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DSWD

Department of Social Welfare and Development

ABOUT THE JOURNAL

The Social Welfare and Development (SWD) Journal is the official journal of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). Published annually, the SWD Journal aims to popularize studies initiated by the DSWD and other stakeholders along social protection and social welfare development. This Journal features quantitative and qualitative researches from various disciplines of social welfare and rigorous policy analysis along social development. Aside from research papers, the SWD Journal also articles with relevant policy implications on social development.

Article contributions are open to DSWD offices, staff and all interested partners – individual researchers, institutions, universities and colleges, and schools including those with research extension offices, non-government organizations, national and local government agencies and other research institutions.

Any reader who is interested in submitting a manuscript may refer to the Guidelines for the Publication of the Social Welfare and Development (SWD) Journal (Administrative Order No. 10, Series of 2017). Queries or comments may be sent to pdpb@dswd.gov.ph.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR



We are pleased to present to you the 2019 SWD Journal – our second issue since the annual publication of the journal was institutionalized in 2017. First of all, we would like to express our sincerest appreciation to the authors, editors and readers for their contributions to the journal and its goal which is to promote researches initiated by the DSWD and other stakeholders along social protection and social welfare.

This year, we are delighted to feature entries from the Policy Development & Planning Bureau. As the research, M&E, & policy development arm of the Department, the PDPB produced numerous research reports and policy papers that aim to shed light on emerging social welfare concerns, and in turn, influence program and policy development.

The 2019 Journal opens with the *“Philippine Country Report on Active Ageing”*, a by-product of the ASEAN Active Ageing Research conducted jointly by the DSWD and UP College of Social Work & Community Development in 2015. This report delved deep into the situation of Senior Citizens in the Philippines vis-à-vis the Active Ageing Framework.

Also included is an in-house assessment entitled, *“Assessment of DSWD’s International Social Welfare Services for Filipino Nationals”*. Led by our very own Undersecretary Camilo G. Gudmalin, the study was carried out to examine the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the International Social Welfare Services for Filipino Nationals (ISWSFN) in Malaysia, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Kuwait.

We are also publishing the *“Policy Paper on the Effects of the TRAIN Law on the Needs of the Poor”*, which was developed in collaboration with the current National Statistician and Head of the Philippine Statistics Authority, Dr. Claire Dennis S. Mapa (through the Asian Development Bank). This paper quantified the effects of the TRAIN Law on the economic and social welfare needs of the beneficiaries of the DSWD’s Unconditional Cash Transfer Program. It also advocated for policy adjustments and reforms the DSWD must consider in the implementation of the UCT Program.

Finally, we took the opportunity to use this platform to officially launch and disseminate to the public, the newly issued *“DSWD Research & Evaluation Policy”* (Memorandum Circular No. 9, Series of 2019). We hope to capture the interest of more researchers, M&E specialists and policy analysts, as they become enlightened on the research & evaluation processes within the Department.

Again, we are always thankful for the support the SWD Journal has been afforded so far and we look forward to more publications in the future.

LUZVIMINDA C. ILAGAN

Undersecretary
Policy & Plans
CY 2019

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Philippines: Country Report on Active Ageing

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(Edited by: Zoe Dominique R. Cunanan³)

ABSTRACT

A product of the ASEAN Active Ageing Research⁴, the Philippine Country Report on Active Ageing narrates the situation of Filipino older persons vis-à-vis the Active Ageing framework. For health, both physical and mental health of older persons are regarded as equally important, with mental health being contingent on social connections. Access to health services and healthy diet are also other determinants that promote the health of older persons.

However, the inequity in health status and access to health services remain a challenge, along with the eradication of communicable diseases (e.g. tuberculosis) which is one of the causes of mortality among older persons in the country. There is also the matter of inadequate residential care facilities for the indigent elderly.

Participation of older persons in the Philippines cuts across the micro (household), meso (community) and macro (national) levels. In the family context, it is common for older persons, especially females, to continue to perform productive work, including caring for their children, grandchildren, and sick, frail, and infirmed family members. Religious activities and membership in organizations are also other ways in which the older persons continue to be active.

The sector is also considered a political force as they continue to exercise their voting rights (through RA 10366). Despite this, the increasing number of older persons with functional disability and continuous engagement in reproductive work and economic activities due to poverty are major constraints from exercising the right to participate.

Even with the variety of available pension programs for the older persons, (e.g. SSS & GSIS for retired employees, social pension for the indigent, and the PhilHealth coverage for all), the limited coverage of these pensions continue to put heavy pressure on the elderly to continue engaging in economic activities or risk further impoverishment. Financial insecurity may be a function of structural, cultural, and physical factors that limit senior citizens' capability to access the few economic opportunities that are available in a sustainable manner, and the concomitant low income.

Meanwhile, there are enabling mechanisms in the form of policies, laws, programs and mandated structures such as the Office for Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) and Senior Citizens Center (SCC), but implementation of legally mandated protective and non-discrimination provision is lagging. A major challenge is the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of legally mandated senior citizens' entitlements. The lack of database on the elderly at the barangay, city/municipal, and provincial levels is also a gap to be addressed.

Keywords: Active Ageing, Filipino Older Persons, ASEAN Active Ageing Framework

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⁴This research produced several outputs – an Integrated Report of all the findings on Active Ageing at the ASEAN level and ten (10) country reports describing the economic, socio-political and cultural context, as well as the various initiatives (e.g. policies/programs) these countries have for older persons and how they influence active ageing. Copies of the full Integrated Report and the other Country Reports are available at the DSWD-Policy Development & Planning Bureau

THE SITUATION OF FILIPINO OLDER PERSONS

Philippine Definition of Senior Citizens

The definition of “senior citizen” in the Philippines has changed over time. Section 2 of Republic Act (RA) No.7432, which was enacted in 1992, defined a senior citizen as a resident citizen of the Philippines who is at least 60 years old and with an annual income of not more than P60,000.00. Almost three (3) years later, RA No. 7876 or the “The Senior Citizens Center Act of the Philippines” narrowed down the definition to age, i.e., anyone who is at least sixty years old.

In February 2004, Congress approved RA No. 9257 or the “Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2003” which retained the minimum age of 60 years old and brought back two (2) requirements from the RA 7432 definition of a senior citizen: **resident and citizen of the Philippines**. This definition is retained in RA No. 9994 or the “Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010.”

Indigent Senior Citizens

Meanwhile, Section 3 of RA No. 9994 defines “indigent” senior citizens as “any elderly who is *frail, sickly or with disability, and without pension or permanent source of income, compensation or financial assistance from his/her relatives to support his/her basic needs* – as determined by the Department of Social Welfare and development (DSWD) in consultation with the National Coordinating and Monitoring Board (NCMB).”

As per the latest census, there are about seven (7) million senior citizens in the Philippines (or 6.9% of the total population), with 1.3 million classified as indigent (Department of Health, 2012). Seven (7) regions have a proportion of senior citizens that is higher than the national figure – Region I (9.0 percent), Region VI (8.7 percent), Region VIII (8.2 percent), Region VII (7.8 percent), Region II (7.3 percent), Region III (7.0 percent), and Caraga and the

Cordillera Autonomous Region (6.9 percent each) (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2012). On the other hand, the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) has the lowest proportion at 2.9 per cent. This may be due to the long-standing armed conflict and the incidence of poverty in the region which is the highest in the Philippines at 53.4 per cent as of the first semester of 2015 (National Anti-Poverty Commission).

Life Expectancy

The estimated life expectancy at birth in 2015 was 68.96 years (Central Intelligence Agency, 2015). Women have a higher estimated life expectancy at 72.59 years as against 65.47 for men. Table No. 1 shows the distribution of senior citizens by age and sex. One trend is that female senior citizens are outliving their male counterparts.

At the age group 60-64 years, they represent 52.3 percent and men are 47.7 percent. At age group 85 years and above, they account for double the number of men at 66.4 percent as against men's 33.6 percent.

Table 1. Population of Senior Citizens by Age and Sex (2010)

Age Group	Total	Male	Female
60-64	2,224,105	1,061,324	1,162,781
65-69	1,495,115	678,782	816,333
70-74	1,140,951	491,491	649,460
75-79	705,977	285,693	420,284
80-84	393,387	145,686	247,701
85 and over	270,768	91,058	179,710

Source: (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2012b)

Health Care

Ageing is often associated with health challenges. The leading causes of death among senior citizens are cerebrovascular disease, acute myocardial infarction, and chronic lower respiratory diseases (Virola, 2016). Racelis, Russo and Mason (2003), in a study on the health expenditure of the elderly relative to the National Health Account, state that they are “relatively heavy consumers of personal health care (22%) and relatively light consumers of public health (5%).” The study showed that 62 percent of health expenditures of Filipinos in the age groups 50-64 years, and 65 years and above, came from out of their own pockets. This reveals the relevance of the mandatory coverage of all senior citizens in the national health insurance program of PhilHealth as provided for by R.A. No.10645.

In the inaugural Philippine Patients Conference held in May 2015 in Manila, Salvacion Basiano, President of the Center for Empowerment and Development of the Elderly, spoke about the problems which senior citizens like her meet in accessing health care because they had only their meager pension to rely on.

While the government, through the Department of Health, has been able to provide preventive programs for tuberculosis, cholera and malaria, Basiano asserts that senior citizens’ basic needs have remained unaddressed. Many ailing senior citizens, according to her, die without the benefit of consulting a doctor. In response to a situation where healthcare is expensive, she proposed the training of physically able senior citizens to perform basic health services in their respective communities.

Economic Security

Another area of concern is financial security, particularly for those in middle and low income groups. The 2007 Philippine Longitudinal Study of the Population Institute of the University of the Philippines (UP) in Diliman reveals the economically precarious situation of senior citizens (Cruz and

Camhol, 2011). Thirty nine percent (39%) of the 3,105 respondents work, with males (47 percent, mainly in agriculture) outnumbering the women (33 percent). Despite an average of two (two) jobs, the median monthly income was only PhP3,000.00 (US\$62.50). Only twenty-two percent (22%) received pension. More than half (53%) reported that they had difficulties making ends meet. Fifty-eight percent (58%) relied on income from their children within the country. More females (n=43) than males (n=22) depended on remittances from children working abroad.

A total of 2,600,990 Filipino senior citizens work without remuneration in family-operated farms and businesses (National Statistics Office, 2005c).

In 2005, more than half of Filipino senior citizens, or 52.47% were helping without pay in family-owned ventures. (National Statistics Office, 2005). They also take care of grandchildren to enable the latter's parents to be gainfully employed. This is especially true in the case of seniors whose children work overseas.

The foregoing data indicate that advancing years do not prevent one from being active and productive. However, they also give rise to the concern about social and economic security in old age, especially in relation to financing one's medical consultations, medicines and health supplements, and hospitalization. Because of meager to nil income, senior citizens tend to be financially dependent and insecure.

Living Arrangements

Regarding living arrangements, more than 70 percent of the respondents in the 2007 Philippine Longitudinal Study of Aging resided with their children (Cruz and Camhol, 2013). This arrangement keeps the elderly socially connected with their children.

An almost forgotten segment among senior citizens are the prisoners serving time in jails all over the country. Seniors constitute 5.55 percent of the 36,000 convicted prisoners in

2012 (Bureau of Corrections as cited in Investigative Documentaries), including an estimated 300 in the Correctional Institute of Women. The oldest female inmate, Petra Lukingan, was granted executive clemency last year upon the intercession of Pope Francis during his visit to the Philippines. She was 91 years old. Many have reportedly died in jail while most are sick. The daily budget for medical care per person is only P3.00 (US\$0.062). Daily food budget for every person is P50.00 (US\$1.04) (Quismundo, 2016).

While Filipino senior citizens are living longer, many do so in “poorer health and socio-economic condition,” according to Population Commission Executive Director Perez (Crisostomo, 2015). Perez cites the fact that social protection systems have lagged behind social conditions. Poverty is the main threat toward realizing the potentials of Filipino senior citizens (Carlos, 2009). Because pensions are inadequate, Perez anticipates that senior citizens as a crosscutting sector will be among the poorest. In 2009, poverty incidence among senior citizens was already at 15.8 per cent, making them the 7th poorest sector (Virola, 2011).

Socio-Cultural Context of Filipino Senior Citizens

The Filipino family is described as a closely-knit, extended family with up to three (3) generations living in one household (Abuja, 2000). It is not unusual for families to take care of their senior members. According to Abejo (2004), “Filipino elderly have been dependent on their children or co-resident kin for economic, social and physical support”. Carlos (2009) mentioned that respect for senior citizens is a trademark of the Filipino socio-cultural context since the society puts premium on preserving their dignity. According to Fritzie Borrromeo who is a focal person for Standards in DSWD, “Of course, we give so much respect to senior citizens, knowing that if not for them, we will not exist. All of us will not exist”.

In addition, the concept of caring is rooted on the socio-cultural tradition which has three aspects, namely role behavior contributing to social harmony, respect for elders and those in authority, and the importance of generosity and reciprocity. The Filipino family is the source of one’s identity as well as of emotional and financial support (Migration Information Centre, 2003).

The Philippine country report that was presented at the 12th ASEAN High Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies in Japan underscored that Filipino senior citizens initiated socio-cultural activities in their community (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2014). For example, senior citizens in rural areas teach younger generation about their traditional dance, dialect and distinct community customs that were not taught in regular schools. Moreover, senior citizens influence the religious affiliation of their children and grandchildren. Filipino senior citizens also are responsible to transfer the cultural and family tradition to the next generation. They also contribute to dispute settlement between and among family members and within the community.

The 2007 Philippine Longitudinal Study of Aging reveals that senior citizens are socially active with 41 percent indicating membership in organizations, and 21 percent involved in volunteer work (Tan, 2013).

Nonetheless, despite their significant contributions to the home and to the community, development initiatives, many senior citizens experience abuse, neglect and abandonment by family members and/ or institutional care providers. According to WHO, one in ten older persons experience abuse every month (Philippine Information Agency, 2016). But only one of every 24 cases is reported. The UN has declared June 15 as the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

In a forum co-organized by the Philippine Information Agency, the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines, the

Coalition of Services for the Elderly (COSE) and the Confederation of Older Persons Associations of the Philippines in June 2014, Mr. Fransiscus Cupang, COSE executive director, stated that elder abuse is the “gravest experience that the elders suffer” but they were afraid to come out, preferring to keep quiet because the perpetrators are family members such as spouses, children, grandchildren, and care providers. A study cited in the forum identified the children of the elderly as perpetrators of abuse, usually when under the influence of drugs and alcohol (Junio, 2014).

Dr. Deana Santos-Ringor, Health Director of Bantay Matanda Inc., an NGO promoting the welfare of the elderly, added that the elderly would rather not confront perpetrators of abuse because they fear retaliation. Moreover, the elderly did not know the procedures for reporting and were not inclined to go into legal processes. (Junio, 2014).

DSWD, on its part, began to look into the issue of elder abuse in 2007. Policy briefs have been formulated, becoming the bases for the filing of a bill on Anti-Elder Abuse which is now pending in Congress.

Because of the problem of underreporting on elder abuse, DSWD has developed the Reporting System and Prevention Program for Elder Abuse Cases (RESPPEC). The acronym sounds like the English word “respect” which is what the program seeks to promote in relation to the elderly. RESPPEC is a documentation and reporting system for elder abuse cases. It is now being pilot-tested in four regions in the country.

POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS ON SENIOR CITIZENS

The Philippine Constitution values human dignity and guarantees the protection and fulfillment of human rights. Article II, Section 9 states that *“The State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the*

prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all.”

Specific to senior citizens, the Constitution has the following pertinent articles:

- **Article XV, Section 4** of the Philippine Constitution states that “It is the duty of the family to take care of its elderly members but the State may also do so through just programs of social security.”

- **Article XIII, Section 11**, provides that “The State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to all people at affordable cost. There shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged sick, elderly, disabled, women and children. The State shall endeavor to provide free medical care to paupers.”

Within this framework, presidential proclamations have been issued and laws enacted to promote the rights and entitlements of senior citizens (see Table 2). It should be noted, however, that the policies, laws and legal issuances do not use the phrase “active ageing.” They provide definitions of who senior citizens are, portray them as active and productive members of society while at the same time acknowledging that they constitute a basic and disadvantaged sector in society, requiring recognition of their rights and the importance of proactive support in the form of entitlements, programs and services from the government to meet the challenges of ageing, and ensure a better quality of life, especially on the part of the indigent.

At the international level, the Philippine Government is one of the signatories to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). The MIPAA is the first global and comprehensive agreement on

ageing, recognizing older people as active contributors in society and securing governmental commitment to include older persons in policies, programs and development, including anti-poverty initiatives, and to adopt core recommendations in the areas of discrimination and decision-making, work and pensions, health, and supportive environments.

The Philippines also actively participated in the conceptualization and adoption of other international plans such as the Macau Declaration on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific 1998 and the Shanghai Implementation Strategy 2002.

the areas of employment, education, health, social services, access to public transport, and incentives.

Additional entitlements are: a) social pension for indigent senior citizens amounting to P500.00 monthly; b) mandatory coverage by PhilHealth; and c) social safety nets in the form of food, medicine, and financial assistance, to help cushion the adverse effects of economic crisis, disasters and calamities.

Table 2. List of National Policies on Senior Citizens

National Policies on Senior Citizens	Key Provisions
Republic Act 10911 "The Anti Age Discrimination in Employment Act"	Promotes equality in employment opportunities and in treatment in the workplace by promoting the employment of individuals based on their competencies, irrespective of their age.
Republic Act No. 10868 "Centenarians Act of 2016"	Gives a "Letter of Felicitation" from the Philippine president and a "Centenarian Gift" in the amount of PhP100,000.00 (US\$2,083.33) to Filipino citizens in the country or abroad who reach the age of 100 years
Republic Act No. 10645 "An Act Providing for the Mandatory PhilHealth Coverage for All Senior Citizens"	PhilHealth, the national health insurance program, is mandated to cover all senior citizens (not only the indigent)
Republic Act No. 9994 "Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010"	Amendment of RA 7432; Recognizes rights of the elderly as well as the role of the family, community and the government in the ensuring they can achieve "a more meaningful and productive ageing"; Broadens coverage of government assistance to senior citizens in

Republic Act No. 9710 "The Magna Carta of Women" Provides for State protection of women senior citizens from neglect, abandonment, abuse, exploitation and discrimination

Republic Act No. 9257 "Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2008" Created the National Coordinating and Monitoring Board (NCMB) - an inter-agency committee for senior citizens that shall be responsible for regular updating, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating the plan for senior citizens. The NCMB is chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development

Republic Act No. 8425 "Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act" Section 6(k) identifies senior citizens among the basic sectors that should be represented in NAPC organizational structure

Republic Act No. 7876 "Senior Citizens Center Act of the Philippines" Mandates the establishments of a senior citizen's center in all cities and municipalities

Executive Order No. 105, series of 2003 Promotes community-based housing program for neglected, abandoned, abused and unattached senior citizens through the provision of "Group Home/Foster Home for Neglected, Abandoned, Abused, Detached and Poor Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities"

Executive Order No. 266, series of 2000 Philippine Plan of Action for Older Persons 1999-2004; became the national blueprint for instituting appropriate policies, programs, and services for older persons

Presidential Proclamation No. 1048, series of 1999	Declares a Nationwide Observance in the Philippines of the International Year of Older Persons in 1999
Presidential Proclamation No. 470, series of 1994	Declares the First Week of October of Every Year as Linggo ng Katandaang Pilipino (Elderly Filipino Week)

PHILIPPINE PLANS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

The table below summarizes the national plans the Philippines has developed for senior citizens since 1999, and their evolution through time.

Table 3. National Plans for Senior Citizens

Content/Framework		Milestones
1999-2004 Philippine Plan of Action for Older Persons (PPAOP)	The first national blueprint to promote the welfare of older persons; Operationalized the national government's commitment to the Macau Declaration and the Plan of Action on Ageing for Asia and the Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The issuance of Presidential Proclamation (PP) Nos. 470, series of 1994 and 1048, series of 1999. PP No. 470 declared the first week of October as Filipino Elderly Week ● The creation of the National Inter-Agency Committee on the PPAOP and 16 Regional Inter-Agency Committees to oversee, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the Plan ● Training and mobilization of senior citizens as volunteers in social welfare and development programs of DSWD, the Federation of Senior Citizens Associations of the Philippines (FSCAP) and local government units ● Organized the Federation of the Senior Citizens' Associations of the Philippines (FSCAP) at the national and local levels ● Establishment of an Office for Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) in cities and municipalities ● The development of programs for older persons such as Balik Literacy, the Neighborhood Support Services for Older Persons, Senior Citizens Day Centers, and Group Homes for Older Persons ● Issuance of a memo by the Department of Health to drugstores to strictly comply with the legal provision of giving senior citizens 20 per cent discount on purchase of medicine

- Recognition of gender-specific issues in ageing

2006-2010
Philippine Plan of
Action for the
Senior Citizens
(PPASC)

Adopted as a result of the signing of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, with the theme "Building a Society for All Ages."

Prioritized the needs of the underprivileged and ailing senior citizens, and the development of indicators for every major goal in every region, province, municipality and barangay.

Adopted from the Shanghai Regional Implementation Strategy on Ageing, the Plan's three priority directions or areas of concern - (1) *Senior Citizens and Development*; (2) *Advancing Health and Wellbeing into Old Age*; (3) *Ensuring Supportive and Enabling Environment*

- Establishment of functional Coordinating and Monitoring Board Committee at the national and regional levels
- Development of regional, provincial, city/municipal and barangay plans for senior citizens within the framework of PPASC
- Integration of data on senior citizens in the Philippine Statistical System

2012-2016
Philippine Plan of
Action for Senior
Citizens (PPASC)

Continued the three priority directions

- Ensured implementation of 1% budget allocation for senior citizens among government agencies & state colleges/universities
- Advocated for more policy and legislative measures
- Prioritized gender responsive community-based initiatives that will develop effective and meaningful participation of senior citizens in decision-making in the private and public spheres

PHILIPPINE INITIATIVES VIS-A-VIS ACTIVE AGEING FRAMEWORK

1. Health

The World Health Organization (2003) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It developed a policy framework on active ageing that refers to "the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security..." (World Health Organization, 2002). The end goal is the enhancement of people's quality of life as they age, including those who are frail, with disability and are in need of care.

Most of the key informants and focus group discussion (FGD) participants on active ageing held in selected cities in the Philippines in 2015 linked health with physical exercise, physical and mental health, independence, and longevity. Physical exercise is considered important to maintain one's health and to remain active. Some examples of physical exercise are walking, doing household chores, swimming and dancing the zumba. An 86-year old male respondent says that "I usually do physical exercise, like walking and I am very happy because I can still walk."

On the part of a 65-year old female resident of the DSWD-managed Haven for the Elderly, she says she still feels young because “I still walk fast...then sometimes, I still do my own laundry.... clean my bed... and engage in productive work, like making bags and wallets out of beads (Lola Emma, 2015).”

