

## **GAWAD KALINGA GOVERNANCE PARADIGM: THE CAPIZ EXPERIENCE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Poverty remains a serious social concern and is described in different ways around the world. In the Philippines, poverty is having very little or no food, suffering from unhealthy practices, little education, and having no permanent place to live. The Philippine government is spending millions to alleviate the situation but the impact is not felt and the poor are impatient.

“Gawad Kalinga,” translated in English means to “give care,” is a Philippine-based movement that aims to end poverty by first restoring the dignity of the poor. With its motto “less for self, more for others, enough for all” GK employs an integrated and holistic approach to empowerment by creating an enabling environment with values-formation and leadership development at its core. GK has become a vehicle for convergence for all sectors, and its model of governance is now being replicated in all levels of Philippine society (Reyes, 2014). Established in 2003, the foundation currently works with over 2,000 communities including eight in the province of Capiz.

The need to respond to the challenges brought by Typhoon Hayan (Yolanda) paved the way for the birth of Gawad Kalinga (GK) Capiz. Forty percent of the people affected by typhoon Hayan were below poverty line (UNDP, 2013) but how come GK beneficiaries in Capiz describe themselves as the “happy poor?” It is then the purpose of this study to look at the experience of the provincial management team of Gawad Kalinga Capiz, its volunteers, workers, private and government partners and beneficiaries, their poverty alleviation participation and social partnership system, and the role of Gawad Kalinga in the sustainable development of the Province of Capiz in the Philippines. Interview and survey questionnaires were employed to gather needed data and describe the experience giving deeper understanding of project impact to the milestone travelled from where they were after the devastation.

GK Capiz activities undertaken includes house build, values formation, community organizing, Paraisong Pambata, food sufficiency, clean up drive, medical missions, scholarship programs and partnership with academe on social enterprise development. “Helping others makes me feel good” one GK volunteer describe the feeling of participating in a GK Bayani Challenge. Seventy nine percent of the 287 respondents came from families

below poverty line yet describe their GK experience as very enjoyable. Beneficiaries granted housing describes their life as much better now. Workers and volunteers' level of commitment is very high, land donors believe that GK workers and volunteers are trustworthy and effectively deliver services while government partners strongly favor community projects undertaken by Gawad Kalinga.

**Keywords:** Poverty, Dignity, Housing, Food Security, Partnership for Sustainable Development

### **Introduction**

Poverty remains a serious social concern and is described in different ways around the world. In the Philippines, poverty is having very little or no food, suffering from unhealthy practices, little education, and having no permanent place to live. The Philippine government is spending millions to alleviate the situation but the impact is not felt and the poor are impatient.

Poverty is described as the state of having no food, no permanent home, no economic activity, no dignity and no hope. People who are poor accept the fact that they could remain poor for a long time and may die poor. This mindset puts a heavy burden on the shoulder of the government.

It is estimated that one billion people in the world today live in extreme poverty. According to the Institute of Development Studies (2015) There are many dimensions to their deprivation, low and irregular incomes, lack of safe drinking water, poor housing, limited access to health and education, and social exclusion and discrimination. Their poverty makes them extremely vulnerable to life cycle, natural, or economic hazards. In many cases, extreme poverty persists over time.

Using the definition of chronic poverty as those people who remain under the poverty line for at least five years, approximately 400 million people in the world are chronically poor. The persistence of poverty over time eats into their assets and networks, undermining their resilience and voice. For a number of reasons, those affected by chronic and extreme poverty are often left out in policy initiatives. They are often harder to reach, require stronger and longer term support, and have limited political influence.

Gawad Kalinga describes the poor as the landless, homeless, and hungry. "Gawad Kalinga," translated in English means to "give care," is a Philippine-based movement that aims to end poverty by first restoring the dignity of the poor. With its motto "less for self, more for others, enough for all" GK employs an integrated and holistic approach to

empowerment by creating an enabling environment with values-formation and leadership development at its core. GK has become a vehicle for convergence for all sectors, and its model of governance is now being replicated in all levels of Philippine society (Reyes, 2014). Established in 2003, the foundation currently works with over 2,000 communities including eight in the province of Capiz.

