmulaan iti arubayan ken aglawlaw
- Ordinansa para iti panangigalut kadagiti animal a mangdangran kadagiti mula
- Maaddaan iti bukod a kasilya tunggal balay
- Maaddaan ti compost pit kada barangay

8) **Transparency and Good Governance**

- Maibaskag ti pundo ti barangay ken ti nakaigastoanna
- Maipatungpal ti regular a pannakaangay ti barangay assembly mamindua iti makatawen
- Panagatender ken panagpartisipar kadagiti amin a pasken wenno aktibidad nga angayen dagiti barangay opisyal
- Marespetar ti karbengan ti tunggal tao a makipagdesisyon kadagiti banag a pakaseknanda, barangay man wenno iti municipal a level
- Awan ti aggatang ken aglako ti botos iti tiempo ti eleksion
- Pannakaipatugaw ti officer of the day iti barangay hall no inkaso awan ni kapitan

9) **Nasayaat a Kababalin ken Ugali**

- Adda respeto iti karbengan iti tunggal tao

- Makimisa iti naituyang nga schedule ti barangay
- Panangammo kadagiti saan pay a nagbuniag ken nagkasar
- Agbalin a pagwadan ti nasayaat nga ugali ken kababalin dagiti opisyal ti munisipio ken ti barangay
- Agbalin a nasayaat nga ehempo kadagiti annak.

Kas bumaranggay, dagitoy dagiti maikomitmi nga aramiden tapno magun-od dagitoy nga arapaap ken tarigagay:
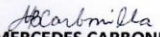
1. Tumulong a mangipakaammo ti linaon daytoy a KATULAGAN kadagiti amin a bumaranggay
2. Sumurot kadagiti ania man a maipatungpal nga ordinansa a mangipatungpal kadagiti gannuat ken aktibidad a pagsayaatan ti amin
3. Agpartisipar kadagiti aktibidad a barangay wenno ili
4. Agbalin a modelo iti nasayaat nga aramid ken ugali kadagiti annak ken kaarruba.
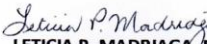
Kas dadaulo ti Munisipal a Gobierno ti Tayum, ikomitmi a mairaman daytoy naputar nga arapaap dagiti kameng ti Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program ken dagiti planoda para iti panagdur-as ili a Tayum iti 5-Year Local Executive-Legislative Agenda ken Annual Investment Plan ti Munisipyo.
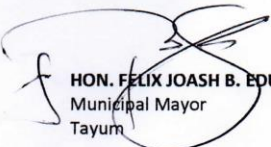
Kas Local Civil Society Organization (LCSO) a mangiyim-implementar iti "Guarding the Integrity of the Conditional Cash Transfer Program" project (i-Pantawid project) ditoy Tayum, dakami a taga-YCCAGG nga adda iti sidong ti Divine Word College of Bangued, itedmi ti naan-anay a suportami para iti pannakatungpal ti Arapaap ken dagiti plano tapno magun-od dayta nga arapaap.

PIRMAANMI daytoy a PAMMATALGED ken KATULAGAN para iti panagdur-as ti ili a Tayum, ita nga aldaw Disyembre ___14___, 2016.

JENNIFER DE DIOS
Parent Leader Representative

MERCEDES CARBONILLA
Parent Leader Representative

LETICIA P. MADRIAGA, Ed.D.
Project Coordinator, i-Pantawid Project
YCCAGG

HON. FELIX JOASH B. EDUARTE
Municipal Mayor
Tayum

WITNESSED BY:

ANICETA C. BALTAR
Project Manager, i-Pantawid
CCAGG

Areas

I. Peace and Order

Ordinance concerning curfew, selling of liquor, gambling, *karaoke* use, and computer shops
Sports program for the youth sector
Installation of streetlights in dark areas

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Installation of CCTV system

II. Health

Adequate medication and cure for the sick
Provision of village health centers with free medicines
Provision of clean, portable water system
Feeding program for school age children
Regular check-up of children and pregnant women

III. Jobs and Livelihood

Establishment of a cooperative
Generation of jobs for the poor to avoid vices
Planting of fruits and vegetables as source of food and income
Provision of livestock
Skills training for the unemployed

IV. Infrastracture

Availability of village halls for assemblies and meetings
Road widening
Water system for houses
Motorized or rubber boat for the rainy season
Village service vehicle in case of emergency

V. Agriculture

Seeds for farmers
Farming equipment
Irrigation system
Technical assistance on high yielding crops

VI. Education

Scholarship for college students
Continuation of Alternative Learning System (ALS)
Guiding children and sending them to school

VII. Environmental Concern

Education on recycling
Ordinance regarding waste segregation and recycling
Availability of village trash bins
Provision of toilets in every house
Provision of compost pits in each barangay

VIII. Transparency and Good Governance

Transparency on budget and expenditures
Regular village assemblies
Participation in political and public affairs arranged by LGU
Respect for people's right to participation in affairs affecting them
No vote buying and selling during election period
Officer of the day when the village chief is not around

IX. Good character and conduct

Respect for human rights
Attend scheduled mass in the village
Local government officials as good examples and role models
Be good examples to children

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