The Philippine Physical Activity Guidelines prescribe for senior citizens “at least 30 minutes of light to moderate physical activity, accumulated or in one session is needed for most days of the week, if not daily” (Philippine News Agency, 2012).

The World Health Organization (2002) recommends that governments ensure programs are in place to keep senior citizens active and prevent physical deterioration through proper nutrition and an active lifestyle. In this regard, the Philippines’ Department of Health (DOH) has collaborated with the WHO since 1999, which was declared by the UN as the International Year of Older Persons, in joining the Global Movement for Active Ageing, and instituting programs such as the Health Development Program for Older Persons, and Health and Well-being of Older Persons. These programs involve strategies such as accessible health services, education, and advocacy, including the production of an exercise video in cooperation with the Strength and Conditioning Inc. and the WHO-Philippine office (Philippine News Agency, 2012).

Walking is a common form of physical activity that national and government agencies like the DSWD and DOH use in their advocacy for public awareness on the issues and concerns of senior citizens. This is particularly true during the annual observance of the Elderly Filipino Week where the DSWD sponsors a “Walk for Life” for seniors and their families.

a. Physical and Mental Health

The second dimension of health, according to the research participants, is physical and mental health. An important determinant of physical and mental health is the right

attitude to ageing. American writer and feminist activist Betty Friedan once said, “Ageing is not lost youth but a new stage of opportunity and strength” (Bergland, 2016).

The January 2016 published research among older persons in Ireland entitled “Negative Perceptions of Aging Modify the Association Between Frailty and Cognitive Function in Older Adults” confirms how a positive attitude towards ageing can prevent older persons from becoming frail and enable them to stay mentally sharp. On the other hand, negative attitudes do affect both physical and cognitive health in older persons’ later years (Bergland, 2016).

Mental health is also contingent on social connections. In a study of the quality of life of senior citizens across different economic strata in the National Capital Region, Dr. Shelley dela Vega (2016), Director of the University of the Philippines in Manila (UPM) Institute of Ageing, National Institutes of Health, and among the first to be trained and licensed in the United States in geriatric medicine, reveals that quality of life is associated with being socially connected. Those with family members or at least one they know taking care of them expressed the most satisfaction with their quality of life. Social connection is like a safety net to them (dela Vega, 2016). To the elderly in the study, additional income, a good pension, or a “good source of money” can help improve their quality of life, as it can support their daily needs.

Active senior citizens’ associations and functional senior citizens centers also promote social interaction and connection among the elderly.

Social connection may also take the form of being up-to-date with what is going outside one’s immediate environs. In the government-run Haven for the Elderly in Rizal that has been given the highest level of accreditation, its head, Mr. Ricky Bunao (2016), makes sure that the residents are up-to-date with what is going on in society, including political developments. Each cottage is provided a TV set so the residents

can watch the news and entertainment programs for a maximum of two hours a day. Thus, the residents become aware of what is going on outside of their immediate environment and have more topics to discuss amongst themselves.

A different kind of social connection but no less important is that provided by the internet. This assumes added significance for those who are separated from loved ones by geographical distance. The OSCA in General Santos City co-sponsored with the government run- Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) a course to teach senior citizens how to use the internet (Arcaga, 2016).

b. Access to Health Services

Another determinant to physical and mental health is access to health services. The mandatory coverage of all senior citizens under the national health insurance program of PhilHealth is a big leap towards ensuring that healthservices—promotive, preventive, and rehabilitative—are within the reach of even the poorest senior citizens.

Regular visits to medical doctors is also imperative in maintaining senior citizens' physical and mental health. Geriatrics as a field of medicine in the Philippines has been given importance in the last decade. The National Center for Geriatric Health (NCGH) was established in 2010. Geriatric units have been established in some hospitals in Metro Manila such as the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital, and the privately owned St. Luke's Hospital.

Dr. dela Vega is among the prime movers behind such developments and in setting up organizations such as the Philippine College of Geriatric Medicine, an association of subspecialists in Geriatric Medicine, "pioneered, as well as established and currently run the charity outpatient geriatric clinics in the Philippine General Hospital, The National Centre for Geriatric Health (Malacañang Compound), and the Marikina City Health Department, among others (Philippine College of Geriatric Medicine). Said association has also conducted

medical outreach activities in several provinces, in Metro Manila, and in DSWD's residential care facility known as Haven for the Elderly in Tanay, Rizal. It has also provided technical assistance to DOH and the DSWD.

The Philippine Society of Gerontology and Geriatrics (PSGG), a multi-disciplinary professional organization composed of medical doctors and allied medical professionals, advocates for the appointment of a geriatrician in tertiary hospitals in the Philippines (Philippine Society of Gerontology and Geriatrics, 2015). It also conducts training for medical professionals and allied medical professionals (e.g., nurses, physical therapist and social workers) in providing care for senior citizens, thereby helping increase the number of human resources to care for the elderly.

In the case of residential centers for indigent, abandoned, neglected and sick elderly, medical care can drain already meager finances. In an interview on December 2016, key officers of the Home for the Aged St. Vincent said that 31 of the elderly in their care have Alzheimer's disease and that most of their budget goes to medical expenses. They receive funding from the local government of Gen. Santos City and from donations from parishioners and Catholic organizations.

In order to optimize access to medical care by the residents in the DSWD Haven for the Elderly, Bunao (2016) has networked with barangay, municipal and provincial health centers, as well as private hospitals in the town where the Haven is located.

In medical and nursing education, Dr. dela Vega has contributed to integrating geriatrics and gerontology in the curricular programs, especially in UP Manila, to produce practitioners who can competently relate with and treat elderly patients.

On preventive care, since pneumonia and acute lower respiratory tract infections rank as the second leading cause of morbidity among Filipinos in 2013, the DOH has

launched the Expanded Pneumococcal Immunization Program for Senior Citizens (Texan, 2016). All senior citizens aged 60 and 65 years old may have their free pneumococcal vaccination in their local health centers. The 60-year olds are given two doses - one at 60 years, the next after five years while the 65-year olds will have a single dose.

c. Healthy Diet

The third determinant is a healthy diet. Ageing slows down metabolism. It can also result in “decreased sense of taste or smell... poor appetite, nutrient malabsorption (Rodriguez, 2014).” Malnutrition may occur. Ms. Milagrina Jacinto, president of the Department of Health (DOH) League of Licensed Nutritionist-Dietitians Inc., advises the elderly to include in their diet vitamin-rich food, whole grains, fruits, fish and green leafy vegetables, and to avoid sugar and excessive sodium in their food (Rodriguez, 2014). Dr. Jimmy M. Bautista, a specialist in gastroenterology, neuro-gastroenterology, motility, and clinical research, says, “Physical activity and nutrient intake are two modifiable factors controlling the rate of decline in bodily functions that naturally occurs with age...Age is just a number. An individual who exercises regularly may have a biological age 10 years younger than his chronological age”.

As a preventive approach, one good practice in this area is the planting and consumption of organically grown vegetables by the seniors at the Haven for the Elderly; eating organically grown vegetables will help to add years to the life of the elderly in their centers (Bunao, 2016).

The fourth determinant of physical and mental health is independence. Independence is the ability to perform activities of daily living in the community with little or no help. Such activities include preparing one's meal, and going to the market or grocery. Independence is a function of the absence of any ailments and disability. The 2007 Philippine Longitudinal Study on Aging reveals that at least 15

percent of older persons reported to have some difficulty in daily life such as sitting down, standing up, and going out of the house. The pattern of older persons with functional difficulty is that it affects more females than males, those who are 80 years old and over, and those with lower educational attainment (Cruz, n.d.).

Exercise, a positive attitude, accessing healthcare services, independence and a balanced diet may well constitute a healthy lifestyle in active ageing.

In the case of the elderly who have been neglected, abused and/or abandoned by their families, and are indigent, DSWD manages four residential centers that have comprehensive services, including health care, dietary services and occupational therapy. COSE has its Group Home.

Faith-based organizations also manage residential centers such as the San Lorenzo Ruiz Home for the Elderly which is run by the Little Sisters of the Poor, the Kanlungan Ni Maria Home for the Aged in the Catholic Diocese of Antipolo, and the Home for the Aged St. Vincent in General Santos City in Mindanao.

Research is an important continuing function in the dimension of health. The University of the Philippines (UP) - National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Philippine Society for Gerontology and Geriatrics (PSGG) conduct research on ageing and disseminate findings through symposia, fora and conferences. Research findings, in the experience of Dr. dela Vega, are best translated into policy statements for advocacy to the Department of Health and/or Congress. If successful, and there have been a number of significant successes, they can lead to programs and services to better the elderly's quality of life.

Research, in a residential setting such as the Haven for the Elderly, may take the form of systematic and regular monitoring. The Haven for the Elderly in Tanay has developed monitoring indicators in the different aspects- psycho-social, medical, rehabilitation, home life- to measure the

progress of the residents from the day of arrival (Bunao, 2016). Based on the results, the elderly may be classified into Level 1 (the elderly is able to socialize with the others.), Level 2 (the elderly is able to socialize and share ideas) and Level 3 (the elderly not only shares ideas but is also able to set them into motion, and demonstrates leadership skill). Each level has a corresponding set of interventions.

d. Challenges in Health

The causes of mortality in the Philippines is a combination of communicable and non-communicable diseases. Infectious or communicable diseases remain on the top 10 list of the causes of mortality in the Philippines (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2012d). According to Dr. dela Vega (2013), developed countries have eradicated communicable diseases like tuberculosis but it has remained a public health concern in the Philippines. Therefore, the Philippine government has initiated a health program to address the communicable diseases like the Tuberculosis (TB) DOTS of the DOH. Smoking, alcohol intake, and socioeconomic status are the factors affecting the health of Filipino senior citizens (dela Vega, 2013).

Non-communicable diseases like dementia and communicable diseases like tuberculosis remain as among the main challenges in maintaining health and physical functioning among Filipino senior citizens. Majority of Filipinos are still unaware of dementia. Aging is one of dementia's risk factors. Christensen, Doblhammer, Rau, and Vaupel (2009) suggest that medical and welfare services are important to address challenges of aging populations like dementia. The Dementia Society of the Philippines was established in 2002 by a multidisciplinary group of specialists to discuss how best to respond to the increasing number of dementia cases (Dementia Society of the Philippines). It is engaged in health care provision, advocacy for policy development, health prevention, and pre-service, undergraduate and professional education in Medicine and Allied Health.

Low vision or partial blindness is the most common disability followed by mental illness, mental retardation, and multiple impairments (National Statistic Office, 2005). Among the senior citizens, oldest-old or those who are 80 years old and above are most vulnerable to physical disabilities and dementia. According to Christensen et al. (2009), the oldest-old are most at risks due to physical disability.

Another challenge is the inequity in health status and access to health services. Health service delivery involves a dual system involving the public and private sectors. The poor usually access services from public hospitals while 30 per cent of the population with money to pay for health services go to private hospitals that are concentrated in cities, particularly Metro-Manila. Life expectancy in richer provinces is higher by ten years compared to that in poorer provinces (World Health Organization, 2011). Moreover, medicines cost beyond the means of indigent senior citizens. There is also a shortage of medical professionals, especially in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas. More than 6 out of every 10 government health professionals practice in Luzon, specifically Metro-Manila (Department of Health 2007).

Then, there is the matter of inadequate residential care facilities for indigent elderly. Assuming that ten per cent of the 1.3 million indigent are in need of residential care, it is impossible to accommodate 130,000 in the current government and non-government facilities. Thus, the call for the national and local government units and the private sector to set up more residential care facilities.

Lastly, Dr. dela Vega points out the lack of funding for research. She has had to compete to access limited financial grants within and outside UP.

2. Participation

Participation refers to senior citizens' continuing engagement in social, economic, cultural, spiritual and civic affairs. In the Philippine context, senior citizens'

participation cuts across the micro-meso and macro levels. It is evident at the household, community, national and international arenas. It may either be on an individual organizational basis, self-initiated or elicited by the LGU or DSWD or partner CSOs, paid or unpaid (usually unpaid), ranging from reproductive work, to care work to political engagement (e.g., organizing, policy and legislative advocacy) impacting on the micro, meso and macro levels. A continuing theme is the strong spirit of voluntarism and community service among senior citizens.

a. Activities

In the family context, senior citizens, especially females, continue to perform productive and reproductive work, including caring for their children, grandchildren, and sick, frail, and infirmed family members. Concern has been raised over the situation where elderly grandmothers assume childcare in the absence of one or both parents who may be working abroad. Older persons good-naturedly refer to this as “back subjects” or “review.” Over time, however, childcare can take its toll on their physical wellbeing. (Basiano, 2011)

One of the findings of the 2007 Philippine Longitudinal Study on Aging is that older Filipinos are socially connected (Cruz and Camhol, 2013). Fifty-one percent of its sample of more than 3,000 respondents took part in religious activities, 41 per cent were members of organizations, and 21 percent were engaged in volunteer work with the church and community.

Section 3 of RA 7432 of 1992 (An Act to Maximize the Contribution of Senior Citizens to Nation Building, Grant Benefits and Special Privileges, and For Other Purposes) enumerates some community services that senior citizens may render. These services include tutorial and/or consultancy services, teaching and demonstration of hobbies and income-generating skill, lectures on specialized fields like agriculture, health, and environment protection. Current environmental risks and vulnerabilities have made it urgent for senior citizens to also

participate in disaster risk reduction and management initiatives.

The elderly have also gone beyond their own communities to render volunteer work. An example is the initiative of COPAP in the aftermath of super typhoon Haiyan that struck Leyte and Samar in the Visayas three (3) years ago. COPAP leaders, together with their partner NGO, the Coalition of Services for the Elderly Inc. (COSE), went to Leyte to assist in relief and rehabilitation work.

DSWD, as the primary government agency mandated to provide social protection programs and services for senior citizens, especially indigent ones, has placed importance on the active participation of citizens in the development and implementation of its program and services. According to the former DSWD Secretary, Corazon Juliano-Soliman, “the Department’s efforts would not be as effective without the active participation of citizens” (Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2014). Three examples are the following:

- Home Care Support Services for Senior Citizens that involves mobilizing members of the family and the community to care for the frail, sick and bedridden senior citizens in their midst.
- Intergenerational Program for Older Persons and Children in Mandaluyong City which improved the psychological outlook of senior citizens and social skills of children (Ms. Moral, KII -DSWD).
- Social Pension Program for Indigent Senior Citizens where DSWD is now involving OSCA members to participate in the validation of social pension beneficiaries; and
- ELDERLY or Elderly Leaders Delivering for Resiliency in Late Years. DSWD recently concluded pilot testing it. The project aims to promote active ageing through mobilizing and establishing a core group of volunteers among the residents of the Golden Reception and Action Centre for the Elderly and Other Special Needs (GRACES) to

assist in the management of the center, e.g., orienting visitors about the center.

Senior citizens in residential centers such as GRACES voluntarily help maintain cleanliness under the supervision of a houseparent. Some of them provide support to their co-residents like accompanying them to the hospital or helping less those with disabilities in their activities of daily living.

The Coalition of Services of the Elderly, Inc. (COSE) is a non-governmental organization that was established in 1989. It envisions sustainable, self-managing organizations of senior citizens responding to the most urgent needs of all senior citizens in poor urban and rural communities (Coalition of Services of the Elderly, 2015). It pioneered in mainstreaming the notion of caring for the elderly as not just a family but as a community concern. It trained community care providers who would visit older persons in the neighborhood who lived alone or whose families could not adequately care for them. Their work involved interacting with them, and helping them with activities of daily living.

Senior citizens are also considered a political force. As OSCA heads, they are in a position to monitor the implementation of laws and ordinances pertinent to the rights and welfare of senior citizens. For example, retired teacher Ms. Lydia Tobola, 70-year-old OSCA head in General Santos City, monitors the enforcement of the 20% discount on medicine, groceries and others that senior citizens are entitled to, receives complaints on its non-enforcement, and uses funding from the local government to conduct quarterly multi-stakeholders' consultations on said discount. She has the authority to call non-compliant companies to such consultations to explain why they do not enforce the 20% discount.

As a sector, senior citizens have been lauded by Atty. Karen Dumpit, of the Commission on Human Rights, for being "a viable force in the election", referring to the May 2016 national election. Atty. Dumpit

acknowledged their influence on family members vis-a-vis choice of candidates (Coalition of Services of the Elderly Inc.).

Filipino senior citizens successfully utilized the party-list system of Congress, garnering two seats in May 2016 elections. The Coalition of Associations of Senior Citizens in the Philippines (Senior Citizens) represents senior citizens in the current Congress.

To facilitate the participation of senior citizens in elections, it is the duty of the Commission on Elections, by virtue of RA 10366 (An Act Authorizing the Commission on Elections to Establish Precincts Assigned to Accessible Polling Places Exclusively for Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens), to provide appropriate assistance to persons with disabilities and senior citizens to fulfill their right to participate in electoral processes. An example of such assistance is "ensuring that voting procedures, facilities and materials are appropriate, accessible, and easy to understand and use" (Section 3(a)). Another is giving them priority during elections which can translate to designating a specific lane for them.

b. Senior Citizens' Organizations and Their Work

To the marginalized and economically disadvantaged, community organizing is a form of social protection (Basiano 2011).

Senior citizens' organizations (SCOs) serve as mechanisms to forge unity within the sector. They also serve as their voice, articulating and advancing their needs and aspirations within the frame of their socio-cultural, economic and political rights. RA 7876 provides for the creation of a Senior Citizens Center in every city and municipality.

These Centers provide a physical space for senior citizens to get together for recreational, educational, training and volunteer activities, among others. There

are only 540 SCCs all over the country (Sanchez, 2010). Given that, a) RA 7876 mandates the establishment of a Senior Citizens Center in every city and municipality; and b) there are 135 cities and 1,493 municipalities, there should be 1,628 SCCs. Only thirty three per cent of the target has been achieved fifteen years after the enactment of the law. The low achievement rate (33%) in the establishment of the legally mandated SCCs in all cities and municipalities deserves attention.

One of the most important provisions of RA 9994 is that it mandates that the OSCA head be a senior citizen. The OSCA head is in-charge of managing the day-to-day operations of the center as well as in monitoring the implementation of the provisions of the law for senior citizens. OSCA provides the link between SCOs and local government services. OSCA encourages participation of senior citizen in local governance.

SCOs work together with OSCA in managing Senior Citizens Centers (SCC) under the supervision of the City or Municipal Social Welfare and Development Organization (C/MSWDO).

Existing SCOs unite or coalesce, resulting in bigger formations such as the Federation of Senior Citizens Associations of the Philippines (FSCAP) and the Confederation of Older Persons Associations of the Philippines (COPAP). They have regular meetings and engage in socio-cultural, economic and political programs.

FSCAP is the largest sectoral organization with representation from the barangay, municipal, city, provincial, regional and national levels. Some of its leaders and members are sectoral representatives in the NCMB and RCMB. Moreover, the FSCAP in cooperation with DSWD has co-sponsored the National Forum on Advocacy for Older Persons (2000), and the 2015 Multi-Stakeholders Dialogue on the Promotion & Protection of the Rights of Older Persons.

FSCAP encourages senior citizens to participate in socio-cultural activities as well as to provide social support to their members. Some examples are the following:

- The Barili Federation of Senior Citizens in Cebu provides social support to their members especially to those who are living in far-flung communities through providing information about the services and linking them with social welfare services.
- The Bacnotan Senior Citizens Association Inc. (BASCAI) in La Union has received commendation for its outreach program and contributions to community development such as the livelihood program for youth in conflict with the law. It is composed mostly of retired professionals.

At the national level, senior citizens have sectoral representation at NAPC. Through FSCAP and COPAP, they have taken part in the development of the Philippine Plan of Action for Senior Citizens and are actively engaged in policy and legislative lobbying to advance the rights and interests of senior citizens. COPAP, in fact, was the main lobbyist for the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2003 (R.A. 9257) (COPAP Blog). RA 9257 is the result of more than three years of lobbying, “proof that older people are a powerful force in society” (Kupang, 2010 as quoted in Know-Vydmanov’s Help Age Blog).

On November 24, 2015, together with other SCOs, COPAP and FSCAP co-sponsored the first National Summit on Ageing in Manila. More than a thousand attended, including the 25 NAPC senior citizens’ sectoral representatives, representatives of government agencies such as DSWD, PhilHealth and the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), and civil society organizations. NAPC sectoral representative Salvacion Basiano discussed the 6-Point Policy and Legislative Agenda of Older Persons that included the expansion of the social pension that benefits indigent senior citizens.

As a sector, senior citizens have successfully elected their representatives to

the House of Representatives via the partylist system. The Coalition of Associations of Senior Citizens in the Philippines (CASCP) garnered enough votes in the 2010 and 2016 elections to get two seats.

To complement their engagement in formal legislative structures and processes, SCOs have also launched campaigns and social mobilizations (e.g., rallies) to articulate their issues and concerns to the government and the general public.

At the international level, FSCAP and COPAP are part of global networks such as Help Age International. One of the advocacies is the adoption of a UN convention on the rights of older persons.

Senior citizens' participation in the private and private spheres may be viewed as part of lifelong learning, combining experiential learning with structured ones, e.g., seminars, trainings, and processes such as action-reflection-action. COSE, a partner of COPAP, has two programs - Capability Enhancement Program (CEP) and Awareness/Advocacy/Coalition Building (AACB) - that have helped raise the level of consciousness and capacity of COPAP leaders and members to manage their organizations and engage in advocacy, and partnership development, among others. CEP includes leadership training, organizational development, financial management, and participatory action research, all leading towards capability building on the part of older people themselves.

Apart from learning, participation is also a means to socialize, to increase one's sense of worth and purpose in life, build networks and partnerships, and prevent social isolation.

c. Public Recognition of Senior Citizens' Leadership and Community Service

At least two non-governmental entities formally recognize the contributions of outstanding senior citizens by giving out

awards. These are COSE and BusinessMirror, a daily newspaper. COSE has been giving out annual SUN (Sampung Uliirang Nakatatanda or Ten Outstanding Older Persons) since 1991 during the celebration of Filipino Elderly Week. On the other hand, BusinessMirror in partnership with United Bayanihan Foundation and other NGOs, has its annual Dangal (Dakilang Adhikain ng Ating Lahi or Noble Aspirations of our Race) Awards for Elderly Care (Riego and Abad, 2014). Awardees range from senior citizens in impoverished conditions, e.g., scavengers, street sweepers, to those who continue to practice their professions, who devote time and skills to serve the community in formal and non-formal capacities.

d. Challenges in Participation

The decline in physical ability and well-being remains to be the main challenges for participation. Moreover, the increasing number of senior citizens with functional disability is an area of concern. The estimated number of Filipinos with physical disability is 935,551 and 329,000 senior citizens with some form of disability (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2012c).

Reproductive work, specially taking care of grandchildren, as well as continuing engagement in economic activities may also constrain senior citizens from exercising their right to participate.

3. Economic and Financial Security

Financial security in later life is important, particularly to support the basic survival and medical needs of senior citizens. Dr. De la Vega from UP-NIH suggests that "income for senior citizens contributes to their quality of life which will also contribute to active ageing".