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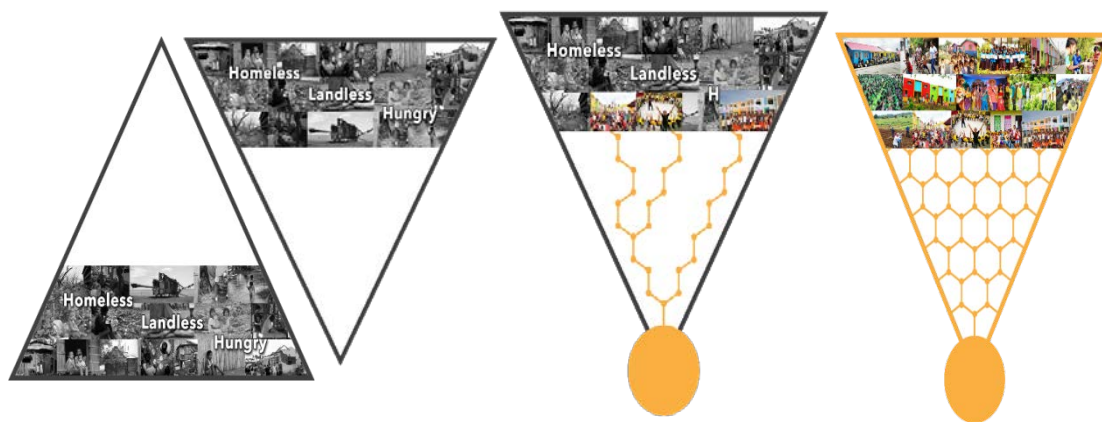
### **Objectives of the Study**

Generally this study aimed to document the experiences of Gawad Kalinga in Capiz for the period covered February 2014 – to August 2015. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. Describe the different poverty alleviation activities conducted by Gawad Kalinga in the Province of Capiz;
2. Find out how these activities are funded;
3. Determine the partners of Gawad Kalinga Capiz and their role in undertaking poverty alleviation activities in Capiz;
4. Surface the factors that facilitated as well as hindered in the implementation of these activities.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Gawad Kalinga (GK) describes the poor as those seen at the “base of the pyramid.” GK has been converging and building goodness among the rich and poor for 10 years concentrating in greater Manila area but spreading the goodness across the country dreaming of ending poverty for 5 million Filipino families. For ten years now, GK had worked towards “flipping” the pyramid contrary to the trickle down strategy or the bottom up approach to development. “Flipping” the pyramid will mean that the “haves” will have to do the heavy lifting if we want to stabilize our nation. We cannot expect the poor to play catch up, they will never be able to (Oquiñena, 2015).



### **Methodology**

Permission was sought from the Gawad Kalinga Capiz head to conduct this study. This study is descriptive in nature and utilized a set of researcher made questionnaire and interview guide. Interviews were done individually and as a group.

GK engages the rich, the government officials, the academe represented by a big number of students, the military, private companies, non-government organizations, people organizations, retirees and volunteers to achieve the goal of helping the poor. The respondents of the study were the 287 GK volunteers and beneficiaries.

**Table 1. Respondents of the study.**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Sex:</b>		
Male	113	39.37
Female	174	60.63
Total	287	100
<b>Age:</b>		
Below 18 years old	15	5.22
18-29 years old	117	40.77
30-60 years old	148	51.57
61 years old and above	7	2.44
Total	287	100
<b>Estimated Monthly Income:</b>		
Php 1,000 - 5,000	198	67.10
Php 5,001 - 10,000	76	22.20
Php 10,001– 20,000	10	1.80
Php 30,000 and above	3	2.40
Total	287	100
<b>Highest Educational Attainment:</b>		
No Formal Schooling	11	3.83

Elementary Level	89	31.01
High School Level	93	32.40
College Level	85	29.62
Vocational Graduate	7	2.44
Post Graduate	2	0.70
Total	287	100

### **Best Practices of Gawad Kalinga Capiz**

The Province of Capiz was among the provinces badly hit by Typhoon Hayan in November 2013. Immediately a core group of Capizeños headed by GK Manila volunteer Jessica Veronique O. Yu, also a Capizeño, got together and planned how they can help the typhoon victims in Capiz who were not given priority during that time because of the severe damage in Tacloban. Donated relief goods from Gawad Kalinga in Luzon, from friends and rich Capizeños, were received, packed and distributed reaching far flung barangays around the province. This was followed by the building of permanent homes for identified poor families, feeding programs, medical missions, livelihood projects, trainings, youth camps, business camp, and gatherings to make the poor feel the presence of those who cares for their well being since the core values of GK is caring and sharing.

### **GK COMMUNITY VALUES FORMATION**



More than programs or funding, caretakers provide consistent presence, offering a hand in friendship and with a strong values formation and mentoring program for sustainable transformation (Gawad Kalinga Model, 2015). GK Capiz starts values formation right after beneficiaries were identified. GK project directors meet with the beneficiaries every weekend to conduct values formation sessions to beneficiaries while construction of houses are on-going. These sessions would usually take three hours. Children below 12 years old are engaged in Paraisong Pambata, an activity that teaches love, caring and sharing, and enhances creativity too by doing fun activities and games.