The mandatory retirement age of employees in the private sector is 60 years, 65 years in the public sector. As contributing members of the Social Security System (SSS) or the Government Service Insurance System

(GSIS), retired employees are entitled to social security with flexible schemes of availment. One issue that has been raised by pensioners of SSS is the inadequacy of the current monthly pension. For a minimum of 120 months (10 years) contributions, a pensioner is entitled to Php1,200.00 (US\$25.00), and for those who contributed for at least 240 months, the monthly pension is Php2,400.00 (US\$52.00). The same rates have been sustained since 1997 despite the 200 per cent increase in inflation since 1997 (Colmenares as cited by Cabacungan, Carvajal and Salaverria, 2016).

President Rodrigo Duterte recently approved a Php2,000.00 monthly increase in the SSS pension. The two chambers of Congress have also approved the increase but no law has been enacted yet.

For those who work in the informal sector or have been without remunerated work, social pension is the instrument to mitigate further impoverishment in old age. It is the main social protection strategy of the government through DSWD. The monthly pension is Php500.00 (US\$10.87), just a third of what COPAP had proposed during its lobby for what would become RA 9994 (The Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010). From 2011 to 2014, the government through DSWD continuously increased the number of indigent senior citizens receiving social pension, from 138,960 beneficiaries in 2011 to 481,603 in 2014. Due to budget limitation, this number covered only the 77-year old and above. In 2015, the approved budget for social pension was increased to Php5.962B from Php3.1B in 2014, which enabled DSWD to cover the 65-year olds and above. For 2016, a budget of Php8.277B was proposed by DSWD to cover 60 year-olds that would benefit 1,375,970 indigent senior citizens. (Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2016)

Senior citizens find themselves in a bind. Their capacity and productivity are assumed to diminish as they age, and yet their pension after decades of employment does not qualify them to be financially secure. Neither is the social pension for indigents. PhilHealth coverage helps but that is

available only during hospital confinement. Thus, the heavy pressure on the elderly to continue to be gainfully employed or risk further impoverishment.

a. Some Initiatives

DSWD is pilot-testing “Cash for Work for Elderly” which provides an allowance or small remuneration for services provided by senior citizens. The allowances augment the daily needs of senior citizens and enable them to fulfil their responsibility in their community.

In the private sector, SM Supermalls began hiring senior citizens in October 2013. It launched its Senior Citizen Community Service Program which is part of its corporate social responsibility. To qualify as greeter or usher, a senior citizen must be between 60-70 years old, medically fit, and a resident of a community where SM has a branch. The jobs are part-time: four hours a day, twice a week, preferably on weekends or holidays.

RA 9994 provides tax exemptions to corporations and companies employing senior citizens.

An example of a public-private partnership to support senior citizens economic security is the Asian Development Bank's partnership with local government units and civil society organizations in a US\$20 million program in Samar and Leyte, two of the poorest provinces and most hit by Typhoon Haiyan. The program began in February 2014, involving cash for work, conditional and unconditional cash transfers (Asian Development Bank, 2015). The grantees are chosen based on age, pension income and existing support from their families. The local barangay officials may exercise flexibility in deciding on how to spend the money. In relation to unconditional cash transfer to the elderly, 260 pesos are given each grantee for a period of 30 days. Usually, grantees are those who can no longer work and have meager to nil income.

RA 10911 (The Anti-Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 2016) is a potential boost

to the fulfillment of senior citizens' right to employment. It prohibits forcibly laying off a worker because of old age or imposing early retirement. The Department of Labor and Employment is mandated to conduct studies towards minimizing barriers to employment of senior citizens. However, it is too early to determine the impact it will make, if any.

b. Challenges

According to Atty. Germaine Trittle Leonin of DSWD (2016), "financial insecurity is still a major concern for older persons, especially those in low-income groups". Financial insecurity may be a function of structural, cultural, and physical factors that limit senior citizens' capability to access the few economic opportunities that are available in a sustainable manner, and the concomitant low income. It may also be a function of the minimal pension received by SSS and indigent senior citizens, indicating low priority by the government.

Basiano (2011) says the reasons are more structural than cultural. She cites the premium on youth and education, the lack of access to non-collateralized loans, rendering them without a choice except to borrow from usurers.

4. Enabling Mechanisms

Existing policies, laws, programs and mandated structures such as OSCA and SCC are enabling mechanisms to the recognition of older persons as a distinct crosscutting sector and to the exercise and fulfillment of their rights. However, implementation lags behind legally mandated protective and non-discrimination provisions. An example is the slow compliance with the establishment of SCCs.

The Presidential Human Rights Committee (PHRC) is mandated by law to monitor the compliance of the different government agencies to the Philippine human rights plans. Specific to senior citizens and their entitlements, the National Coordinating and Monitoring Board which is headed by DSWD has been created with regional counterparts.

The discounts, VAT exemptions, and other entitlements are intended to make life better for older persons. But, they have had a differential impact on different income groups with the rich benefitting more than the poor. Tan (2013) summarizes the findings of the 2007 Philippine Longitudinal Study of Aging illustrating inequities between the rich and the poor: "Only 31 percent of the poorest quintile availed themselves of discounts for medicines, compared to 72 percent for the richest quintile...Among the richest quintile, 20 percent availed themselves of discounts on movies. The figure was a mere 4 percent for the poorest quintile."

An age-friendly, safe and healthy environment remains to be aspirational. Senior citizens themselves, through their organizations, have to be the main actors in its pursuit. They have to advocate for bigger budgets from local government units, for compliance with the law on the establishment of SCCs, and the mandated benefits. They have to continue organizing and educating their ranks to make their sector more visible, their voices heard.

a. Challenges to the Enabling Mechanisms

One major challenge is the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of legally mandated senior citizens' entitlements. Multiple stakeholders should get involved in this process. The conduct of a scorecard is a possible option for this purpose.

Database on the elderly at the barangay, city/municipal, and provincial levels is also a gap to be addressed. For example, a master list of senior citizens for the provision of anti-pneumonia vaccine will be most welcome to facilitate proper targeting of beneficiaries. A second example is profiling that would reflect senior citizens' lived realities as a result of their age, gender, educational level, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity, among others.

And with meager monthly pensions, impoverished senior citizens find it difficult

to cope with them, much less cross the poverty threshold.

CONCLUSIONS

The Philippine government has made significant strides in the enactment of policies, laws and programs. Most of the policies and program provide enabling mechanisms to maximize older peoples' active participation in community development and nation building. They have set conditions in place, albeit to a limited extent, for the realization of the determinants of active ageing, especially participation. Health, economic and financial security remain to be unaddressed because of structural factors, e.g. inequities in the health sector, and inadequate social protection measures because of budget constraints. Presently, the written word is far more advanced than implementation.

Active ageing is a multidimensional and multi-level concept that can be achieved through strategic and concerted efforts of the public, private, and civil society organizations, most specially the SCOs. In addition to the current determinants of active ageing based on the WHO framework, family life, community cohesion, and connectedness in a spiritual and social sense, are significant in the Philippines context.

The lived realities of senior citizens are often described and analyzed in the laws and in the programs and services in a general and essential way, without due consideration to how gender, class, and disability affect them and their access to and availment of mandated structures and entitlements.

Senior citizens who are active in community work break stereotypes that ageing will automatically hinder their role as citizens. Voluntary work is given much importance in community participation.

There are good practices such as the establishment of the Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) under the jurisdiction of local government units.

Another is the mandate for the setting up of SCCs and SCOs.

A third good practice is the work that SCOs such as the FSCAP and COPAP have done, ranging from social protection to political engagement in pursuit of the rights and wellbeing of senior citizens.

Special attention should be given to older Filipino persons living in poverty, and with disabilities or health problems to access support services and to remain and attain active ageing. At present, the number of residential facilities for indigent senior citizens is insufficient and subsist on minimal government (national and local government) budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Monitor the implementation of legally mandated entitlements of senior citizens.
- Increase social pension for indigent senior citizens program to address financial insecurity in old age and to promote active ageing among poor older Filipinos.
- Create elderly friendly communities through investment on elderly friendly infrastructure. Creating an enabling physical environment requires the public-private sector support.
- Given the threat of communicable and non-communicable disease, promote healthy lifestyle not only among older persons but throughout the life-course and strengthen community-based health services.
- DSWD and other concerned government agencies as well as non-governmental organizations and SCOs to adopt the concept of active ageing in their plans and program.
- Integrate gender, class, disability, and sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) as intersecting social stratifiers in assessing the lived realities of senior citizens and developing policies and programs with them.

- Institutionalize indicators that will measure outcomes, not only outputs, within the frame of active ageing and its three dimensions, namely health, participation and financial security.
- Strengthening the database and/or profiling systems of senior citizens at the local level.
- Increase budget for the establishment of more residential facilities for indigent, abandoned and neglected senior citizens. This is a recommendation for national and local government units.
- Coordinate closely with LGUs in implementing legal mandates and provisions towards creating elderly friendly communities.
- Conduct research in the following areas: sexual orientation, gender identity and expression concerns among the elderly, (e.g. discrimination, HIV/AIDS complications, pre-mature ageing), improving active life expectancy, community-based program in promoting active ageing, elder abuse, addressing challenges in participation, financial security in old age, participation in labor markets, gender differences, developing indicators and etc.

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Assessment of DSWD's International Social Welfare Services for Filipino Nationals

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ABSTRACT

Currently, more than 10 million Filipinos are staying in 197 foreign countries and territories, making the Philippines one of the top sources of immigrants around the globe. A large proportion of these Overseas Filipinos (OFs) are migrant workers. The rapid and large-scale international labor migration from the Philippines started five decades ago as a response to the oil-rich Gulf countries' demand for workers to carry out infrastructure development projects after the oil-crisis in 1973. Reinforcing the outflow of migrants was the passage of the Labor Code of the Philippines in 1974, which established the Philippine government's overseas employment program. This opened employment opportunities abroad and prompted the Filipinos to migrate in pursuit of better economic condition and quality of life.

While economic benefits of migration through increased remittances are clearly substantial, safety and welfare of Filipino migrants have been put at risk. Over the years, statistics showed that a considerable number of OFs are in distress – many have been victims of abuse, maltreatment and trafficking. Some have lost their jobs due to economic downturns, while others face criminal sentences. In response to these social protection and welfare concerns of Filipino migrants, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, given its mandate to provide care and protection to vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and sectors, started to implement the International Social Welfare Services for Filipino Nationals (ISWSFN) in 2002 in countries with high concentration of Overseas Filipinos.

With almost two decades of implementation, there have been no studies conducted to examine the extent of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of ISWSFN's interventions. This paper addresses this gap by examining quantitative and qualitative information collected from distressed Overseas Filipinos receiving ISWSFN's services, different program stakeholders, and other relevant sources in four selected countries: Malaysia, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Kuwait. Resulting evidence proved the continuing need for ISWSFN interventions for the foreseeable future. Relevance of social welfare services through ISWSFN was heightened given the high magnitude of distressed and vulnerable OFs in the visited countries. Findings also revealed that despite the existence of human and financial resources constraints, this did not compromise the effectiveness of ISWSFN as evidenced by the clients' highly satisfactory feedback. Still, much remains to be done in ensuring seamless convergence efforts among the Philippine government agencies and in developing policies that would cushion OF's vulnerability to risks associated with migration.

Keywords: Distressed Overseas Filipinos, migration, international social services, Social Welfare Attaches

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Background

The Philippines is known as a major source of global workers. Since the 1970s, the number of Filipinos migrating to work abroad has followed an upward trend. More than a million Filipino workers are being deployed annually to about 197 countries and territories all over the world and work in thousands of different settings. In 2014, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas accounted for 10,238,614 overseas Filipinos in 197 countries and territories as of December 2013.

In the 2015 Survey on Overseas Filipinos (SOF) by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), sixty percent (60%) of the OFWs are concentrated in the Middle East countries topped by Saudi Arabia with 25% of the total OFWs. However, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs-Philippines, Malaysia has the greatest number of undocumented Filipinos with 448,450 persons or 38% of all undocumented OFWs.

In the same SOF, women OFWs constitute fifty-one percent (51%) of the total OFWs with seventy-three percent (73%) serving as laborers, unskilled workers, and service workers. These are usually considered areas of employment with minimal protection, making our women vulnerable to sexual exploitation, abuse, and violence.

The combination of the vulnerable (female, unskilled, low level of education), and the high likelihood of exposure (type of work, tenure, and location of work) put the welfare and safety of OFWs at risk. Over the years, statistics showed that many OFWs under these conditions suffered abuse, maltreatment, forced labor, and exploitation, hence in need of special protection.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development, in line with its mandate to

provide care and protection to vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and sectors, developed the International Social Welfare Services for Filipino Nationals (ISWSFN). Prompted by the massive crackdown/deportation of Filipino nationals in Malaysia, the DSWD began posting its Social Welfare Attachés (SWAtts) in 2002 in countries with high concentration of Overseas Filipinos (OFs) to uphold and protect their rights and welfare, especially the undocumented and distressed.

The SWAtts, as members of the One Country Team (OCT), are very active in helping migrant Filipinos and other overseas Filipino nationals in crisis situation and in need of special protection, especially those who are undocumented and distressed – such as victims of trafficking, illegal recruitment, abuse/exploitation, maltreatment of employers, and human-induced and natural disasters. They also provide services to prisoners/detainees, children in need of special protection (abandoned, neglected, exploited, and abused, including those needing alternative placement), Filipinos experiencing marital and domestic-related problems, those in need of pre-marriage/marriage counseling, those with health problems, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities.

Pursuant to DSWD's thrust towards providing expedient and compassionate service to the public, the continuing expansion of the program calls for a study to assess its implementation in the Foreign Posts. It is in this regard that the Undersecretary for Exigent Concerns was instructed to head an assessment as per DSWD Special Order No. 3916, series of 2016.

⁶Transnational Bridge: Migration, Development and Solidarity, Scalabrini Migration Center-CFO 2010

⁷The conditions of Overseas Filipino Workers in Saudi Arabia. Final Report of the Investigating Mission of the Committee on Overseas Workers' Affairs (COWA) to Saudi Arabia in January 9-13, 2011 by Rep. Walden Bello et. al.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to assess the implementation of the DSWD's International Social Welfare Services for vulnerable and distressed Overseas Filipinos (OFs). Specifically, it intended to:

- Determine the relevance of the ISWSFN in providing the needs of distressed overseas Filipinos;
- Evaluate the responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency of interventions; and
- Recommend criteria for identifying and prioritizing countries where ISSO or SWAtt would be needed.

METHODOLOGY

The study used the ISWSFN's program logic below as the framework/guide to evaluate the implementation of the program. To evaluate the **program relevance**, the assessment team analyzed the **inputs, strategies, and agencies involved in the implementation of the program**. This area focused on understanding the rationale for deploying SWAtt in selected diplomatic posts. On the other hand, **services and outputs** were reviewed to evaluate the **efficiency of service**

delivery since these levels represent ISSO's implementation part. This area includes the analysis of service delivery procedures, and the strength of coordination/referral mechanisms, among others. Lastly, **output to outcome (objective) levels** were assessed to determine the **responsiveness and effectiveness of the ISSO's interventions**. Analyzing the services provided by the ISSO in relation to the services needed by vulnerable and distressed OFs was the primary focus of this evaluation area

GOAL	Welfare and Well-Being Promoted and Rights of all Overseas Filipinos Protected				Responsiveness and Effectiveness of Service Delivery
OBJECTIVES	Ensure Efficient and Effective Delivery of Services to Overseas Filipinos, particularly those in distress, who require prompt and proper assistance at all times				
OUTPUTS	Appropriate and Adequate SWD Services provided in a timely manner	Coordinated and integrated service delivery strengthened			
SERVICES	Service Delivery Procedures				Efficiency of Service Delivery
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Psycho-social servicesAssistance Individual in Crisis SituationAlternative Parental CareChildren in Need of Special ProtectionRepatriation AssistanceReferral	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assistance in employment related complaintsLegal assistanceWelfare assistanceReferralAscertaining whereabouts, runawaysRepatriation esp contract workersDeath benefitsCounseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assistance in Criminal casesAssistance in Immigration casesPrison and hospital visitationBlood money negotiationShipment of remainsRepatriation AssistanceVerification of whereabouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Medical servicescoordinationMedical missions	
AGENCIES	DSWD Social Welfare Attaché	DOLE Labor Attaché	DFA Assistance to Nationals & Legal Service	DOH PHILHEALTH	Program Relevance
STRATEGY	One Country Team Approach				
INPUTS	Resources	Situation of the OFs	Guidelines and Policies	National and International laws	

Mixed method approach – both quantitative and qualitative methods – was employed to achieve the objectives of the study. Quantitative and qualitative information were collected from distressed Overseas Filipinos (FGDs), and clientele survey. Review of receiving ISWSFN's services, different program stakeholders, and other relevant sources in four selected countries: Malaysia, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Kuwait through key informant interviews, focus group discussions relevant documents was also done to answer the objectives of the study.

Surveys were conducted to clients who received services from ISSOs in the four (4) study sites/countries. Clients served who were already repatriated in the Philippines were also surveyed to have a deeper understanding on the variations of satisfaction on and outcomes of the ISWSFN services. An individual questionnaire comprised of mostly closed questions and a few open questions was administered to respondents to determine the responsiveness and effectiveness of services.

For the survey operations from each foreign country, purposive sampling was conducted on the set of clients served through the ISWSFN. The research team employed non-probability sampling due to the nature of the population of interest (moving/non-fixed) and limitations (resources and time) in conducting the study. The size of the sample collected from the 4 foreign posts was n=62. Interviews were only conducted with clients who were served by the Social Welfare Attachés.

RESULTS

Posts visited have high magnitude of vulnerable and distressed Overseas Filipinos thus a high demand for SWAtt services. Shown in the following table are the data of Overseas Filipinos of Philippine Embassies in selected posts. The data suggest that there are a considerably high number of vulnerable Filipinos in selected

countries, as shown by the number of undocumented OFs and number of Household Service Workers. Due to their status, these OFs lack legal and social protection which increases their exposure to various types of abuses. It was also observed that a high number of distressed OFs sought assistance from the Philippine Embassies thus, the high demand for SWAtt services.

Table 2. Statistics on Overseas Filipinos in Selected Countries, 2015

Statistics on Overseas Filipinos	Malaysia	UAE	KSA	Kuwait
Number of Overseas Filipinos*	620,043	574,366	862,648	207,655
Number of Undocumented OFs	298,450	no data	10,625	9,170
Number of Household Service Workers**	180,000	140,285	166,562	164,600
Number of Undocumented HSWs**	-	-	10,625	8,056
Total Number of Distressed Overseas Filipinos served by the Embassy*	22,331	3,740	7,415	9,382
Total Number of Overseas Filipinos Repatriated*	17,366	306	1,765	2,338
* Based on PE Report for July-December 2015				
** Based on Host Country Report 2016				

It should be noted, however, that not all OFs served by SWAtts are distressed. Some of the clients of SWAtts needed pre-marriage counselling services and

services for minors travelling abroad. Table below shows that UAE served the highest number of non-distressed OFs. In fact, more than half of the clients served by the SWAtt in UAE are not distressed.

Table 3. Number of Distressed and Non-distressed Clients of SWAtts, 2015

OFs Served by SWAtts	Malaysia		UAE		KSA		Kuwait		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Distressed	1336	100.0	572	40.1	1834	95.8	670	75.7	4412	79.3
Non-distressed	0	0.0	855	59.9	81	4.2	215	24.3	1151	20.7
Total	1336	100.0	1427	100.0	1915	100.0	885	100.0	5563	100.0

Most of the distressed are household service workers and undocumented overseas Filipinos. As presented in the following table, the highest number of cases of distressed OFs was found in Malaysia, wherein

majority have immigration offenses and are mostly repatriated/deported to the Philippines. This was followed by Kuwait which are mostly Household Service Workers.

Table 4. Distressed OFs Served by the Embassy

Category	Malaysia		UAE		KSA		KUWAIT		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Distressed HSWs and Undocumented OFs	18,387	82.3	2,040	54.5	2,220	29.9	4,570	48.7	27,217	63.5
Undocumented OFs	17,313	77.5	476	12.7	686	9.3	580	6.2	19,055	44.5
HSWs	1,074	4.8	1,564	41.8	1,534	20.7	3,990	42.5	8,162	19.0
Other Distressed OFs	3,944	17.7	1,700	45.5	5,195	70.1	4,812	51.3	15,651	36.5
Total Distressed	22,331	100.0	3,740	100.0	7,415	100.0	9,382	100.0	42,868	100.0

Different types of distress require varying duration & intensity of case management as some cases are complex in nature. Different types of distress were found in various countries. Highest number of cases of abuse and maltreatment were observed in Middle East countries. These OFs require psychosocial services and would need medium to long term case management. Similarly, trafficking victims who are mostly in Malaysia and UAE need psychosocial services as well

as referral services on reintegration interventions in the Philippines. On the other hand, OFs in prisons will require jail visits and counselling from the SWAtts, whenever necessary. Moreover, unemployed and stranded OFs would need services which are short term in nature such as Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS). When repatriated in the Philippines, these Filipinos could be provided with financial/livelihood assistance from the DSWD.

Table 5. Distressed OFs, 2015

Types of Distress	Malaysia	UAE	KSA	Kuwait
Victims of Physical/Sexual abuse	82	153	382	276
Victims of Maltreatment	315	123	353	383
Victims of Verbal Abuse	770	409	93	1318
Involved in Immorality cases	7	71	190	13
Having Illegitimate Pregnancy	-	-	-	18
Unemployed and Stranded OFWs in need of Shelter (old, weak, PWDs)	-	-	600*	22**
Victims of Trafficking	61	70	18	13
OFs in Prisons/with Criminal Cases	1,482	426	652	151
*Estimate				
**Based on SWAtt accomplishment report, 2016				

Many distressed OFs have poor families who are dependent on their remittances.

Based on the client survey, respondents said that their main motivation for working overseas was to support their families financially. Furthermore, many of the respondents mentioned that they wanted to have a “masaganang buhay” and they believed that working abroad will help them to have a wealthy life for their families. Their families depend on their remittances to augment their household expenses.

There are emerging cases of undocumented children in need of special protection.

Countries visited, except for UAE, had high magnitude of undocumented children clients. These cases are children who are born to undocumented parents, illegitimate children, and those who are born out of wedlock, among others. These figures could go higher since not all OFs seek assistance of Philippine Embassies with regard to concerns of undocumented children.

Table 6. Cases of Undocumented Children per post

Malaysia	UAE	KSA	Kuwait
1,018	7	215	279

Stranded male OFs emerge as a new type of vulnerable group in KSA.

The assessment team also discovered the alarming case of distressed male OFWs in KSA. Some of them are staying in *Esteraha*. *Esteraha* is a place or a compound which can be rented for social gatherings and parties. One *esteraha* was converted into a temporary shelter for male OFWs. At the time of the team’s visit, there are more than 80 male OFWs at *Esteraha*. Most of them ran away from their employers and some do not have exit visa yet due to their pending police or labor cases.

OFs in prisons with pending court cases could have been mostly involved in drugs & immorality.

Table 7 below shows that there is a high number of overseas Filipinos in prisons. The highest number among all posts visited by the assessment team was found in Malaysia. Drug-related cases are also highest in Malaysia, followed by Kuwait. Meanwhile, the highest number of OFs with pending court cases are found in Middle Eastern countries such as KSA, followed by Dubai.

Table 7. Cases of OFs in Prison, with Drug-Related Cases and Cases of Immorality

Category	MALAYSIA	UAE	KSA	KUWAIT
OFs in Prisons	1,969	498	855	230
Drug-related	1,131	89	204	80
Immorality	7	71	222	13

Malaysia has the most number of detained OFs for violation of immigration laws.

Among all posts visited, Malaysia has the

highest number of detained overseas Filipinos for violation of immigration laws. This was followed by UAE by a large margin.

Table 8. Number of Detained OFs per Post

	MALAYSIA	UAE	KSA	KUWAIT
Detained OFs	3,010	276	123	46
%	87%	8%	3.5%	1.5%

The JMO is not fully implemented in all visited posts which affects the functionality of the OCTA.

Although a Joint Manual of Operations (JMO) exist, it was observed that its provisions are not religiously followed. The One Country Team Approach

(OCTA) is more relational rather than institutional. The URAF and Prison Visit Form (PVF) are non-existent in all countries visited. Further, duplication of services is evident, i.e. Repatriation services, medical assistance.

Limited human resources affect the coverage and extent of service delivery especially in areas that are far from the location of a particular post. SWAtt services are not reaching enough distressed OFs due to limited manpower. This was observed in countries with OFs employed in areas with vast geographic distances from the capital where the Embassy is situated, such as UAE.

Meanwhile, SWATO pulled down the average utilization rate of ISSOs. As shown in table below, the fund utilization rate in all ISSOs posts were above 50%. However, the rate of utilization was pulled down by the national project management office with a low utilization rate of 12.2%.

Table 9. Utilization Rate of ISSOs

Post	2015			2016		
	Annual Allocation	Funds Utilized	Utilization Rate	Annual Allocation	Funds Utilized	Utilization Rate
Malaysia	7550848.87	3621658.33	48.0%	5644227.58	5065685.90	89.8%
Riyadh	7288301.65	6560908.89	90.0%	5949732.35	6007999.92	101.0%
Abu Dhabi	9586892.65	5677485.68	59.2%	7963092.66	5034189.07	63.2%
Qatar	5996855.80	4774172.84	79.6%	5035532.85	4102783.06	81.5%
South Korea	5734625.60	3688717.88	64.3%	3129609.60	1599122.43	51.1%
Jeddah	7202479.45	3830083.31	53.2%	2649149.10	2107269.42	79.6%
Hong Kong	5766237.65	3725540.47	64.6%	3821421.60	2920650.57	76.4%
Kuwait	7163016.98	4686736.50	65.4%	2767050.00	2771211.96	100.2%
SWATO	24261961.40	15593622.65	64.3%	24240184.26	2951942.93	12.2%
Total	80,551,220.05	52,158,926.55	64.8%	68,000,000.00	32,560,855.26	47.9%

AICS is the most provided service followed by psychosocial services. Out of all the services listed in the Joint Manual of Operations, AICS is the most provided services by the ISSOs in all posts combined. AICS may include food assistance, provision

of toiletries and hygiene kits, and other basic needs. This is particularly highest in KSA where a large number of OFs encountered employment-related issues. Next to AICS, psychosocial services was the second most provided service among all posts.

Table 10. Number of Services per Post

INTERVENTION*	MALAYSIA	UAE	KSA	KUWAIT	TOTAL
AICS	1,292	510	8,453	3,224	13,479
Psychosocial Services	3,197	2,994	3,107	1,891	11,189
Repatriation	1,072	181	271	1,134	2,658
Capability Building/ Information giving	205	167	264	105	741
Referral	190	568	24	5	787

10% of the distressed overseas Filipinos assisted by the Philippine Embassies were served by the SWAtt. The following summarizes the number of distressed served by the SWAtt vis-à-vis the number of

distressed served by the Embassy. Overall, only 10% of distressed OFs were covered by ISSO services. Highest number of clients was covered by ISSO in Riyadh while lowest coverage was observed in UAE.

Table 11. Number of Distressed Served by SWAtts and the Embassies, 2015

OFs Served	Malaysia		UAE		KSA		Kuwait		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Distressed OFs served by SWAtt	1336	6.0	572	15.3	1834	24.7	670	7.1	4412	10.3
Distressed OFs not served by SWAtt	20995	94.0	3168	84.7	5581	75.3	8712	92.9	38456	89.7
Total Distressed Served by the Embassy	22331	100.0	3740	100.0	7415	100.0	9382	100.0	42868	100.0

74.5% of clients surveyed said that they were highly satisfied with the services of the SWAtt. Overall, majority of the survey respondents expressed high satisfaction with the services provided by the SWAtt. Some of them supported their answers by saying that the SWAtt was: quick to provide services; able to provide enough assistance; compassionate and very kind; and able to give helpful advice to solve their problems

All respondents of the FGDs affirmed that the ISWSFN program is relevant, necessary, and responsive to the needs of the distressed overseas Filipinos. All FGD respondents – the Heads of Posts, OCTA members, the Filipinos Communities, and clients recognized the relevance of the ISWSFN in the Posts to address the needs of distressed OFs. This is due to the various forms of risks and cases that need the expertise and interventions of SWAtt such as management of cases of undocumented and abandoned children and other CNSP, as well as victims of trafficking, maltreatment, and other forms of abuse.

Apart from this, the SWAtts are also expected to provide inputs and recommendations to the Heads of Posts on possible policies that will address the emerging issues and needs of OFs such as in the case of undocumented children. Given these concerns faced by the overseas Filipinos, the presence of SWAtt and the implementation of ISWSFN are found to be necessary and relevant in addressing the

needs of these vulnerable individuals and groups.

While PDOS and PAOS are provided to all documented OFs, many still do not recognize the risks and hazards of working abroad. More alarmingly, there are also OFs who left the country without undergoing any orientation sessions prior to departure. Based on findings, most of the survey respondents (61%) were able to attend orientation sessions such as the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminars or PDOS. Despite the fact that PDOS and Post-arrival Orientation Seminar (PAOS) are being conducted by responsible agencies, there were OFs who did not expect or were not ready with the potential risks and dangers of working in other countries with different lifestyles, cultures, and practices.

More alarming than this are the cases of OFs, especially the undocumented ones, who did not undergo any orientations or trainings prior to their departure from the Philippines. According to survey results, 39% of OFs surveyed were not able to receive any counseling, advice or orientations before leaving the country.

FGD results showed that OFs are not fully aware of the services of several government agencies at the Philippine Embassies. In spite of the conduct of PDOS and PAOS that should supposedly serve as venues to inform the OFs about the available services of government agencies at the Posts, Filipino Communities and OFs interviewed

expressed that they are not fully aware of the government services at the Philippine Embassies. Because of this, some OFs opted to seek help from other people, even those they do not completely know, which could oftentimes worsen their situation.

There are 4Ps beneficiaries among the distressed OFs. Despite the assistance being received by Pantawid Pamilya household beneficiaries in the Philippines, a number of them are still taking the risk of working abroad. For instance, there are a total of 33 OFW-Pantawid beneficiaries out of about 300 OFs under the custody of the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait through its center for OFs. These Pantawid beneficiaries sought help and needed assistance from the PE in Kuwait including the SWAtt due to varying cases. This situation could also have an undesirable impact especially if these OFW-Pantawid beneficiaries are the ones providing support to their families. Curiously, most of these Pantawid beneficiaries are from areas in Mindanao.

UAE, KSA and Kuwait do not have social protection laws for undocumented and abandoned children of foreign nationals. The assessment team found that there are emerging cases of undocumented and abandoned children in all countries visited. However, countries like UAE, KSA, and Kuwait do not have laws that cover the cases of undocumented and abandoned children of foreign nationals. Another challenge is the absence of standard institutional and administrative protocols in managing cases of undocumented and abandoned children. This poses an alarming threat to the welfare of these children of Filipino nationals.

CONCLUSIONS

Program Relevance

Overall, the SWAtt served 10.3% of distressed OFs who sought assistance from the Embassy. The remaining 89.7% of distressed OFs still includes other clients needing SWAtt assistance such as

runaways, victims of maltreatment, trafficking, and other forms of abuse. Given the vulnerability of Overseas Filipinos (with new vulnerable groups such as children, older persons, and persons with disabilities) and the magnitude of distressed Filipinos in need of social protection, it could be concluded that presence of SWAtt in the countries under this study is relevant.

Due to the complex nature of cases of OFs, the expertise and distinct role of SWAtt are highly recognized particularly along case management and provision of psychosocial interventions. Apart from this, SWAtt services are also crucial in providing immediate response to the needs of individuals in crisis situations. This is consistent with the mandate of the Department to implement crisis intervention as stipulated in Executive Order 221, s. 2003. Administrative Order No. 7, s. 2016 also emphasized the role of DSWD in ensuring the general welfare and rights of OFs, primarily the undocumented and distressed.

Although the role of the SWAtt is found relevant, RA 10022 or “An act Amending RA 8042 or the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995” does not include provisions on the role of DSWD in providing services to OFs. Including the role of the DSWD in the said law could further improve the protection and promotion of the welfare of OFs, particularly the undocumented and distressed. The delivery of ISSO services also contributes to the achievement of the Department’s Organizational Outcome 2- Rights of the Vulnerable Sectors Promoted and Protected.

Efficiency

It was found that human and financial resources are generally insufficient to reach a large number of distressed OFs needing social protection services. Across all assessed posts, the human resources are inadequate to perform ISSO operations efficiently, especially in those cases wherein the SWAtt are needed to travel to far-flung areas to reach their clients. Following this,

limited resources affects delivery of quality services to those clients who need medium to long-term case management.

In terms of financial resources, it was observed that funds for ISSO services are generally adequate except for Malaysia and Kuwait, as suggested by the findings. As to financial performance, SWAtts showed efficiency as exemplified by fast processing of funds for the provision of services. OCTA members also affirmed efficiency of the SWAtts relative to fund processing, especially on repatriation.

Although a Joint Manual of Operations exists, findings showed that this is not fully implemented as evidenced by the non-existence of URAF and PVF. The JMO also failed to clearly delineate the roles and services of each member agency of the One Country Team which caused duplication of services such as repatriation services and medical assistance.

Responsiveness and Effectiveness

Considerable evidence has shown that SWAtt services are effective and responsive to the needs of the OFs. Based on the survey, 74.5% of clients are highly satisfied of the services of the SWAtt which confirmed that SWAtts were able to address their needs.

It was found that psychosocial services, AICS, and repatriation services for CNSP are relevant in meeting the needs of distressed OFs in Middle East countries. On the other hand, psychosocial services for OFs in prisons/detention centers and victims of trafficking in Malaysia as well as educational assistance for undocumented children are relevant to the address their needs.

Nevertheless, only 10.3% of the total distressed OFs who sought help from the PEs were reached by the SWAtt. As earlier mentioned, the remaining 89.7% may also include clients who are in need of SWAtt assistance. Among these clients are the

most vulnerable groups that should be given priority by the SWAtt such as the OFs with psychosocial needs, undocumented and abandoned children as well as stranded and homeless undocumented OFs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned in the conclusions section, the delivery of ISSO services are indeed relevant and effective; however, lacks efficiency. In order to improve its program implementation and address the issues that adversely affect the delivery of services, the following are recommended by the evaluation team.

Internal to DSWD

In recognition of the expertise and role of the SWAtts in addressing the current and emerging needs and issues of the clients at the posts, the team recommends to continue the deployment of SWAtts in Malaysia, UAE, Kuwait, and KSA which have large concentration and have the most number of distressed overseas Filipinos. Nonetheless, to address limitations on resources, coordination gaps between the SWAtt and home office and issues on delineation of roles, the following are the specific recommendations of the evaluation team:

1. Identify and prioritize clientele of SWAtt services. Taking into consideration the findings of this study, priority clients of ISWSFN can be:

- Overseas Filipinos with psychosocial needs (including victims of trafficking, rape, maltreatment and other forms of abuse)
- Undocumented and abandoned Children
- Stranded and homeless undocumented OFs
- Other cases as may be assigned by the Head of Post, e.g. emergency medical assistance

2. Refocus the services to preclude perceived overlapping of functions with other members of the OCTA. Given SWAtt's expertise, he/she can focus on providing psychosocial services, assistance to individuals in crisis situations, case management, and other services needed by distressed OFs as may be assigned by the Head of Post.

3. Hiring of additional personnel. Due to geographical situation of countries which affects the reach of SWAtt services, the Department may consider adding Assistant SWAtts specifically in Malaysia (Sabah), UAE (Dubai) and KSA (AL Khobar).

4. The role of SWATO along with the provision of technical assistance to SWAtts and coordination with inter-agency bodies regarding services for OFs and their families should be strongly emphasized.

5. Review and revise the AO 7 to support ISWSFN implementation. The AO 7 provides guidelines on the operations of the Social Welfare Attaché Office and its counterpart ISSOs at foreign posts. The guidelines should be reviewed and amended to clearly define mechanisms and processes along the following components:

- Target clients and available services
- Structure (local and at-post)
- Qualification, Selection and Deployment of SWAtt
- Benefits and Incentives
- Protocols in communication
- M&E system
- Information system
- Service delivery procedures (budget parameters, official travel of SWAtts)

Case manage 4Ps grantees, provide livelihood assistance, and discourage them in going abroad as HSW especially in the Middle Eastern countries.

Members of the One Country Team

Recognizing that inter-agency collaboration is crucial in addressing the needs of the

distressed OFs, the following actions are recommended:

1. Strengthen inter-agency coordination to upgrade services to address issues on the delivery of interventions to OFs and their families. There is a need to:

- Improve PDOS and PAOS implementation and enhance existing modules to emphasize discussions on risks and hazards they may encounter given the nature of their work. It is also important to ensure understanding on cultural practices, labor policies, and language barriers.
- Intensify information and dissemination by developing infographics and flowcharts of services available at the Embassy. OFs should also be informed of key contact persons, address and hotlines in case of emergencies.
- Review the JMO to eliminate duplication of services and enhance functionality of OCTA. As discussed earlier, there is existing duplication in the provision of repatriation services and medical services.
- Formulate new models of intervention to address emerging issues of OFs: a) families of distressed OFs including 4Ps household beneficiaries; b) temporary shelter for distressed male OFs waiting for repatriation; c) mother and child; d) older persons and e) persons with disabilities
- Enhance existing program for returning distressed overseas Filipinos and their families especially the undocumented OFs. This program shall primarily promote sustainable livelihood to prevent them from engaging into precarious acts such as illegal recruitment and human trafficking.

2. Develop policy papers and guidelines in coordination with concerned agencies to address the emerging issues of OFs such as:

- Legitimizing guardianship for abandoned children
- Undocumented children of school age to be allowed access to educational and health facilities
- Repatriation of unregistered children

3. Push for the amendment of RA 10022 to include DSWD as one of the primary agencies that promote and protect the rights and welfare of Filipino migrants. This amendment should clarify the distinct role of the DSWD and specify social welfare and development services for distressed OFs who are not members of the OWWA. Nonetheless, it should be clarified that the deployment of SWAtts may not be necessary in all posts. As such, the team recommends the following criteria for the selection of posts where a SWAtt can be deployed:

- High population or concentration of OFs
- High magnitude of reported cases of undocumented and distressed OFs based on PE Reports (number of undocumented and distressed OFs versus total number of OFs)
- Huge number of vulnerable Filipinos and those needing special protection such as abandoned and neglected children, and adoption cases based on PE Reports
- Presence of established FWR

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Policy Paper on the Effects of the TRAIN Law on the Needs of the Poor

Claire Dennis S. Mapa, Ph.D¹

BACKGROUND

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) serves as the national policy and regulatory institution for social protection (SP) concerns. Social protection refers to policies and programs that seek to reduce poverty and vulnerability and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized (Social Development Committee Resolution No. 1, series of 2007). Thus, it behooves the Department to study and act on public policies and programs that affect the interests and welfare of the poor.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) supports the DSWD in advancing the country's social protection reform agenda. The ADB assistance includes grant-based support through the policy and advisory TA 9079: Strengthening Social Protection Reforms. TA 9079 is intended to help achieve project impact and outcome by providing timely advice in key policy areas and themes of the social protection agenda as identified by the DSWD and the National Advisory Committee of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program. It also includes "technical advice on operational and governance risks faced by the program implementers at the national and local levels and devise action plans to address these risks."

Republic Act 10963 or the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law mandates the DSWD to implement an Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) to households in the first to seventh income deciles of the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR), Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, and the Social Pension Program for a period of three years. A total of 10 million households will receive P200 a month for 2018 and P300 a month for 2019 and 2020. Release of the cash grants to 1.8 million Pantawid beneficiaries started in the first week of March 2018. Validation of Listahanan-identified poor who are non-Pantawid Pamilya households and non-Social Pension individual beneficiaries is being undertaken by DSWD to ensure that those who will benefit from the program will be the poorest as indicated in the law.

The UCT aims to cushion the negative effects of the tax reform, which is expected to raise consumer prices and inflation. The cash grant amount is calculated by the Department of Finance (DOF) to completely offset the expenses of the bottom 50 percent of all households. But inflation went beyond the DOF-projected 1% maximum increase, in January 2018 shooting to 3.4%, and in February to 3.9% (PSA, March 6, 2018).

How the poor fare during and beyond the timeline of the UCT is a concern to DSWD, especially since this early in the implementation of the law, the UCT's effects on the poor seem to be more negative than what was projected. This will also bring new challenges to the Department's organizational outcomes of improving the well-being of poor families and promoting and protecting the rights of the poor and vulnerable sectors. There is thus a need to conduct an in-depth study on the effects of the law on the needs of the poor, specifically on UCT beneficiaries.

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OBJECTIVES

The consultant will assess the effects of the TRAIN law on the economic and social welfare needs of the UCT beneficiaries and develop a policy paper drawn from the results of the assessment report. The study to be conducted by the Consultant shall guide the DSWD and the National Economic and Development Authority Social Development Committee (NEDA SDC) in monitoring the implementation and effects of the TRAIN and UCT, particularly in advocating policy adjustments and reforms as may be necessary.

Specifically, the assessment shall cover the following concerns:

1. Profile of UCT beneficiaries, disaggregated by basic sector, needing the most social welfare intervention;
2. Sufficiency of the cash transfer to mitigate the effects of TRAIN on UCT beneficiaries;
3. Effects of TRAIN on the inflation rate of the UCT beneficiaries;
4. Impact of inflation (particularly fuel and rice/food) to the poor and basic sectors; and;
5. Policy recommendations on identified issues.

METHODOLOGIES

a. Inflation Rate of the Poorest 30% of the Households in the Philippines

In order to estimate the effect of the TRAIN Law on the UCT beneficiaries and to verify whether the corresponding cash transfer is sufficient to cushion the negative impact of the law on the poor households, one needs to look at the consumption pattern of poor households and differentiate this from the consumption pattern of the “average” household. The consumption pattern of the households is officially generated from the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES), conducted every three years, by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). The consumption pattern of the households is a very important input to the consumption basket that constitute the Consumer Price

Index (CPI). The CPI is the basis for the computation of the country’s inflation rate. The PSA regularly reports two CPI baskets: one for the “average” household and one for the poorest 30 percent of the households. From these two baskets, the PSA reports two inflation rates: the popular headline inflation rate reported monthly and the inflation rate of the poorest 30 percent of the households, reported quarterly prior to October 2018, when the PSA started reporting the inflation rate of the poorest 30% of households on a monthly basis².

²The first official monthly report for the poorest 30 percent of the households was released on 19 October 2018 for the inflation rate in August 2018. The PSA decided to release the monthly inflation report for the poorest 30 percent of the households after clamor from various stakeholders (legislators, economic managers, media outlets) for such data, after two presentations of the earlier versions of this paper to the Senate Economic Affairs Committee (in 26th February 2018 and in 16th August 2018) chaired by Senator Sherwin “Win” Gatchalian.

There is another issue that needs to be clarified – **the base year of the CPI**. The PSA reported the inflation rate in January 2018 using the 2006-based CPI, but starting with the February 2018 headline inflation rate, the PSA shifted to the 2012-based CPI. The rebasing was announced ahead and is a common practice in National Statistical Offices all over the world. According to PSA (2018), *“rebasing is necessary when the basket of the reference year no longer represents what is commonly purchased by the households. The CPI then becomes irrelevant and would tend to give wrong market signals. The CPI is an indicator that derives its usefulness from its representation of how much a typical market basket behaves over a specific period of time.”*

While rebasing was easier for the headline inflation rate, it was not for the inflation rate of the poorest 30 percent of the households. The PSA still reports the inflation rate of the poor using the 2000-based CPI. This makes any comparison between the two inflation rates a bit problematic.

The PSA is having a hard time reporting the official inflation rate of the poorest 30 percent of the households using the 2012 CPI due to some data constraints.

In order to come up with a meaningful comparison on the impact of the TRAIN Law on the poorest 30 percent of the households, the author estimated the inflation using the different commodity groupings from the 2012 FIES (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2012). The results are general estimate of the inflation rate of the poorest 30 percent at the national level.

The information provided in Table 1 presents the different weights of selected commodities in the CPI basket of the poorest 30% of the households and the average household. The most noticeable group is the Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages. Poor households spend a large percentage of their budget on

food, and this group of items accounts for about 61 percent of the estimated 2012-based CPI basket³. The corresponding weight for the average household of food and non-alcoholic beverages is only about 38 percent.

Under the food and non-alcoholic beverage group for the poorest 30 percent of the households, the four items with the largest shares are: (a) Rice (22 percentage points); (b) Fish (11 percentage points); (c) Vegetables (8 percentage points); and (d) Meat (6 percentage points). Since the weight of food items is heavier in the CPI basket of the poorest households, compared to the average household, the impact of increasing prices on these items, experienced in 2018, created a spike in the inflation rate of the poorest 30% off the households.

³The food group accounts for about 70 percent of the 2000-based CPI basket of the poorest 30 percent of the households.

Table 1. Weights of the Commodity Groups in the CPI Baskets for the Average and Poorest 30% of Households

Commodity Groups	Weight in the CPI Basket (Base Year 2012)	
	Poorest 30% of HHs ³	Ave Household (Headline)
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	60.89	38.34
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and other Fuels	18.00	22.04
Transport	4.21	8.07
Health	2.03	3.89
Clothing and Footware	2.07	2.93
Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco	2.48	1.58

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) and Author's Computation using the PSA Data

**Author's estimate using the 2012 FIES data from the PSA

The monthly headline inflation rate and the inflation rate of the poorest 30% of the households, from January to December 2018, are presented in Figure 1 below. The

information shows that both inflation rates have been increasing since January 2018, showing a gradual decrease only in the last quarter of 2018. More importantly, the inflation rate of the poorest 30% of the households is always higher than the average or headline inflation. The average inflation rate

of the poor in 2018 is 6.1 percent (with highest at 8.2 percent in September 2018), compared to the average headline inflation rate of only 5.2 percent. Both inflation rates are the highest in the last ten (10) years, as reported by the PSA⁴.