### **GK COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM**

Gawad Kalinga Community Infrastructure Program builds brightly painted homes for the poorest families to restore their dignity and pride “taking them from a slum environment to a beautiful community of homes painted with the colors of hope” (Gawad Kalinga, 2015). Providing safe and decent homes for the poor is one of the critical steps in their journey out of poverty. Homes and other communal facilities such as multipurpose centers, school buildings, clinics, and reading centers are built through a combination of skilled paid labor and sweat equity of the GK Village residents. Everyone has a part to play: Individuals/corporations sharing resources to fund materials needed for construction, the builders who are beneficiaries of other



*Fitness First GK Village in Barangay San Nicolas, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines*





*Volunteers doing house build at GK Village Panitan after a youth camp*

communities; the students and youth together with other volunteers sharing a few hours of labor to carry materials from drop points to the construction sites, mix cement, and dig holes; and the beneficiaries themselves spending 600 hours of labor for the houses they built for themselves.

A GK community is composed of at least 20 household with standard design house costing PhP 150,000 or roughly US\$3,200 with total living space of 22-24 sqm, expandable loft area for cooking, and own toilet/bath.



*Fitness First manager and staff attended the turn-over ceremony of*

*21 GK houses in San Nicolas, Tapaz, Capiz, Philippines*



**Security of Tenure on the Land.** There has to be a clear and secure arrangement on the land where the GK village will be built. Clearly, GK cannot serve informal settlers unless it is part of a relocation plan to a secured site. “Secure” means the beneficiary community either collectively owns the land or in a usufruct agreement with a private/public entity for the land (Gawad Kalinga, 2015).

**Willingness of Beneficiary Community.** The beneficiary community, after a GK appreciation session, must accept and enroll into the Gawad Kalinga program voluntarily and must render 600 hours of labor at the community.

**Caretaker Team.** A Caretaker Team must be locally available and willing to guide the beneficiary community through the GK journey. GK Caretaker teams are volunteers formed and trained by GK Provincial Management teams in each province. These Provincial Management teams are in turn duly assigned by GK Head Office management.



*GK Capiz Provincial Management Team with GK Enchanted Farm*

*President Mr. Frank Chu*

One of the challenges faced by the provincial management team on the building of homes is the processing of the certificate of donation of the land and memorandum of agreement particularly that of the government because it need to pass through the local council.

## **GK BAYAN-ANIHAN**

Bayan-Anihan is the first family-based, sustainable farm program in the Philippines. Each family is given a 10-square meter garden plot which can yield a minimum of 10 kilograms of vegetables per month, providing 30 meals per family. The program's success depends on the valuable contributions of partners and individuals who each have a role to play in fighting hunger in the Philippines. The Department of Agriculture provides farm inputs and funds technical training while the local government units provide land & water systems for the farm and on-ground monitoring.

The GK Food Sufficiency program is committed to empower the hungry and to eradicate hunger by empowering each family in the community to produce their own food and augment family income to support other needs. Fitness First GK Village is developed to serve as the nursery for other GK villages in the province of Capiz.

## **GK CHILD AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**



The GK Child and Youth Development program aims to develop the skills and talents of the children and youth in the GK communities by inculcating values that bring out their full potential. SIBOL which means “to grow” provides value-based education to pre-school children, aged 3 to 6 years old. SAGIP, which means “to save a life” is a support program for children aged 7 to 13 years old, usually consists of free academic tutorials, sports and creative workshops and values formation classes.

SIGA, on the other hand, means “to light” empowers teens to become productive citizens through sports, creative activities and mentoring sessions (The Quest, 2015).



*Students and GK Youth of Capiz State University during solar panel installation training. They helped install solar panels for GK Villages in Capiz.*

Gawad Kalinga Capiz was also able to send four students to De La Salle - College of Saint Benilde for school year 2015-2016. They enjoyed full tuition fee coverage, allowances and board and lodging. The scholars had difficulty coping with the standards of education and lifestyle of a highly regarded private school like De La Salle. The provincial management team is looking at this concern and is considering sending scholars to government educational institution where most of the students come from middle class and poor families.



## **CENTER FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION**



The GK CSI is a business ecosystem developers that aims to build a culture of social entrepreneurship where entrepreneurs are encourage to test prototypes and new business models to build global Filipino product brands that have real social and environmental impact. The center for social innovation in Capiz was launch in partnership with Capiz State University. A business camp was conducted at CAPSU Main Campus participated by 94 business and agriculture students of the university. The students organized themselves as LISO (locally means seed) or the League of Innovative Social Organizations. They were mentored to take on the challenge of helping the GK communities develop and engage in social enterprises that will help them become self-reliant and sustainable.