The reason for higher inflation rate of the poorest households, compared to the headline inflation, is because the poor spends a higher percentage of their total expenditures on food items, as shown in Table 1, relative to the average households, and the prices of food

items such as Rice, Fish and Vegetables spiked up in 2018⁵.

The numbers presented in Table 2 are the inflation rates of the households in the poorest three (3) income deciles and information shows that inflation rates felt by the poorest households are the highest, concluding that the poorest households suffered the most from the increasing prices of food items in 2018.

⁴The inflation rates were highest in 2008 due to the dual "shocks" from increasing oil prices and rice prices in the international market.

⁵During periods of high prices on rice and other food items, the inflation rate of the poor households is higher by about one (1) percentage points compared to the average household

Figure 1. Headline Inflation Rate and Inflation Rate of the Poorest 30% of the Households (January to December 2018)

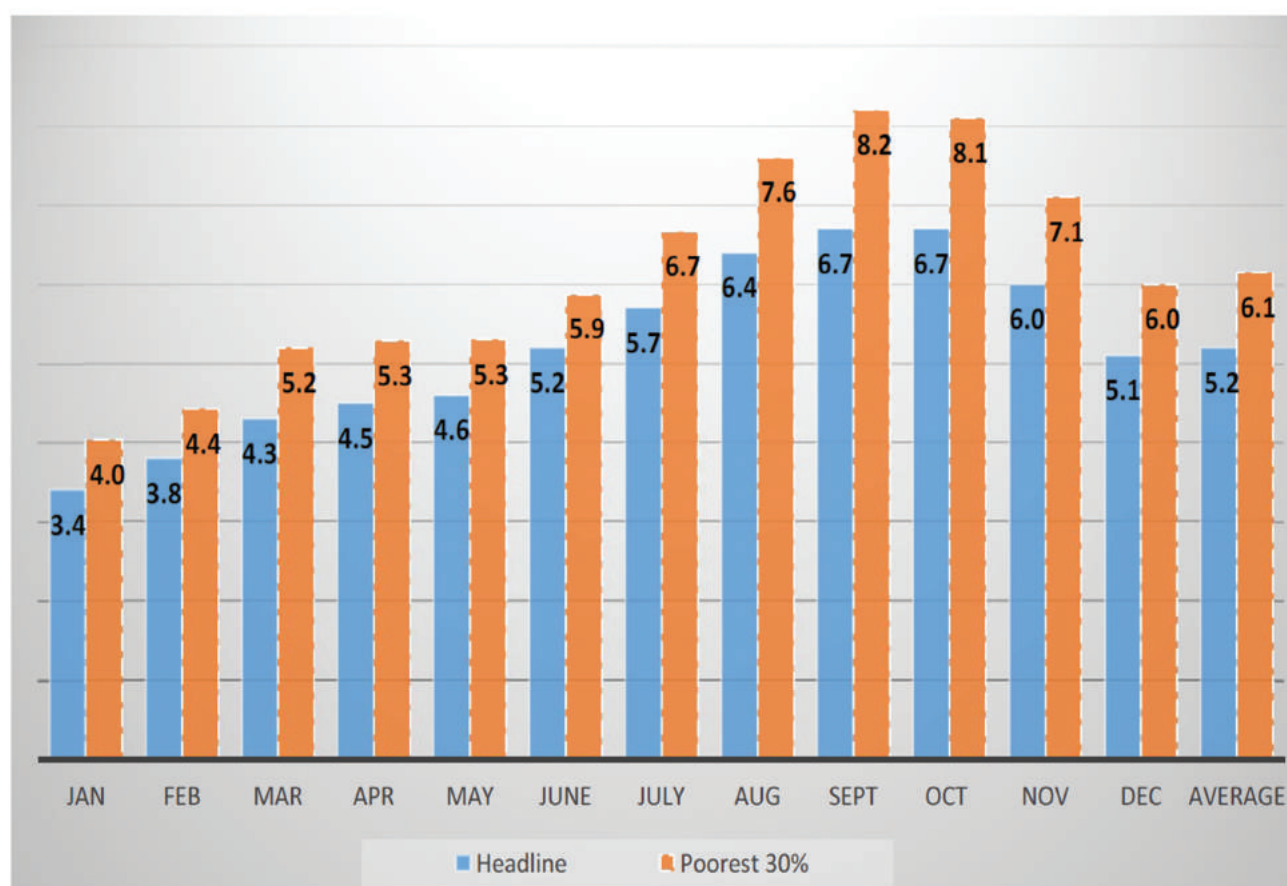


Table 2. Headline Inflation Rate and Inflation Rate of the Households in the First Three Income Deciles (January to December 2018)

Month	Headline	1 st Income Decile	2 nd Income Decile	3 rd Income Decile
Jan	3.4	4.1	4.0	4.0
Feb	3.8	4.5	4.4	4.4
Mar	4.3	5.3	5.2	5.1
Apr	4.5	5.3	5.3	5.2
May	4.6	5.3	5.3	5.2
June	5.2	5.9	5.9	5.8
July	5.7	6.8	6.7	6.5
Aug	6.4	7.7	7.6	7.4
Sept	6.7	8.3	8.2	8.0
Oct	6.7	8.2	8.1	7.9
Nov	6.0	7.2	7.1	7.0
Dec	5.1	6.1	6.0	5.9
Average	5.2	6.2	6.2	6.0

Prior to 2018, the inflation rates of the poorest households were relatively low, as reported by the PSA. Using the 2000-based CPI, inflation rates averaged at 1.6 percent in 2015, 1.4 percent in 2016 and 3.0 percent in 2017, due to the relatively stable prices of food items, such as rice. Using the 2012-based CPI, the inflation rate experienced by the poor households averaged at 3.1 percent in 2017 and almost doubled in 2018 at 6.1 percent, as shown in Figure 2.

The sources and contribution of the increase in the inflation rate of the poor households in 2018 relative to 2017, of about 3.0 percentage

points, are estimated and presented in Table 3. The results show that Food Items and Non-Alcoholic Beverages contributed about 2.3 percentage points in the increase the inflation rate of the poor households (out of the 3 percentage points overall increase), accounting for 77 percent of the total increase. Tobacco and Alcoholic Beverages contributed 11 percent, Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and other Fuels added about 7 percent, while transportation contributed about 2 percent in the overall increase in inflation rate.

Figure 2. Inflation Rate of the Poorest 30% of the Households in 2017 and 2018

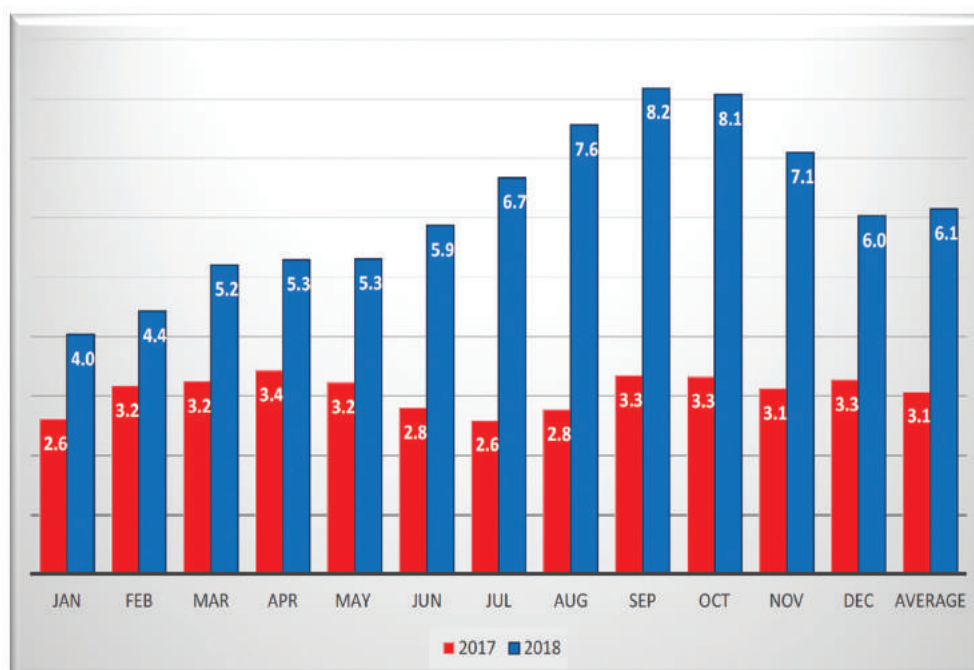


Table 3. Sources and Contribution of Increase in Inflation Rate of the Poor Households in 2018

Group of Items	Percentage Point Increase	Contribution
Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	2.31	77%
Tobacco and Alcoholic Beverages	0.32	11%
Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Fuels (HWEFG)	0.22	7%
Transport	0.07	2%

Under the Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages, increasing rice prices contributed the bulk of the increase in the inflation rate of the poor households. The PSA reported that average price per kilo of Regular Milled Rice amounted to about Php 41.33 per kilo in 2018, about 10 percent higher compared to the average price in 2017 of Php 37.54 per kilo. In addition, cheaper rice from the National Food Authority (NFA) costing only Php 27.00 per kilo was scarce or non-existent during the first semester of the 2018, forcing the poor households to purchase the more expensive commercial rice at a higher price.

The availability of cheaper rice from the NFA is one of the promises of the Republic Act 10963 or the TRAIN Law. Under the social welfare and benefits program of the TRAIN Law (page 95 of the Republic Act 10963) it is stated that, “discounted purchase of National Food Authority (NFA) rice from accredited retail stores in the amount equivalent to ten percent (10%) of the net retail prices, up to a maximum of twenty (20) kilos per month.”

The proponents of the TRAIN Law, anticipating increases in the prices of goods resulting from its implementation, incorporated a provision to make sure that poor households are able to access cheaper priced-rice at a discount. However, such provision was never implemented forcing poor households to purchase Rice at a higher price, contributing to the higher inflation rate experienced by the households in 2018.

b. Estimation of Cash Transfers to Poor Households

The Department of Finance (DOF)

estimated that inflation in 2018 will increase from a low of 0.4 percentage point to a high of 0.7 percentage as a result of the TRAIN Law, particularly because of the additional excise taxes on fuel products⁶ To mitigate the impact on the poor households, particularly those who will not benefit much from the lower personal income tax (PIT), such as the unemployed workers and workers who are earning minimum wages, the Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) was introduced as part of the social mitigating measures of the TRAIN Law.

The TRAIN Law will provide, “*Unconditional Cash Transfer to households in the first to seventh income deciles of the National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR), Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, and the social pension program for the period of three (3) years*” (Section 82-c, Republic Act 10963). The UCT will be Two Hundred Pesos (Php 200.00) per month for first year of the implementation and Three Hundred Pesos (Php300.00) per month for the second year and third year, and to be implemented by the DSWD. Ten (10) Million families are being targeted for this social mitigating program.

This policy paper will show that a UCT of Php 200.00 per month for the first year of the implementation of the TRAIN Law is an underestimation due to (a) incorrect assumption made on the impact of the Law on Inflation Rate of the poorest households; (b) incorrect assumption on the family size of the poor households; and (c) non-implementation, due to lack of preparation and foresight, on the other provisions of the Law that resulted in increasing the inflation rate of the poor households.

First, the DOF made use of the headline inflation in computing for the UCT. The problem, as shown in the previous discussion, is that poor households' consumption basket is different from that of the average household, where the headline inflation is based. The DOF should have used the inflation of the poorest 30% of the households, already available from the PSA, in computing for the UCT.

⁶At the hearing of the Senate Economic Affairs Committee, chaired by Senator Sherwin “Win” Gatchalian, last 16th August 2018, Deputy Governor Diwa Gunigundo told the Committee the said 0.7 estimated percentage point increase in the inflation rate constitutes the direct effects of the excise taxes. The number do not include the indirect effects of the excise taxes on inflation rate.

Second, the DOF made used of the national average family size of five (5) members in the computation of the cash transfer. However, data from the PSA will show that family size of the poor is larger than five (5) members. The National Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) of 2017 shows that fertility rate of the poorest quintile is 4.3, while the national average fertility rate is only 2.7. Moreover, data collected on the number of family members from the NHTS-PR supports this observation – that poor families have larger family size.

And most importantly, critical social protection program promised by the TRAIN Law was never implemented and created

unintended consequences in increasing the inflation rate. One particular provision is on the availability of cheaper rice for the poor. The TRAIN Law promised that poor households can avail of “discounted purchase of National Food Authority (NFA) rice from accredited retail stores in the amount equivalent to ten percent (10%) of the net retail prices, up to a maximum of twenty (20) kilos per month.” The promise of the TRAIN Law is that poor households can purchase Php 27.00 per kilo of NFA rice at Php 24.30 per kilo, after 10 percent discount. In reality, however, NFA rice was scarce or unavailable from January to June 2018, and the poor households were forced to buy, at a minimum, the Php 39.00 per kilo commercial rice. Given that rice consumption is about one-fifth (1/5) of the consumption basket of the poor households, the inflation rate experienced by the poor spiked up significantly, driven partly by high prices of rice, in 2018.

Using the national per capita poverty threshold of Php 21,753.00 in 2015, the estimated per capita poverty threshold for 2018 is estimated to be about Php 24,015.00. An alternative UCT of 3 percent of the per capita poverty threshold is then computed for families of various family sizes. The 3 percent cash transfer is based on the increase in the inflation rate of the poorest 30% of households in 2018, as compared to 2017. The computed alternative UCT are given in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Alternative UCT based on Number of Family Members in the Households and Using Inflation Rate of the Poorest 30%

Number of Members	Annual Poverty Threshold	3 percent of Annual Poverty Threshold UCT	
		Yearly	Monthly
family of 5	120,526	3,616	301
family of 6	144,631	4,339	362
family of 7	168,736	5,062	422

The new computation shown in Table 4 tells us that poor household with five (5) members should be getting UCT of about Php 300.00 per month, instead of the Php 200.00 per month, or should be higher by about 50 percent. For families with seven (7) members, the typical family size of the

poor, the UCT should be about Php 422.00 per month, or about 111 percent higher.

⁷The paper made use of the inflation rates of the poorest 30% of households in 2016, 2017 and 2018 to arrive at the 2018 per capita poverty threshold in 2018. The inflation rates used are 1.4% in 2016, 3% in 2017 and 6.1% in 2018.

c. Implications on Poverty and Hunger Reduction Efforts

The Duterte administration promised to reduce the country's poverty incidence significantly when its term ends in 2022. As identified in the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022, poverty incidence is targeted to decline from 21.6 percent of the population in 2015 (base year) to 14 percent by 2022. Moreover, poverty incidence in rural areas is being targeted to decrease from 30 percent in 2015 to 20 percent in 2022. Overall, poverty incidence in the population is targeted to decrease by an average of 1.1 to 1.2 percentage points per year. Using comparable data from the PSA for the period 2006 to 2015, we can see that significant reduction in poverty incidence happened only between 2012 and 2015, when poverty incidence decreased by an average of 1.2 percentage points per year between the two periods. In 2012, the PSA reported that poverty incidence among the population was 25.2 percent and this number dropped to 21.6 percent in 2015, an average of 1.2 percentage-points reduction per year. Moreover, poverty incidence among families also decreased from 19.7 percent in 2012 to 16.5 percent in 2015, a total of 3.2 percentage points or an average of 1.1 percentage-points reduction per year.

However, upon examination of the relevant economic data, one can see that high income growth and low inflation are key to poverty reduction efforts. Examining the FIES data from 2006 to 2015, significant reduction in poverty was achieved only during the period of high income growth, particularly for the poor households, combined with low inflation rate experienced by the poor households. The information in Figure 3 show the average income growth of the poorest 30% of the households, the inflation rate of the poorest 30% of

households and the poverty incidence among families, as reported by the PSA. The figure shows that reduction in poverty incidence is significant only in the year when average income growth rate was high and inflation rate of the poor was low. This occurred in 2015 when average income rate of the poor was recorded at about 7.4 percent and inflation rate of the poor was 1.6 percent that year.

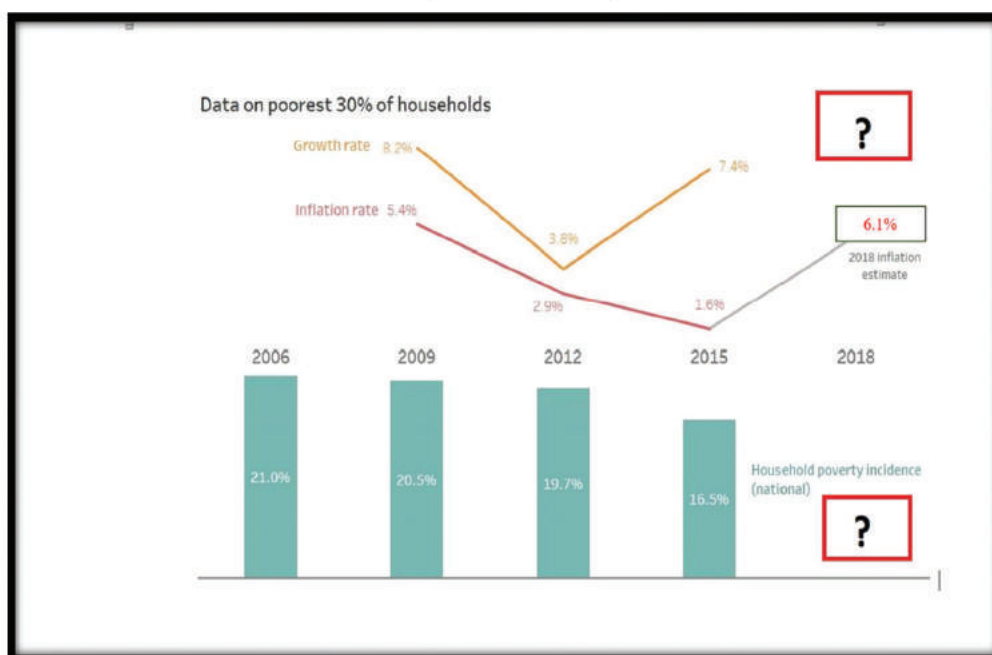
During the periods when the inflation rate of the poor was high, such as in 2009 when inflation of the poor households was 5.4 percent, not even a high income growth rate of the poor households recorded at about 8.2 percent per year was able to reduce poverty incidence.

Now, given the 2018 inflation rate figure for the poorest 30% of the households at 6.1 percent, it will be a big challenge for the government to achieve the 3.3 to 3.6 percentage-points reduction in poverty, in order to achieve the overall government's target of 7.6 percentage points by 2022.

The PSA will report the initial 1st Semester 2018 poverty incidence in March 2019 and a very undesirable scenario is when poverty incidence will remain the same as the 2015 numbers, or a worse scenario when poverty incidence increase. This will create a big test to the government's poverty reduction efforts.

Using alternative data on Poverty and Hunger, one can see the high inflation rate experienced by the poor households in 2018 is already showing up in the increasing Self-Rated Poverty and Self-Rated Hunger Incidence data, as reported by the Social Weather Stations (2018). The information in Figure 4 represent the quarterly Self-Rated Poverty Incidence from the 1st Quarter of 2000 to the 3rd Quarter of 2018 of the SWS Survey.

Figure 3. Income Growths, Inflation Rates and Poverty Incidence among Families (2006 – 2018)



Source: The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) and Author's Computation

The Hodrick-Prescott (HP) Filter, to estimate the overall direction of the trend of the series, is also reported. Overall, the trend of the Self-Rated Poverty Incidence is decreasing through the years. However, Self-Rated Poverty incidence inched up

significantly to 52 percent during the 3rd quarter of 2018 from 42 percent in the 1st quarter 2018. Moreover, Self-Rated Poverty increased in two successive quarters, 2nd and 3rd quarters, of 2018, adding a total of 10 percentage-points increase to over-all Self-Rated Poverty Incidence⁸.

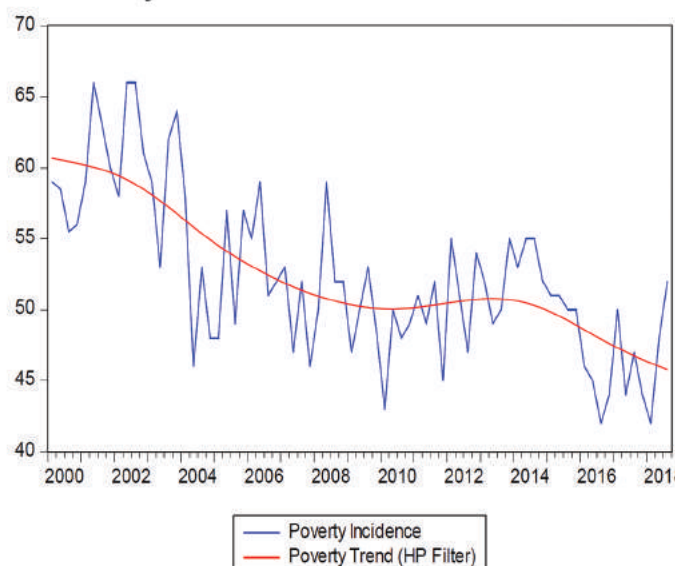
⁸The latest report of SWS on Self-Rated Poverty showed a reduction of 2 percentage points during the 4th Quarter of 2018, at 50 percent. However, given the margin of error

of the survey, the said reduction in the 4th Quarter relative to the 3rd Quarter is not statistically significant.

The quarterly Self-Rated Poverty Incidence of the SWS is a useful indicator of the direction on the movement of the official poverty incidence reported by the PSA.

In the past, significant spikes in Self-Rated Poverty incidence during FIES years eventually shows up in the official poverty statistics.