Products made by blacksmiths from GK Village in Milibili were displayed together with other local SMEs during the second day of the business camp. The entrepreneurs together with business and agriculture students were mentored by the team from Gawad Kalinga Enchanted Farm headed by GK Founder Mr. Tony Meloto.



## GK KALUSUGAN

GK Health Program believes that every Filipino has the right to good health and ensures that community health care services are delivered to those who need it the most. Volunteer doctors, nurses and medical practitioners around the country



*Medical team from Manila conducts medical mission for Barangay Intampilan*

conduct medical missions and health profiles of the GK Capiz communities are maintained. These are connected to the local health centers for the day-to-day health needs of the beneficiaries.

## **BAYANI CHALLENGE**

Bayani Challenge is conducted once a year. Bayani Challenge Barangay Walang Iwanan was held from April 9 (Day of Valor / *Araw ng Kagitingan*) to June 12 (Independence Day / *Araw ng Kalayaan*) nationwide. Together with many local leaders across the Philippines, our national government partners Philippine Information Agency (PIA) and Pilipinas Natin and our private partners Direct Relief International, Globe and Microsoft, Gawad Kalinga volunteers and partners, brought concrete hope and help #endpoverty for the province of CapiZ and the city of Roxas.



This year's Bayani Challenge is the take off point of Barangay Walang Iwanan, a 3-year effort to fuel and inspire the bayanihan spirit in at least 20,000 barangays across the country. With exciting activities like youth conferences, house builds, health missions, sports programs, and clean-up drives, Bayani Challenge was a successfully participated by various sectors and age groups. Among the activities undertaken were: refurbishing of schools in different municipalities; clean up drive, youth conferences, medical missions, house builds and kalinga night.





### **Gawad Kalinga Fund Source**

Donations are resources entrusted to GK for use in various activities. Donors usually opt not to participate in any way with program implementation and simply wish to be assured that their donations are able to help the GK cause. Partnerships are collaborations between a partner, Gawad Kalinga and GK communities to achieve specific goals. These collaborations are, in most cases, defined through a Memorandum of Agreement between the partner and GK. Donations and partnerships for GK programs can generally be classified into these ways of helping:

- a. To support urgent and ongoing campaigns such as feeding programs, Bayani Challenge, etc.;

- b. To donate land;
- c. To build a GK community in a priority area;
  - Fund houses
  - Fund learning center, community center or playground
  - Support community empowerment
  - Sponsor an event



*Handumanan GK Village at Brgy. Cabugao, Panay, Capiz, Philippines.*

The pictures presented are evidence not of poverty but of the hopeful poor. Of the 287 respondents, ninety two percent strongly agree that helping others is an expression of love and caring. “Helping others makes me feel good” one GK Capiz volunteer describe the feeling of participating in a GK Bayani Challenge.

At Gawad Kalinga, the poor helps each other. Seventy nine percent of the 287 respondents came from families below poverty line yet describe their GK Capiz experience as very enjoyable. The poor who were described as landless may still not hold a land title for the GK house granted to them but they describe their life as much better now. Even without a land title, they felt secure because GK made sure that they can stay at their homes for as long as they exults the values and commitment of the GK community.

Workers and volunteers’ level of commitment is very high. They look forward to the

next activity and the next year's Bayani Challenge. Land donors believe that GK workers and volunteers are trustworthy and effectively deliver services. During the turn-over ceremony of the Fitness First Village, Ms. Grace, land donor and an indigenous people herself, convinced another friend to donate a piece of land for Gawad Kalinga Capiz's next GK Village in the Municipality of Tapaz.

Government partners strongly favor community projects undertaken by Gawad Kalinga. Representatives from the local government units, the provincial agriculture and the Department of Science and Technology pledge support to help develop GK income generating projects identified for each GK Village to attain food sufficiency and sustainability.

### **Conclusion**

Gawad Kalinga engages the rich and poor, young and old Capizeños, private and public sector, the Filipinos as a country and the good Samaritans around the world to pool their resources together to ensure that goodwill and positive impact is multiplied many times over. Monetary donations received from GK headquarters and local donors are complemented by the guidance of the provincial management team as caretakers, the sweat equity of the GK Village beneficiaries, valuable contributions of volunteers, local government, the expertise of the academe and other individuals and institutions, creating a network of relationships that is key to the process of elevating the poor from poverty, one family, one community at a time.

Problems encountered such as long wait for processing government documents will require a lot of patience and perseverance. Community challenges need more presence from the caretakers because to some residents it will take a while before the right values are formed while the youth needs more love, understanding and continued guidance and presence.

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