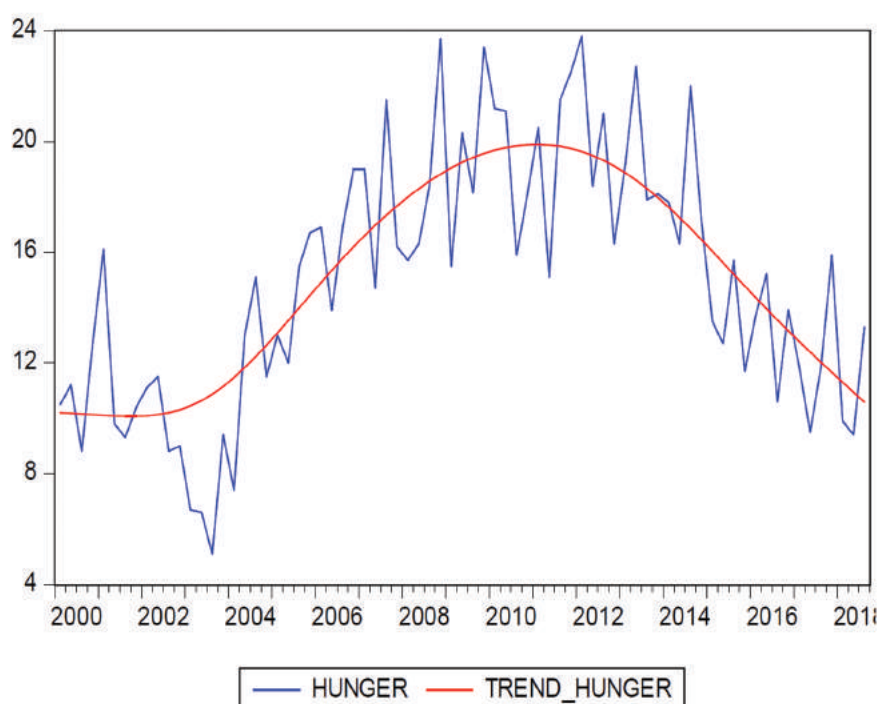
Figure 4. Self-Rated Poverty Incidence from 1st Quarter 2000 to 3rd Quarter 2018



Information on the Self-Rated Hunger Incidence 9.4 percent, or a 3.9 percentage points tells the same story. Figure 5 reports the increase . Spike in hunger incidence is an Self-Rated Hunger Incidence from 1st Quarter expected outcome of raising food prices, 2000 to 3rd Quarter 2018 and the corresponding particularly rice. Past studies of Mapa, Han HP Filter estimate of the trend in hunger and Estrada (2011) and Mapa, Castillo and incidence. While the data shows that overall Francisco (2015) showed that spikes in hunger incidence is going down, the picture in Food Inflation, particularly in the price of 2018 is quite alarming. During the 3rd Quarter of Rice, increased Self-Rated Hunger 2018, Self-Rated Hunger Incidence increased incidence in the succeeding quarters after significantly to 13.3 percent, compared to the the spikes in prices. corresponding 2nd Quarter number of

⁹The 3rd Quarter Hunger Incidence number is also significantly higher when compared to the 1st Quarter 2018 number, reported at 9.9 percent or 3.4 percentage points increase.

Figure 5. Self-Rated Hunger Incidence from 1st Quarter 2000 to 3rd Quarter 2018



In another study by Bagsit, Mendoza, Tabao and Mapa (2018), the authors used a Dynamic Panel Model to explain the determinants of Self-Rated Hunger Incidence using the four (4) sub-national areas from the SWS survey: (1) NCR, (2) Balanced Luzon, (3) Visayas and (4) Mindanao. Linking the effects of Food Inflation and Job Misery Index (defined as the sum of the employment and underemployment rates), the authors found that spikes in Food Inflation contributed significantly in increasing Self-Rated Hunger Incidence, controlling for other factors and lag effects.

The study shows that a one-percentage point increase in Food Inflation leads to an increase in the average Self-Rated Hunger Incidence by about 0.68 percentage point, controlling for other factors. In addition, a one-percentage point increase in the Job Misery Index leads to an increase in the average Self-Rated Hunger Incidence by about 0.76 percentage point, all things being the same.

Table 5. Determinants of Self-Rated Hunger Incidence in NCR, Balanced Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao) using Dynamic Panel Data Analysis and Arellano-Bond Model

Variable	Estimated Coefficient	Robust SE	P-value
Food Inflation (in %)	0.6766	0.1413	0.0000
Job Misery Index (in %) *	0.7646	0.1821	0.0000
Constant	-10.4382	4.6520	0.0250
Total Hunger (Lag Effect)			
Lag 1	0.2570	0.0611	0.0000
Lag 2	0.2146	0.0797	0.0070

*Job Misery Index is the sum of the unemployment and underemployment rates

The authors then estimated the impact of Food Inflation and Job Misery Index on the Self-Rated Hunger Incidence reported during the 3rd Quarter of 2018 at 13.3 percent. The data found in Table 6 shows that Food Inflation increased by about 5.40 percentage points during the 3rd Quarter of 2018 compared to the same quarter in 2017. Meanwhile, Job Misery Index slightly increase by 0.7 percentage point. The large increase on Food Inflation, amounting to 5.40

percentage points, contributed about 3.7 percentage points in the 3rd Quarter 2018 Hunger Incidence, controlling for other factors. The slight increase in the Job Misery Index contributed about 0.5 percentage point in the 3rd Quarter 2018 Hunger Incidence. The analysis tells us that a large percentage of the increase in Hunger Incidence is due to increasing Food Inflation, consistent with the results of the earlier studies.

Table 6. Estimates of the Impact of Increasing Food Inflation and Job Misery Index on Self-Rated Hunger for 3rd Quarter 2018

	3rd Quarter 2018	3rd Quarter 2017	Increase/Decrease
Food Inflation (in %)	8.40	3.00	5.40
Job Misery Index (in %)	22.60	21.90	0.70
Contribution of Food Inflation on Hunger Incidence			3.7 percentage points
Contribution of Job Misery Index on Hunger Incidence			0.5 percentage points

SECTORS VULNERABLE TO INCREASING INFLATION RATE

Given the threat of rising inflation rate on the poverty reduction efforts of the government, in general, and of DSWD in particular, one needs to look at the sectors of society that will be affected the most by the rising inflation rates. The PSA regularly reports the poverty incidence among the basic sectors like farmers, fishermen, women, seniors and others (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2015). The poverty incidence of individuals in these sectors are provided in Table 7 below.

The two sectors with the highest poverty incidence are the farmers and the fishermen, with 2015 poverty incidence of 34.3 percent and 34 percent, respectively. The policy paper will estimate the impact of rising inflation rate experienced in 2018 on the poverty incidence of the four sectors, namely the farmers, fishermen, women and seniors¹⁰.

¹⁰These basic sectors were identified as priority sector by then DSWD OIC-Secretary Emmanuel Leyco

Table 7. Poverty Incidence among the Select Basic Sectors

Basic Sector	Poverty Incidence (in %)			
	2006	2009	2012	2015
Farmers	38.5	38.0	38.3	34.3
Fishermen	41.2	41.3	39.2	34.0
Women	25.9	25.7	25.6	22.5
Seniors	16.9	16.1	16.2	13.2
Residing in Urban Areas	12.6	12.6	13.0	11.5
Migrant and Formal Sector Workers	16.0	16.8	16.6	13.4
Youth	21.1	21.6	22.3	19.4
Children	35.2	35.3	35.2	31.4
Self-Employed and Unpaid Family Members	30.6	29.9	29.0	25.0

Source: The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)

To estimate the households that will more likely be affected by the rising prices, we need to look at the “near-poor household.” A near-poor household is a non-poor household at a given time (e.g. during a particular FIES Year), but with higher probability of becoming poor in the future (e.g. in the next three years), due to unforeseen “shocks” that may affect the households, such as rising prices of food and other commodities, health of the household member, natural and man-made disaster and others. Paqueo, Orbeta, Cortez and Cruz (2014) provided a definition on who are the near poor households using the households’ per capita income. A near-poor household is one where its per capita income is between the Poverty Threshold (PT) and 1.1 times the Poverty Threshold.

The authors also provided two other thresholds to be classified as near-poor: (a) those with per capita income of between the PT and 1.2 times the PT; and (b) those with per capita income between the PT and 1.3 times the PT. The higher thresholds for the second and third groups meant that more

households will be covered by any social protection programs for the near poor. This is possible once the government is able to allot a bigger budget for social protection to cover more households (poor and near-poor).

Given the three classification of near-poor and utilizing the data from the 2015 FIES, Table 8 provides estimates on the number of near-poor among the households and the population. Using the first classification of a near-poor households where the income is between the PT and 1.1 times the PT, the percentage of near-poor households is estimated to be about 4.21 percent, equivalent to about 5 percent of the population, or about 5 million individuals. A more liberal definition of a near-poor household, one with per capita income between the PT and 1.3 times the PT, the percentage of near-poor households will increase to 12.25 percent and about 14 percent of the population (or around 14 million individuals).

Table 8. Percent of Near Poor among Households and Population under Three (3) Classifications

Near Poor Household Classification (using the 2015 FIES)			
Near Poor as Percent of:	1 to 1.1 times of PT	1 to 1.2 times of PT	1 to 1.3 times of PT
Households	4.21%	8.45%	12.25%
Populations	4.94%	9.76%	13.92%

Using the income data from the 2015 FIES, the average per capita income of near poor households, or those earnings per capita income between the poverty thresholds to 1.1 times the poverty threshold, is only about Php 22,748.00, as reported in Table 9 below. This average income is about 4.57 percent higher than the poverty thresholds. In other words, while the near-poor households can be classified as non-poor, their average per capita income is very near the poverty threshold, such that household income may not be able to catch up with the rising prices of goods and services, as what the country

experienced in 2018. The farmers and fishermen groups are the most vulnerable among the near-poor, since the average per capita income of the near-poor in these groups are just slightly higher than poverty threshold, with 2.94 percent higher for the farmers and 0.42 percent higher for the fishermen. The average per capita income of the near-poor in the women sector is 4.71 percent higher than the poverty threshold, while for the near-poor among the seniors, their average per capita income is just 4.32 percent higher than the poverty threshold.

Table 9. Average Per Capita Income of the Near Poor Households in 2015 (HHs with Per Capita Income from the Poverty Threshold to 1.1 times the Poverty Threshold)

Basic Sector	Average Per Capita Income (2015)	% Higher Than Per Capita PT
Near Poor (Overall)	22,748	4.57
Fishermen	21,845	0.42
Farmers	22,392	2.94
Women	22,778	4.71
Seniors	22,693	4.32

From the analysis of the per capita income, these households are vulnerable to sliding in poverty given the price shocks experienced in 2018. It is important, therefore, to determine the numbers and regional locations of these vulnerable households, to be able to identify the appropriate social safety net programs for them. Using the 2015 FIES data, the information from Table 10 provides the estimates on the percentage of population in each sector that will likely be affected and its regional location.

capita income of the near-poor is just slightly above the poverty threshold. About 8 percent of the fishermen will likely to be affected by the price shocks and an additional 6 percent of the farmers. About 5 percent of the women are vulnerable to slip into poverty and about 4 percent of our senior citizens. In terms of location, majority of the vulnerable households in the four (4) sectors are residing in Regions, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, the CARAGA and the ARMM. The DSWD must prioritize these areas for the appropriate intervention.

In terms of percentage of the population, the fishermen and farmers groups are the most vulnerable given that average per

Table 10. Percentage and Regional Location of the Near Poor Households

	Near Poor Population (Basic Sectors)			
	Fishermen	Farmers	Women	Seniors
% of Population	8.07	6.36	5.28	4.23
Mostly Found in	Regions 5, 11, 8	Regions 8, 9, 10	Regions 5, 10, 12	Regions 8, 10, 12
	CARAGA and ARMM	CARAGA and ARMM	CARAGA and ARMM	CARAGA and ARMM

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DSWD

High inflation rates experienced by the poor households is a threat to any poverty reduction effort. Using official data on income and poverty from the PSA over the last ten (10) years, the analysis showed that significant reduction in poverty was achieved only during period of high-income growth among the poor households, coupled with relatively low inflation rate experienced by the poor. The introduction of the TRAIN Law in January 2018 created shocks on the prices of goods and services and this led to a ten-year high inflation rates experienced by the average and the poor households. Of course, the TRAIN Law is not solely to blame for the increasing prices. For one, the timing of the law was awful. It was introduced during the period when the oil prices in the international market increased significantly, creating pressure to push prices of goods and services further. However, there are details in the implementation of the social mitigating measures of TRAIN Law that needed refinement. The DSWD being the national policy and regulatory institution for social protection concerns should push for the following actions:

- a. Revisit the computation of the UCT, utilizing the inflation rate of the poor households rather than the average households. As discussed in this policy paper, the UCT of Php 200.00 per month for the first year of the implementation of the TRAIN Law is not enough since the basis of the computation is the consumption pattern of the average household, and not the poor households.
- b. Incorporate family size in the computation of the UCT. The family size of the poor household is larger than the average household. While there is a population management program, spearheaded by the Population Commission (POPCOM) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) to eventually reduce the number of children and family size of the poor households, we have to accept the fact that under the current period, family size of the poor is larger than the assumed 5 members used by the economic managers in the computation of the UCT. The alternative computation presented in this policy paper shows the 2019 UCT of Php 300.00 is still low if one incorporates the family size into the computation.
- c. Push for the ten (10) percent discount on NFA rice as provided in the TRAIN Law, using the database of DSWD NHTS-PR on the poor households for identification of the potential beneficiaries. The database is already being used for targeting and can be used for this social protection program of providing cheaper rice. Proper coordination between the DSWD and the NFA is critical to make sure that cheaper rice are made available to the poor households, in order to avoid the escalating price of rice experienced in 2018 that became the number 1 contributor to the high inflation rate experienced by the poor.
- d. Identify other social protection programs to the near-poor households, particularly among the farmers and fishermen, so they will not slide to poverty. These two groups are the most vulnerable among the basic sectors since the average income of the near-poor is just slightly above the poverty

line. Given the regional locations, as discussed in this policy paper, the DSWD can specifically target the priority households from these basic sectors.

e. Must make sure that distribution of the UCT to the ten (10) million households for 2019 is done early to help the poor households mitigate the impact of the higher prices on their welfare.

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MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

No. 09

Series of 2019

**Guidelines for the Conduct
of Research and
Evaluation in the DSWD**

or

**“THE DSWD RESEARCH
AND EVALUATION
POLICY**

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

No. 09

Series of 2019

Subject: GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION IN THE DSWD or “THE DSWD RESEARCH AND EVALUATION POLICY”

I. RATIONALE/BACKGROUND

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD or Department) is a dynamic organization that has grown in scale, scope, and speed of operation in the past decades. As such, the Department has recognized the importance of evidence-based information for policy and program development and enhancement.

In line with this, research and evaluation serve as major tools in proactively addressing critical issues and concerns of the SWD sector. Accordingly, the implementation of the various social welfare and development (SWD) policies and programs should be closely scrutinized based on its goals and impact to society.

To strengthen the research and evaluation functions in the Department, several guidelines were issued including (i) the 2010-2014 DSWD Research Agenda, (ii) the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework, (iii) Guidelines on the Formulation of DSWD's Research Agenda, and the (iv) Research Protocol for External Research Requests. Formal committees composed of representatives of various DSWD offices, bureaus, services, and units (OBSUs) were also institutionalized, through the Research and Development Technical Working Group (RD-TWG) and Composite Monitoring and Evaluation Team (CMET), to oversee the research and evaluation policies and activities of the Department.

Since the implementation of the Department's Reform Agenda that started in 2006, it has made significant strides in strengthening the research and evaluation in the organization along with the establishment of a results-based monitoring and evaluation system. Through this, the Department can ensure that its

policies and programs are more relevant and responsive to the needs of the poor and vulnerable sectors, as well as efficiently and effectively implemented.

Moreover, the national government has taken measures to mainstream M&E in the bureaucracy through the formulation of Results Matrices for the Philippine Development Plan since 2010, and the issuance of the National Evaluation Policy Framework of the Philippines in 2015, which was jointly initiated by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). The latter policy document highlighted the significance of measuring results of the programs and projects being implemented by the government and directed all government institutions to adopt an M&E system, emphasizing the crucial role of evaluation as a part of program management.

With all the policy developments along research and evaluation in the past two decades, and the growing interest in research and evaluation within and outside the Department, it is deemed important that an integrated and comprehensive policy on research and evaluation for the Department be established. As such, this Memorandum Circular has been formulated and issued to achieve this purpose. In particular, it entirely repeals the (i) Guidelines for the Formulation of DSWD's 5-Year Research Agenda (M.C. 11, S. 2009) and the (ii) Revised Terms of Reference for the Research and Development Technical Working Group (M.C. 14, S. 2009), as well as amends relevant portions of the DSWD Research Protocols (A.O. 19, S. 2011), particularly Sections 8.1.1.8 and 8.2.1.9 (i.e. submission of inventory of research studies)

II. LEGAL BASES

A. National Policies

1. **Republic Act No. 11032**, “Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018”, promotes the ease of doing business and efficient delivery of government services;
2. **Executive Order No. 2, series of 2016**, “Freedom of Information Order”, requires all government offices under the executive branch to make public all official records, data and information requested, with exceptions to the right of access as listed in the memorandum from the Executive Secretary of the Office of the President, dated 24 November 2016;
3. **National Economic and Development Authority and Department of Budget and Management Joint Memorandum Circular no. 2015-01 of the**, “National Evaluation Policy Framework of the Philippines”, directs government agencies to formulate an evaluation agenda, form a neutral evaluation unit, include an evaluation plan in all project proposals, and ensure the appropriate use of evaluation results in the management of programs and projects;
4. **Republic Act No. 10173**, “Data Privacy Act of 2012”, protects the fundamental human right of privacy, of communication while ensuring free flow of information to promote innovation and growth. It also establishes the State’s inherent obligation to ensure that individual personal information in information and communication systems in the government and the private sector are secured and protected;
5. **Executive Order No. 80, S. 2012**, “Directing the Adoption of a Performance-Based Incentive System for Government Employees” provides for the need to strengthen performance monitoring and appraisal system based on existing systems like the Organizational Performance Indicator Framework (OPIF) and the Results-based Performance Monitoring System (RBPMS);
6. **Republic Act No. 10005**, “Philippine Technology Transfer Act of 2009”, provides the framework and support system for the ownership, management, use and commercialization of intellectual property generated from research and development funded by government;
7. **Executive Order 15, series of 1998**, “Redirecting the Functions and Operations of DSWD”, mandates the Department to undertake researches and studies and adopt policies to ensure the effective implementation of public and private social welfare and development programs;
8. **Republic Act No. 8293**, “Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines of 1998”, protects and secures the exclusive rights of scientists, inventors, artists and other gifted citizens to their intellectual property and creations, particularly when beneficial to the people; it also promotes the diffusion of knowledge and information for the promotion of national development and progress and the common good.

B. DSWD Issuances

1. **Administrative Order No. 10, series of 2018**, “Adopting the DSWD Strategic Plan 2018-2022”, communicates the desired outcomes and the necessary strategies and critical activities to achieve the DSWD client-focused and organization-focused objectives as well as the contribution of DSWD to national development goals;
2. **Administrative Order No. 10, series of 2017**, “Guidelines for the Publication of the Social Welfare and Development (SWD) Journal”, institutionalizes the publication of peer-reviewed SWD journal to strengthen the dissemination and utilisation of research reports;
3. **Memorandum Circular No. 9, series of 2017**, “DSWD Freedom of Information (FOI) Agency Manual”, provides the Department’s business process in dealing with requests for information, pursuant to Executive Order No. 2, series of 2016;

4. **Administrative Order No. 7, series of 2015**, “DSWD Child Protection Policy in the Workplace”, further emphasizes the Department’s commitment to ensure protection of children by providing for the courses of action to be adapted by its officials and personnel while carrying out their mandated functions. This includes guidelines on the involvement of children as subjects or respondents in researches;
5. **Memorandum Circular No. 4, series of 2014**, “Guidelines on the Operationalization of the Unified Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation System”, provides for the institutionalization of a department-wide results-based M&E system for DSWD;
6. **Administrative Order No. 19, series of 2011**, “Policy Guidelines on the Conduct of Research Studies in DSWD Offices, Centers, and Institutions”, also known as the DSWD Research Protocol, provides guidelines on the conduct of research studies on, or in DSWD Offices and Centers and Institutions, particularly by researchers external to the Department;
7. **Administrative Order No. 17, series of 2011**, “Knowledge Management (KM) Framework of DSWD”, provides directions on how to conduct and implement knowledge management in the Department;
8. **Memorandum Circular No. 5, series of 2010**, “The DSWD Reform Agenda”, in particular, Reform Agenda 1: Leading/Engaging the Sector in Social Protection, calls for the enhancement of evidence-based policy-making, while Reform Agenda 4: Improving Delivery Systems and Capacities, provides the installation of a department-wide M&E system and conduct of risk assessment and impact evaluations;
9. **Memorandum Circular No. 22, series of 2009**, “DSWD Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework”, provides that the Department M&E component shall be two-pronged both for organizational performance and for program/project performance;
10. **Memorandum Circular No. 14, series of 2009**, “Revised Terms of Reference for the Research and Development Technical Working Group”, establishes the National Research and Development – TWG and the Regional –TWG to provide oversight and advisory role to all Department-wide and Department-funded research activities.
11. **Memorandum Circular No. 11, series of 2009**, “Guidelines for the Formulation of DSWD's 5-Year Research Agenda”, provides the research framework and methodology in coming up with the DSWD research agenda.

III. OBJECTIVES

This Memorandum Circular shall provide overall guidance to the Department, including its Offices, Bureaus, and Services, as well as its Field Offices, and external researchers and partners on the development, implementation, monitoring and utilization of researches and evaluation studies involving the DSWD.

In addition, it aims to:

1. Institutionalize the formulation and monitoring of the DSWD Research and Evaluation Agenda; and
2. Provide standards and criteria in the conduct of researches and evaluation studies in the Department.

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. **Call for Research Proposals** – refers to the mechanism whereby external research proponents are requested to submit research proposals responding to a pre-identified theme. An extensive selection process is adopted at the Regional and National level to determine several proponents that shall implement studies for the Department.
2. **DSWD Results Framework** – refers to the over-all logic chain that guides the actions and strategies that the Department will operationalize to deliver its mission.

3. **Ethical Standards** – refers to a set of customary and acceptable principles, values, and practices applied for any research involving human participants that should govern the conduct of all research activities in DSWD.
4. **Exit Conference** – refers to meetings conducted by DSWD to discuss initial findings of the researcher/s to serve as venue for validation and clarification of any issue related to the conduct of data-gathering activities.
5. **Evaluation Study** – refers to the specific type of research study whose goal is to provide a systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, program or policy, in order to determine its relevance and fulfilment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Due to its role in the policy- and decision-making process of the Department, it stands on its own from other branches and types of policy research (see “Research Study”).
6. **Knowledge Management** – refers to creating an environment in which people's experience and wisdom on Social Protection and Social Welfare programs delivery are valued; and where internal processes are structured to support social welfare policy makers, program managers and service providers in creating, sharing, and using knowledge.
7. **Knowledge Products** – refers to documents and publications derived from expertise, research, and lessons learned that respond to different demands of users and may cover a wide range of purposes.
8. **Primary Data** – refers to data obtained through first hand investigation. These are collected through face-to-face interview, survey questionnaires, focused group discussion, case studies, among others.
9. **Research Conference/Learning Fora**– refers to a venue for the presentation of completed researches and serve as platform for awareness and promotion of the studies.
10. **Research and Evaluation Agenda** – refers to the outline of the Department's research and evaluation direction including priority topics that served as guide for the Department and other stakeholders to ensure the studies to be undertaken are responsive to the emerging concerns of the social welfare development sector.
11. **Research and Evaluation Technical Working Group (R&E-TWG)** – refers to a group of technical persons from different OBSUs of the DSWD Central (National) and Field Offices (Regional) that is responsible for overseeing and providing advisory role to all research and evaluation activities of the Department.
12. **Research Report** – refers to completed studies, in the form of a written document or an audio-visual presentation of the research study's findings based on the conduct of data-gathering activities and recommendations. It shall also include relevant information congruent to the research proposal such as the study's objectives, scope/delimitation, rationale, and related literature.
13. **Research Study** – refers to any original and systematic investigation undertaken in order to increase knowledge and understanding and establish facts and principles. It usually consists of information acquired from research investigation backed up by related literature. Recommendations are crafted from a thorough analysis of the obtained data. Researches that aim to assess DSWD's programs, projects, and policies, based on their accomplishments vis-à-vis its design, is distinctly referred to as an “Evaluation Study”.

14. **Research Protocol** – refers to guidelines and procedure adopted by the Department in the review and facilitation of internal and external research requests for primary data.
15. **Secondary Data** – refers to data that has already been consolidated and/or published by DSWD and readily available as public document.
16. **Social Protection (SP)** – refers to policies and programs that seek to reduce poverty and vulnerability to risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized by promoting and protecting livelihood and employment, protecting against hazards and sudden loss of income, and improving people's capacity to manage risks. It is broken down into four components: social welfare, social insurance, social safety nets and labor market. (*NEDA SDC Resolution 1, series of 2007*)
17. **Social Protection and Development Report (SPDR)** – refers to a report that will provide a comprehensive source of information on the current situation of a municipality/city/province/region based on the demographics, socio-economic profile, identified risks and vulnerabilities with corresponding SP strategies, gaps in the implementation of LGU mechanisms and relevant recommendations to be used for LGU planning and budgeting.
18. **Social Welfare and Development Journal** – refers to the official publication of the DSWD, featuring social protection and social welfare and development articles and researches, including those with policy and program implications.

V. COVERAGE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy shall cover all DSWD Offices, Bureaus, Services, and Units in the Central and Field Offices tasked to conduct

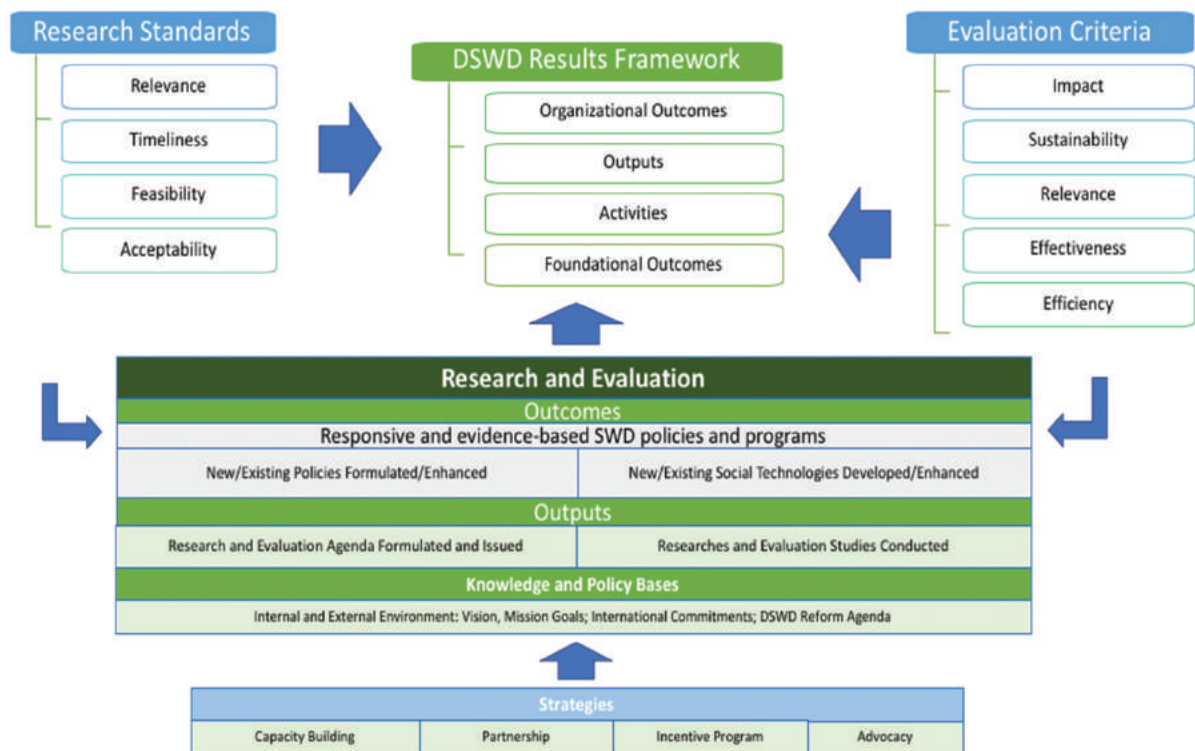
research or evaluation studies on the DSWD policies, programs, and projects. This shall include the development, management, and implementation of any research and evaluation initiated by the Department, regardless of execution (i.e. in-house, joint, or outsourced).

Additionally, this policy applies to external stakeholders who partner with the Department in the conduct of researches or evaluations related to or involving the DSWD, such as local and international research institutions, the academe, independent researchers, other National Government Agencies, local government units, and DSWD Attached Agencies.

VI. RESEARCH AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The framework in Figure 1 illustrates the five (5) elements relevant to the development and implementation of researches and evaluation studies in the Department, namely: The (i) Research and Evaluation; (ii) DSWD Results Framework; (iii) Research Standards; (iv) Evaluation Criteria; and (v) Strategies.

Figure 1. DSWD Research and Evaluation Framework



(i) Research and Evaluation

a. The Concept of Research and Evaluation

Research or research study refers to “any original and systematic investigation undertaken in order to increase knowledge and understanding, as well as establish facts and principles. It usually consists of information acquired from research investigation backed up by related literature ¹”. Researches conducted in and by the Department typically serves three purposes, namely:

- 1) to describe a situation, subject, behaviour, or phenomenon;
- 2) to explore a topic for better understanding of issues/problems that have not been studied more clearly, with the intention to establish priorities, develop operational definitions and improve the final research design; and
- 3) to explain the extent and nature of cause-and-effect patterns and relationships among variables and specific problems.

Evaluation is a type of research, that has a significant role in promoting evidence and results-based policy and decision-making in the Department. It is defined as a “systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results with the overall goal of determining its relevance and fulfilment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability². It focuses on the expected and achieved accomplishments of the intervention by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand achievements or the lack thereof³.”

b. Types of Researches and Evaluation

To facilitate the development of responsive & evidence-based policies and programs, the Department welcomes the conduct of a variety of research types, such as but not limited to the following, that may provide a holistic look at current & emerging SWD concerns/phenomena:

¹Lifted from AO. 19, S. 2011

²Based on the OECD Definition (OECD/DAC, 1991)

³Based on the UNICEF Evaluation Policy (2013)

Table 1. Types of Researches

RESEARCH TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Descriptive Research	Examines situations in order to provide insights on the current situation/place/people/events and establish the current norms, through scientific observation.
Experimental Research	Determines causation among relatively limited and well-defined concepts and propositions; mainly involves hypothesis-testing.
Action Research	Similar to experimental research but is implemented in a real-life setting. Follows an exploratory cycle where interventions are carried out, monitored and assessed continuously, until a sufficient understanding of the problem is achieved.
Policy Research	Uses evidence to gain insight on the causes and consequences of problems, and calculate the advantages, disadvantages and risks of various policy interventions.
Case Study	In-depth investigation, which focuses on one or a few instances of a social phenomenon e.g. a community, family, individual or historical period.
Longitudinal Study	Tracks changes/progress of the same group or individual over time.
Ethnography	Provides a detailed and observation of the social and cultural environment of a group/community.

Alternatively, evaluation studies are generally classified as follows:

Table 2. Types of Evaluation

EVALUATION TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Impact Evaluation (IE)	A type of evaluation that seeks to answer the changes directly attributable to a program or the causal effect (impact) of a program on an outcome of interest.
1. Prospective IE	These are impact evaluations that are developed at the same time as the program is being designed and are built into program implementation. Herein, baseline data is collected before the program is implemented.
2. Retrospective IE	Assess the program impact after the program has been implemented. As such, data for the comparison groups are collected ex post.
Process Evaluation	A type of evaluation that focuses on how a program is implemented and operates, assessing whether it conforms to its original design and documenting its progress and operation.

c. Department Researches and Evaluations

In the Department, the development and conduct of researches and evaluations are key foundational activities that support the attainment of its different organizational goals. These activities are anchored on the knowledge and policy bases in its internal and external environment. Internally, researches and evaluations support the vision and mission, strategic plan as well as the reform agenda of the Department. Externally, the international commitments of the DSWD, including its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, are crucial in the design and objectives of its researches and evaluations.

The research and evaluation process in the Department produces two main outputs, namely: the (1) research and evaluation agenda; and (2) research and evaluation studies. The Research and Evaluation Agenda serves as a reference document for the Department and its partners regarding the various areas and topics intended to be conducted for the SWD sector, especially those that are specific to the DSWD. It shall also guide the researchers and evaluators on the proposed timelines and criteria in relation to the conduct of such studies. On the other hand, the studies are the actual researches and evaluations conducted, reflected in the Agenda, to support the information and knowledge requirements of the Department. It should be emphasized that the research and evaluation program of the Department recognizes the important role of the external partners in both of these outputs, particularly as participants in the formulation of the Agenda and as co-implementers in the conduct of the studies.

Through these research and evaluation outputs, existing programs and policies of the Department are intended to be improved and enhanced. Based on the findings of the studies conducted, the program design and implementation, as well as the effectiveness of the policies will be reviewed to ensure efficient delivery of services.

Simultaneously, new policies and social technologies can be formulated and developed as a result of the various studies conducted. Supported by evidence provided by the several researches and evaluations, policies and programs that are timely and relevant will be initiated to address various SWD concerns and issues. As such, an enabling environment where SWD policies and programs are more responsive is achieved.

(ii) DSWD Results Framework

The DSWD Results Framework reflects the various activities, outputs, and outcomes of the organization that are relevant in the fulfilment of its mandate, powers and functions. The research and evaluation program of the DSWD is linked to the Department's Results Framework in two ways. First, all researches and evaluation studies conducted by the Department, and/or with or by its partners are anchored on these objectives. Secondly, all researches and evaluation studies that are intended to be conducted aim to support the information needs and knowledge gaps of the Department, as stipulated in its Results Framework.

At each level of the Results Framework, indicators are formulated to measure the level and extent of attainment of the organization in each of its objectives. The various researches and evaluation shall provide evidence and information about these indicators to effectively investigate the overall performance of the Department. Furthermore, researches, such as exploratory and descriptive types, are conducted to determine the different issues and concerns along social welfare and development (SWD) that are important to support policy and program design and implementation.

(iii) Research Standards

Studies conducted in and by the Department must take into account the various aspects of its work and the different sectors that it serves. Apart from contributing to the growing body of knowledge on SWD, the

Department aims to generate useful information that will influence policymakers, program developers, frontline service implementers and stakeholders, through these studies. With the welfare of the poor and marginalized sectors at stake, it should be noted that researches are to possess the following standards:

Table 3. Research Standards

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION
Relevance	Denotes direct significance to SWD and the issues that surrounds the sector as well as having concrete linkages to the key indicators in the Department's results framework.
Timeliness	Intends to respond to a pressing issue or concern; needed to aid in decision-making as well as in developing interventions address a critical or immediate problem or issue.
Feasibility	Presents a clearly testable and workable research design that is outcome-oriented.
Acceptability	Firmly grounded on cultural sensitivity and aligned with the basic ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, and justice; ensures gender responsiveness and sensitivity; do not inflict harm and pose other risks to people and environment.

(iv) Evaluation Criteria⁴

Evaluation studies are customized according to the requirements of the program or intervention and/or to the use it is intended to serve. In general, a set of criteria can be used to ensure the quality and consistency of evaluations to be conducted. These evaluation criteria also relate to the different levels of objectives in the results framework. The following table shows the five evaluation criteria, their description, and the level of results they intend to investigate.

⁴Based on the OECD's Evaluation Criteria (OECD/DAC, 1991)

Table 4. Evaluation Criteria

CRITERION	DESCRIPTION	LEVEL OF RESULTS
Efficiency	measures how economically resources (inputs) and the way they are applied are converted to direct results; both quantity (most economical or cost-effective) and quality (most appropriate) are assessed	Input to Output
Effectiveness	the extent to which the direct results of interventions (output) contribute to the sustainable achievement of the objectives (outcome)	Output to Outcome
Impact	measures all significant effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended, on the ultimate stakeholders and third parties	Impact (Ultimate Outcomes)
Relevance	the extent to which the effects of interventions make a sustainable contribution to achieving the ultimate objective	Outcome to Impact
Sustainability	the extent to which the effects achieved by the intervention would be more lasting, such as on financial, economic, institutional, and socio-cultural aspects	Output to Outcome

(v) Strategies

In order to successfully implement the processes involved along the development and conduct of researches and evaluation studies, several strategies should be undertaken.

1. *A strong and intensive capacity building program* should be implemented for the Department's personnel and partner stakeholders in-charge of the execution of the various studies. Through this, continued learning and growth along research and M&E in the Department can be strengthened. Among others, capacity building can be in the form of local or international training programs to research-related conferences, fora, symposia and other research-related activities.

2. *Partnerships with key stakeholders*, such as but not limited to the academe, research institutions, oversight agencies, and other individual practitioners, should also be enhanced. It is acknowledged that DSWD does not have monopoly on the conduct of studies related to SWD issues and concerns. Instead, the DSWD partners with various stakeholders to ensure the delivery and success of relevant and appropriate studies that support the DSWD's mandate and objectives.

3. *Incentive mechanisms for researchers and evaluators* particularly for Department-initiated studies should be institutionalized. In order to encourage the conduct of important studies needed by the Department, an award system for the conduct of ground-breaking studies and other research and evaluation initiatives shall be established. Relevant studies that are found helpful to the organization shall also be featured in the SWD Journal of the Department and be nominated in both national and international research or evaluation conventions and conferences. Acknowledging the important role of the the R&E – TWG, honoraria for the members shall also be explored and facilitated.

4. *Advocacy activities for research and evaluation* should also be ensured. In order to promote the research and evaluation agenda for possible partnership, as well as to popularize the findings of the completed studies, advocacy and social marketing should be strengthened, a such as but not limited to the conduct of research and evaluation fora and conferences. Publication of studies completed, and production of information and communication campaign materials can also be done as part of this strategy to improve awareness of SWD studies as well as increase utilisation of research and evaluation findings.

VII. OPERATIONALIZATION OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION STUDIES

To effectively operationalize the Research and Evaluation Framework, guidelines along the development, implementation, monitoring, and utilization of researches and evaluation studies in the Department shall be instituted.

A. Development of Research and Evaluation Proposals

A.1. The researches and evaluation studies to be conducted on SWD are anchored on the Research and Evaluation Agenda (or herein called simply "the Agenda") issued by the Department that guides its Offices, Bureaus, and Services (OBS), including the Field Offices (FOs), as well as its stakeholders and partners on priority topics and areas (**See Annex A**). This Agenda which is formulated through a participatory process serve as the basis for researches and evaluators, both within the organization and outside, in the crafting of respective proposals.

A.2. As a first step, proposals are developed by the proponent Office or their respective research partner/s (**See Annex B**). All proposals on researches and evaluations included in the Agenda to be undertaken by

a particular office in the Department, either in CO or FO, shall be submitted to the PDPB or the FO-Policy and Plans Division (FO-PPD) for initial review and comments.

For all proposals by student researchers doing undergraduate or postgraduate studies, these shall be coordinated with the PDPB and FO-PPD for assessment, based on the DSWD Research Protocols (A.O. 19, S. 2011) and other related succeeding issuances.

A.3. After initial review, research and evaluation proposals that are identified as priority topics⁵ in the Agenda, as well as related studies that cover more than one region, shall be endorsed to the NR&E-TWG for review, prior to its approval. Once cleared by the NR&E-TWG, these shall be endorsed to the Secretary or its assigned representative for final approval. Studies proposed by the Field Offices covering only a particular region shall be reviewed by Regional R&E-TWG and approved by the Regional Director.

Consequently, all research and evaluation proposals developed by the PDPB shall be shared to the NR&E TWG for review. During the review process, the design, methodologies, objectives, and tools of the study, among others, shall be assessed.

As part of the assessment, proposals involving human participants, including the use of data derived from humans, shall be endorsed for ethical approval. A clearance certificate shall be issued to the respective research proponent (**See Annex C**).

A.4. Studies led by the Social Technology Bureau that are part of the social technology development process shall not be covered by the review protocols, and these shall be undertaken based on the existing policy on social technology development (AO 14, S. 2018). Furthermore, the review process shall not cover urgent studies directed by

the Secretary or other studies directed by the Management that are not included in the Department's Agenda, and these shall be approved by the respective Cluster Head of the concerned Office/s. However, all proposals shall still be shared to the PDPB for appropriate tracking and monitoring.

To ensure the quality of all research and evaluation designs, especially those not included in the regular review process, the concerned Office/s shall create an ad-hoc technical working group (TWG) to support the technical needs of the particular study. The concerned Office/s shall determine the composition of this (TWG) which may include both external and internal stakeholders. The PDPB shall be invited as a regular member of such ad-hoc TWGs.

A.5. All studies that involve surveys shall ensure compliance to the principles of the Philippine Statistical Survey Review and Clearance System. Further, studies whose primary objective is to generate official statistics on a particular segment of the population shall be requested for clearance from the PSA, under the same system.

⁵Priority topics refer to the studies included in the Agenda that are intended to provide evidence and information on the outcomes and outputs of the organization as reflected in the Results Matrix of its Strategic Plan

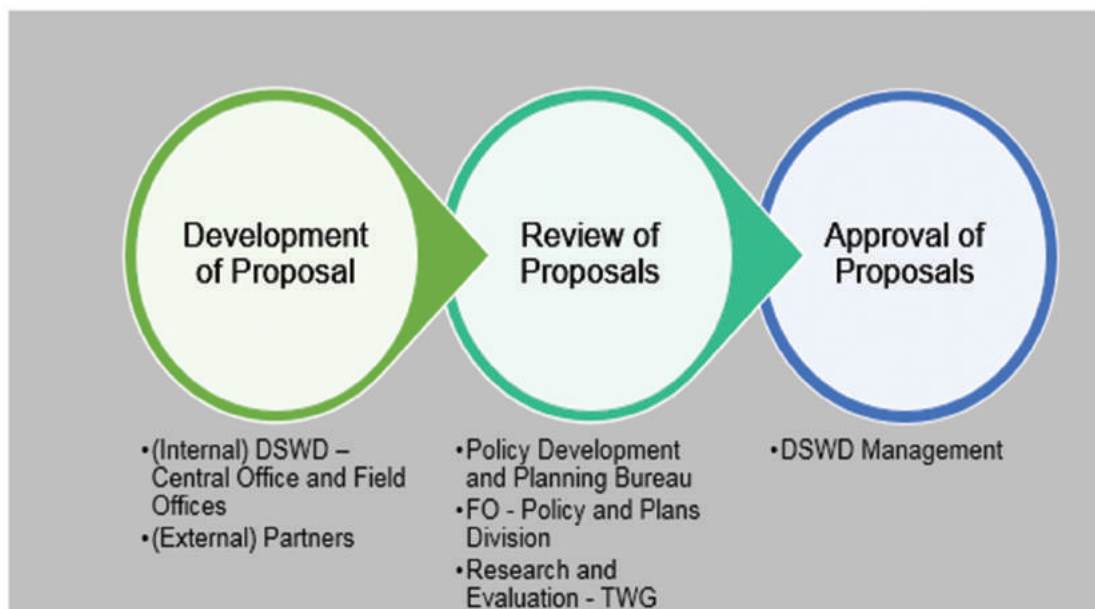
B. Conduct of Researches and Evaluations

B.1. Researches and evaluations can be conducted by both internal Offices or Units and external partners of the Department. For studies initiated by DSWD Offices or Units, once the proposal has been approved, there are three broad approaches that can be ventured, namely (**Please see Table 1 for Summary**):

B.1.a. In-House Studies

The DSWD, through its Offices in the Central Office and Field Offices, may lead the conduct of in-house studies by utilizing the Department's human resources,

Figure 2. Process Flow: Proposal Development and Approval



especially its research and M&E focal persons, using government funds or donor support.

OBS with designated research and M&E teams, such as but not limited to the National Program Management Offices of the Department's key programs and projects, are generally allowed and encouraged to administer in-house studies related to their respective programs, functions, and assignments. However, in order to guard the process in conducting research and evaluation studies, OBS without dedicated research and M&E teams are discouraged to conduct in-house studies.

The PDPB, as the lead in research and evaluation in the Department, shall spearhead the conduct of in-house evaluation studies of special programs and projects implemented by other OBS without dedicated research and M&E teams. Moreover, Offices with oversight functions, with dedicated research and M&E units, are encouraged to conduct studies in their respective turf.

B.1.b. Fully-outsourced Studies

Another approach that can be embarked on by the Department to implement researches

and evaluation studies is through engaging with third-party researchers/evaluators or outsourcing. In this set-up, the Department will be the hiring authority while the third-party researchers/evaluators shall conduct the actual study. As the hiring authority, the Department, through the proponent Office, shall manage the overall conduct of the study, as well as review and approve all documents submitted by the research partners.

The proponent or the hiring Office shall assist the research partners such as but not limited to the following: a) provision of information required for the preparation of tools, design, and other evaluation documents; b) coordination with Field Offices regarding data collection activities; and c) coordination with other stakeholders, such as with other government agencies, as deemed necessary for the study.

To ensure collegiality, the R&E TWG shall assist in the implementation of the outsourced study by helping in the review of relevant documents submitted by the research partner. It shall ensure that the third-party lens is within the bounds of the actual experience of the DSWD programs. Moreover, the PDPB and/or the members of the NR&E TWG can also be tapped in the conduct of spot checks, specifically during

the data collection activity, to make sure that the processes being undertaken on the ground are based on the study design.

Hiring of consultants or research firms to conduct studies is necessary for Offices with no or little resources, particularly time and personnel, required to conduct the same. This is specifically advisable for OBS with no dedicated research and M&E units. As the studies are conducted by an external partner, the neutrality and impartiality of the report is high. The service provider may also be engaged in the provision of capacity building activities to the Department, as part of its contract. The Office who engages with third-party researchers shall ensure that sufficient information is provided and thoroughly discussed with them.

B.1.c. *Joint-Studies*

The third approach is the conduct of studies in close partnership with research consultants or institutions, while maintaining a significant role in the study. This set-up is called, Joint-Studies. In this approach, the partner individual or institution undertakes the study but involves the staff of the hiring Office through allowing

them to assist in the following: a) development and pre-testing of the evaluation tools; b) actual conduct of data collection activities; and c) data processing, analysis, and report writing. Part of the joint-study approach is capacity building which shall provide training to the Department's personnel, whether in a structured manner or on-the-job. This allows transfer of technology from the consultants to the staff of the hiring or proponent Office.

Similar with in-house studies, it is a prerequisite for this approach to be ventured by Offices with dedicated research and M&E teams or staff. Resources, particularly time and personnel, are needed to ensure success of this set-up. B.2. All reports produced from the conduct of the studies, in any of the approaches by the Department and its partners, both preliminary and final, shall be submitted to the PDPB, and in the case of the FOs to the PPD, for dissemination to the members of the R&E -TWG, for review or comments. In this process, the coherence of the data gathered, and the strength of analysis applied on the study shall be examined.

Table 5. Summary of Approaches and Their Applicability

APPROACH	DESCRIPTION	STRENGTHS	APPLICABILITY
<i>In-house</i>	A study initiated and conducted by DSWD Office/s and its personnel	High program knowledge; Offices use their own time and schedules; High opportunities for learning	OBS/FOs with dedicated Research, M&E Teams; OBS with oversight functions
<i>Fully-outsourced</i>	A study initiated by an Office that is outsourced to a third-party service provider (e.g. individual consultants or research institutions)	Evaluations are neutral and impartial; Less staff time is required from the hiring Office	All OBS/FOs with research and evaluation agenda in a particular timeframe
<i>Joint</i>	A study conducted in close partnership with an individual or team of consultants	Personnel are trained (transfer of technology), and staff learning is high; Balance of neutrality and program knowledge	OBS/FOs with dedicated Research, M&E Teams; OBS with oversight functions

The R&E – TWG, both in the CO and the FOs, shall recommend to the proponent Office/Unit and/or to the respective Cluster the approval of the report.

B.3. For students who intend to study SWD concerns, especially the programs and services implemented by the Department, the conduct of the respective studies shall undergo the DSWD Research and Evaluation Protocols (A.O. 19, S. 2011).

C. Monitoring of Researches and Evaluations

C.1. The PDPB shall maintain a database of the Department's research and evaluation studies, i.e. planned, on-going, and completed, and ensure that all studies pipelined in the Department's Agenda, in each period specified, are pursued. The database shall cover studies conducted or managed by the Department as well as its partners. The database shall include information about the inventory of studies as well as how the findings of completed studies are utilized by the Department and its stakeholders, whenever necessary or applicable.

C.2. In order to ensure that the database is maintained and up-to date, a report on the studies being undertaken by the DSWD – OBS and FOs, including external researches, capturing all approved proposals and/or final reports, shall be submitted to the PDPB on an annual basis every 30th day of January⁶, using the prescribed template (**See Annex D**). Copies of the reports and proposals shall also be submitted to the PDPB electronically. In addition, the report shall include updates on the utilization of the researches and evaluation studies and other recommendations moving forward.

C.3. The PDPB, through the R&E TWG, shall conduct a mid-term and end-term review of the implementation of the DSWD Research and Evaluation Agenda. The review will include an assessment of the studies conducted, utilization of the researches completed, as well as challenges

encountered in the operationalization of the Agenda, in order to formulate recommendations in improving the research and evaluation system in the Department.

D. Utilization of Researches and Evaluation Studies

D.1. The proponent Office or Unit in-charge of the management of the study shall be responsible in the submission of the report to the Management, as well as in the dissemination of the findings to relevant stakeholders. The results of the studies shall be discussed by the concerned Offices within the organization in their regular and/or special activities. A public forum shall also be organized by the respective Office in order to share the results of the study to concerned stakeholders.

D.2. Following the dissemination and popularization of completed studies, the findings generated shall be utilized either for policy and/or program development and improvement. This involves determination and marketing of significant findings that are applicable and useful in practice. Utilization occurs once results are considered in decision-making and program improvement, including the development of positions on certain issues, as well as in the formulation and/or amendment of a particular legislation or policy, among others. The report on the utilization of completed researches shall be included in the Inventory of Studies form being submitted to the PDPB on annual basis.

⁶Amending Section 8.2.1.9 of A.O. 19, S. 2011

D.3. Through the knowledge management system, the studies implemented from the Research and Evaluation Agenda will also be shared to various stakeholders and clienteles who can use the studies for the development of other programs and services. The PDPB shall submit to the SWIDB a list and copies of studies that can be shared online for public consumption. Abstracts of completed studies, titles, and

authors of studies conducted shall be uploaded to the KM Portal of the Department. Furthermore, printed and/or digital copies of the full reports shall be made available and accessible to the public, through the Knowledge Exchange Center (KEC) in the Central Office and the Regional Learning and Resource Centers (RLRCs) in the Field Offices.

D.4. To increase awareness and promotion of SWD studies, the PDPB, in partnership with the R&E TWG, shall also conduct annual public fora or conferences to share findings of researches and evaluation studies, for both internal and external stakeholders. In addition, the DSWD shall periodically publish full reports of selected studies through the annual SWD Journal.

VIII. GENERAL POLICIES ON UNDERTAKING RESEARCH AND EVALUATION STUDIES

A. Guiding Principles and Standards of Research and Evaluation

A.1. *Rights of data subjects, confidentiality, and respect.* Evaluators and researchers are expected to respect the diversity of individuals involved and to adhere to the set standards in gathering and handling personal information. This policy shall abide by the provisions of the Republic Act 10173 – Data Privacy Act (DPA) of 2012 to ensure that rights of the data subjects are safeguarded. Specifically, implementers must uphold the following in undertaking research and evaluation activities:

1. Value and safeguard the rights, interests, and dignity of all persons involved. Researchers and evaluators shall be guided by principle of beneficence when involving human subjects in a study.

2. Be sensitive to the cultural, gender, social and economic environment of all stakeholders, particularly those covered by studies and conduct themselves in a manner that is fair and appropriate to the environment.

3. Differences in gender, culture, sector, ethnicity and religion must be taken into account in designing studies, analysis of data and reporting.

4. Under the DPA, lawful collection of personal data shall be ensured. Obtain as appropriate, a written informed consent (or in the case of minor respondents, informed assent). Researchers must ensure that prospective respondents fully understand the purpose, procedures and risks involved with their participation in the study.

5. Consistent to the DPA, obtain information from participants that are only relevant to the study.

6. Respect confidentiality of information provided by the participants, especially, any agreement to grant anonymity. Sensitive information shall remain confidential to protect study participants from potential harm and reprisals.

7. As stated in Chapter IV of the DPA of 2012, the data subjects are entitled to the following rights with regard to processing of their personal information:

a. right to informed when his/her personal information will be, are being or have been processed;
b. right to be informed on the purpose, methods and other details prior to entry of his or her personal information into the processing system;
c. right to access his or her personal information;
d. right to correct data errors or inaccuracy;
e. right to suspend, withdraw or order the blocking, removal or destruction of his or her personal information from the data handlers; and
f. right to be indemnified for any damages for inaccurate, unlawful or unauthorized use of personal data.

8. Give respondents freedom to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time.

be ensured, and purpose of the study must be clearly communicated. Study questions, methodology and processes shall be shared and consulted with them to improve ownership and quality of study implementation. Researchers/evaluators shall provide the DSWD (especially with the concerned Offices/Bureaus/Sections and/or Staff) an opportunity to validate and gain knowledge from the results of the research study through an exit conference and dissemination of final study report.

A.3. Independence and Impartiality.

Potential conflicts of interest must be prevented or reduced to maintain independence of study findings. Studies shall be carried-out without undue influence from any party. While active participation of program implementers and managers is encouraged during various stages of study implementation, findings must be protected from their views to ensure that independence and impartiality are not compromised. It is the responsibility of the proponent Office and the Department to ensure that evaluations are conducted with the highest possible degree of impartiality in order to maximize objectivity and minimize potential for bias.

A.4 Credibility and Reliability. It is crucial to ensure credibility and reliability of study results so as to influence or convince DSWD management to integrate research and evaluation findings into the decision and policy-making processes. Along the implementation of the studies, researchers and evaluators shall a) maintain integrity and quality of the study design, framework and methodology; b) employ appropriate study techniques and carry-out accurate analysis; and c) ensure that findings and recommendations are supported by strong evidence.

B. Ownership of Research and Evaluation

DSWD-initiated studies whether conducted in-house, with partners (joint-study), or through outsourcing shall be owned by the Department. However, for those fully

outsourced and joint-studies funded by the government and Official Development Assistance fund, ownership can be shared by the proponent Office and its partner research institution. DSWD shall have the proprietary rights to utilize the raw data and actual findings. Any interested individual or group shall be required to seek permission from the DSWD, particularly the OBSU/Field Office that initiated the research/study, if they intend to utilize the data or use for personal and/or academic use. Further, the following policies shall be observed:

1. DSWD may publish, without prejudice to the consultants, all studies that the Department deems necessary for publication.

2. For researches about DSWD but whose proponents are external to the Department, not falling under joint-studies or fully outsourced researches, the proprietary rights over the raw data as well as the research findings is with the external researcher. Herein, the proponents shall recognize the DSWD's support in the conduct of the research study.

3. All above-mentioned protocols in terms of ownership of the research and the confidentiality clause of the raw data gathered by the researchers shall be stipulated in the contract or Memorandum of Agreements or Terms of Reference between the two (2) parties involved in the conduct of studies.

4. Compliance of parties to the provisions of RA 8293 otherwise known as the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines, particularly Sections 185 (Fair use of copyrighted work), Sections 187 (Reproduction of published work); and Sections 188 (Reprographic reproduction by libraries) shall be observed.

C. Management of Information

DSWD produces ample database that can be used by different stakeholders from public and private sectors, especially those involved in the implementation of social

welfare and development programs. The data and information from the DSWD needed for and resulted from research and evaluation studies shall be made available to external partners and researchers.

The provision of relevant data and information by the Department afford full protection to a person's right to privacy, and thus, shall adhere to relevant policies, particularly the Data Privacy Act of 2012, DSWD Freedom of Information (FOI) Agency Manual and other pertinent guidelines on sharing of information with partners and stakeholders.

Consistent with Chapters VI and VII of the DPA of 2012, the Department shall implement appropriate security measures with respect to processing and sharing of personal sensitive data. These measures shall be used to standardize access of data, prevent unlawful and unauthorized use or processing of data, and minimize risks of data breach or accidental/unintentional personal data disclosure.

IX. IMPLEMENTING MECHANISMS

A. Implementing Structures and Mechanisms

1. Creation of Research and Evaluation - Technical Working Group. Two (2) Technical Working Groups are hereby created, i.e., National Research and Evaluation (NR&E-TWG) at the Central Office and the Regional Research and Evaluation (RR&E-TWG) at the Field Offices.

2. Composition and Secretariat. The National R&E-TWG shall be chaired by the PPG and shall have two (2) representatives from all clusters of the Department. Five (5) members from the Core Group of Specialists (CGS) on Research and M&E shall also form part of the TWG. The Assistant Secretary for PPG shall serve as the chairperson of the TWG, while the PDPB shall provide secretariat services.

On the other hand, the RR&E-TWG shall be chaired by the Division Chief of Policy and Plans Division (PPD) of the Field Office and shall have two (2) representatives from all the Divisions in the region. The FO shall also include two (2) members from the regional CGS on Research and M&E. The PDPS shall be the secretariat of the RR&E-TWG.

3. Functions of the NR&E -TWG. The NR&E-TWG shall have the following functions:

- 3.a Oversee and provide advisory role to all priority, Department-wide, and Department-funded and initiated researches and evaluations;
- 3.b Partake in the development and implementation of the Department's Research and Evaluation Agenda;
- 3.c Participate in the review process of research and evaluation proposals and reports for onward submission to the Management;
- 3.d Assess the ethical considerations of the different research and evaluation studies, and identify studies requiring ethical approval;
- 3.e Provide necessary technical assistance to CO-OBS and Field Offices in line with research and evaluation;
- 3.f May act as implementers or co-implementers in the conduct of researches and evaluations to be undertaken by the respective CO-OBS;
- 3.g Recommend and participate in the regular capability building activities if or both the national and regional R&E-TWG members along research and evaluation; and
- 3.h Attend regular and special meetings and actively participate in the TWG initiatives.

4. Functions of the RR&E-TWG. The RR&E-TWG shall have the following functions:

- 4.a Oversee and provide advisory role to all priority, region-wide and FO-funded and initiated researches and evaluations;
- 4.b Partake in the development and

implementation of the Department's Research and Evaluation Agenda, as well as in the cascading of the Agenda at the regional level;

4.c Participate in the review process of research and evaluation proposals and reports for endorsement to the Regional Director;

4.d Provide necessary technical assistance to research proponents in the region; and

4.e Attend regular and special meetings and actively participate in the RR&E-TWG initiatives.

5. Functions of the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall have the following functions:

5.a Monitor and coordinate research and evaluation activities of the Department and its Field Offices;

5.b Prepare notice of meeting, agenda and proceedings of the NR&E and RR&E-TWG meetings;

5.c Review and provide initial inputs on all research and evaluation documents prior to endorsement to the TWG;

5.d Prepare reports of all research and evaluation-related activities covered by the TWG;

5.e Maintain databank of completed and on-going researches as well as all research and evaluation-related documents; and

5.f Convene and provide administrative and logistical requirements for the TWG.

6. Meetings. The national and regional R&E-TWG shall convene regular meetings every semester and may hold special meetings as deemed necessary.

B. Institutional Arrangements

B.1 Central Office

The Policy Development & Planning Bureau shall take the lead role in the implementation of these guidelines and carry out the following tasks:

1. Spearhead the formulation of the DSWD Research and Evaluation Agenda, and in

particular, it shall prepare the draft agenda and organize the required consultation activities with OBS and partners;

2. Ensure the approval and issuance of the DSWD Research and Evaluation Agenda;

3. Organize, in partnership with the Social Welfare Institutional Development Bureau (SWIDB) and Social Marketing Service (SMS), the necessary public conferences or forum such as for the dissemination of the Research and Evaluation Agenda, as well as for the findings for completed researches evaluation studies;

4. Lead the conduct of research and evaluation studies on topics relevant to the measurement of the organizational outcomes and outputs, as well as for special programs and projects, especially those without dedicated Research and M&E Teams;

5. Develop and maintain a database of inventory of researches and evaluation studies and closely monitor the Department's compliance to its Research and Evaluation Guidelines, specifically on the timelines and topics identified in its Agenda;

6. Provide the reportorial requirements to the Management and stakeholders, such as the oversight agencies, among others, related to the implementation of the research and evaluation studies in the Department; and

7. Develop and implement, together with the Human Resource Development Service and Social Welfare Institutional Development Bureau, a comprehensive capacity building program that shall assist the whole organization in the effective implementation of this policy.

Offices/Bureaus/Services shall partake in the processes identified in this policy, and in particular, it shall:

1. Participate in the formulation of the research and evaluation agenda, specifically in the identification of the

proposed topics and areas, among others;

2. Conduct research and evaluation studies, and engage with partners if deemed appropriate, in close coordination with the PDPB, based on the provisions prescribed in this policy;

3. Partake in the development and implementation of other researches and evaluation studies initiated by OBS other than them especially those that concern them or their stakeholders;

4. Attend and participate in all other research and evaluation activities, including the capacity building sessions, organized by the Department to ensure successful implementation of this policy and the results-based agenda.

Social Marketing Service (SMS) and its regional counterpart. In addition to its functions specified as part of the OBS in the Department, the SMS, and its FO counterpart, shall:

1. Organize, in partnership with the PDPB or FO-PPD, relevant conferences and fora for the dissemination of the research and evaluation agenda including research and evaluation findings; and

2. Assist the PDPB or FO-PPD in the development of appropriate communication materials related to researches and evaluation studies, as well as in the packaging of the research and evaluation reports (e.g. electronic and print copies) being submitted to stakeholders.

Human Resource Development Service (HRDS) and Social Welfare Institutional Development Bureau (SWIDB), and their regional counterparts. In addition to their roles specified earlier, both the HRDS and SWIDB shall:

1. Assist the PDPB or FO-PPD in the development and implementation of a comprehensive capacity building program on evaluation that supports the objectives of this policy; and

2. The HRDS shall integrate research and evaluation in skills trainings provided to the Department's personnel, while SWIDB shall incorporate research and evaluation in the trainings provided to stakeholders, such as the local government units and non-government organizations, among others.

B.2 Field Offices

The Policy & Plans Division through the Policy Development and Planning Section (PDPS) shall take the lead role in the implementation of these guidelines at the Field Office. The PDPS shall then carry out the following tasks:

1. Participate in the development of the DSWD Research and Evaluation Agenda and spearhead the cascading of the same to its respective region;

2. Lead the conduct of researches and evaluations at the Field Office level;

3. In partnership with the Capacity Building Section and Social Marketing Section, shall organize regional research and evaluation conferences and fora in line with the promotion of research and evaluation in the FO;

4. Spearhead the review process of research proposals and reports, with the assistance of the RR&E-TWG;

5. Lead in the organizing of relevant regional forum or conferences related to the dissemination and popularisation of research and evaluation reports;

6. Maintain an inventory of researches and evaluation studies being conducted in the FO and submit annual inventory report to PDPB;

7. Organize capacity building activities, in partnership with the Human Resource Development Division, and provide necessary technical assistance to the FO personnel as well as to the researchers and evaluators.

Sections/units within the Field Office, including Centres and Institutions, shall:

1. Actively participate in the research and evaluation activities of the Region particularly in the RR&E TWG initiatives; and
2. Initiate studies relevant to their respective programs or services, guided by the provisions of this policy, particularly in Section VII.

C. Funding

1. The DSWD shall endeavour to make funds available to encourage the CO-OBS and Field Offices to conduct researches and evaluations on a regular basis, as prescribed by this policy and the Department Agenda.
2. The PDPB shall include in its Annual Work and Financial Plan a budget for (i) policy-related researches to ensure that at least one (1) Central Office initiated research is implemented per year, and (ii) evaluation studies assigned to the Bureau scheduled to be conducted within the specified time period as indicated in the Department's Agenda. Likewise, an amount of Php300, 000.00 for each Field Office who will request for fund augmentation will be allocated and included in PDPB Annual Work and Financial Plan. The request of Field Offices shall be made prior to the preparation of the WFP, as this will be the basis of the PDPB for fund allocation. In cases that the proposed researches have funding requirement of more than P300,000.00, the FO shall augment additional fund. Moreover, appropriate budget allocations required to ensure the conduct of the various research and evaluation strategies of the Department (i.e. capacity building initiatives, advocacy and dissemination activities such as but not limited to the annual conduct of conferences and publication of journals, and other incentive mechanisms) shall be included in the Bureau's WFP.

3. The DSWD Field Offices and CO-OBS shall also allocate funds for the conduct of researches and evaluations every year, as provided for by the National Evaluation Policy Framework requiring national agencies to allocate funds for the conduct of researches and evaluation studies, especially those implementing core social protection programs. Said budget shall be reflected in their respective Work and Financial Plan. Further, the Field Offices and other OBS can also generate funds from external sources for the conduct of their own research and evaluation priorities in accordance with the existing budgeting, accounting and auditing rules.

4. The PDPB shall work closely with the Technical Assistance Unit to generate resources from external partners, which shall be used to augment research and evaluation needs of the Department including its Field Offices and OBS. Conduct of researches under resource augmentation from TAU shall also ensure adherence to the requirements prescribed by external partners.

X. Transitory and Repealing Clause

As part of transition, all researches and evaluations that are ongoing prior to the issuance of this policy shall be implemented as planned. However, studies that have not commenced yet but with already approved proposals or designs shall be implemented following the standards and procedures set forth by this policy.

All guidelines inconsistent with the provisions of this Memorandum Circular are hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

XI. Effectivity

This Memorandum Circular shall take effect immediately.

Issued in Quezon City this 15th day of May 2019.


ROLANDO JOSELITO D. BAUTISTA
Secretary
Department of Social Welfare and Development

THE DSWD STRATEGY MAP 2028

DSWD Adopts the Performance Governance System (PGS) for a Better Public Service

DSWD - Office of the Strategy Management¹

In pursuit of a more focused and responsive operations, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) incorporated the Performance Governance System within its organizational and operational processes to ensure optimum quality of service.

The (PGS) is a holistic and collaborative framework for designing, executing, monitoring, and sustaining roadmaps to reform. It raises the standards of strategy setting for Philippine public sector institutions that works beyond operational effectiveness and complement process improvements while giving premium to its agency's mandate into a world-class public service.

With the AmBisyon 2040 aiming for “*Matatag, Maginhawa, at Panatag na Buhay*” and DSWD’s Vision of having “all Filipinos free from hunger and poverty, have equal access to opportunities, enabled by a fair, just and peaceful society”, a performance management tool is needed to track the performance of the Department to ensure the fulfillment of its enabling and implementing roles.

Given this mandate and a societal vision, the Department adopted the PGS to institutionalize a system to guide DSWD into coming up with feasible targets and goals in all its program planning, policy development, systems and processes, and service delivery.

The PGS has a four-stage pathway and the DSWD is already on the second of the stage. Beginning in November 2019, the DSWD has already developed its target breakthroughs, new strategic position, and the DSWD Strategy Map 2028 and the 2022

Governance Scorecard, which completed the *Initiation Stage*. Since February 2020, multi-level scorecards have been developed and cascaded into various Office Strategic Contributions and Strategic Deliverables referred to as cascading sessions which then commenced the *Compliance Stage*.

The DSWD Strategy Map 2028 was developed to provide the strategic focus to deliver its mission by facilitating coordinated efforts and convergence of different partners and stakeholders. It intends to mobilize and steer social protection and social services to address poverty reduction. Not only that this direction is critical, but officials and employees are expected to imbibe the core values namely: *Maagap at Mapagkalingang Serbisyo, and Serbisyong Walang Puwang sa Katiwalian at Patas na Pagtrato sa Komunidad*.

The key sections of the Strategy Map primarily focus on achieving its *Impact Objective* of an improved social protection initiatives which will contribute to poverty alleviation. This objective is the articulation of DSWD’s contribution to the sectoral and societal goals for AmBisyon 2040 and the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022.

Another important section of DSWD’s strategy map is its focus on the steering (enabling role) and rowing (implementing role) functions of the Department. Essentially, it aims to sustain the implementation of Strategic Plan 2018-2022 and taking into consideration the thrust of the new administration of institutionalizing the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) and actualizing the full devolution of DSWD services to local government units.

¹Office of the Strategy Management (osm@dswd.gov.ph)

It also contains the *Core Objectives (Outputs)* which comprised of the outputs essential to achieving the focus objectives. As enabler, the Department is expected to increase the capacity of the LGUs on social protection through the functionality of the Local Social Welfare and Development Offices (LSWDOs). While as implementer, the Department need to improve well-being of its constituents through strengthening the social welfare system. As such, the 4PS beneficiaries are expected to be self-sufficient, the DSWD Centers and Residential Care Facilities shall be centers of excellence.

Furthermore, the PGS also presents possible indicators to measure the accomplishment of the Department in achieving its commitments through the

DSWD Governance Scorecard. With the Scorecard, the Department will be made accountable in fulfilling all its plans.

Lastly, in response to the needs in social protection due to the COVID, DSWD is revisiting its Strategy Roadmaps for adjustments in its plans and processes due to the emerging effects of the COVID-19 pandemic to the work systems of the Department and occupational safety of its employees.

With a transparent and dynamic system like PGS in place within the Department, it is expected that DSWD's roadmap of operations will lead to an improved organization system which, in turn, will result in the provision of better quality of service to the Filipino public.



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