

THE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF ILOCOS SUR, PHILIPPINES: A TOOL OF POVERTY REDUCTION

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of the Ilocos Sur Educational Assistance and Scholarship Program (ISEASP) from 2008 to 2014. The program seeks to assist the financially-challenged but deserving students of the province in attaining and fulfilling their dreams in life, that is, to earn a college degree and be gainfully employed. This is in line with the poverty reduction program of the province.

The descriptive research design was used in this study. A questionnaire was used to gather data on the personal profile including the current employment status of the respondents, as well as the administrative capability of the Provincial Government of Ilocos Sur (PGIS) in implementing the scholarship program. Data were analysed using frequency and percentage, mean and correlation analysis.

The indicators of effectiveness are the graduation rate and employability of the scholars of the provincial government. From School Year 2008-2009 to School Year 2013-2014, a total of 1,556 scholars have been supported by PGIS. Of these, 492 have graduated or 31.81%. Of these graduates, 431 have been gainfully employed, contributing significantly to the economy of the place.

The effectiveness of the program is mainly due to the executive leadership of the provincial government, punctuated by the commitment of the governor to invest in human resources cognizant of the fact that local development is anchored on educated citizenry. Second, it is also due to the competence and commitment of the staff of the scholarship and the financial adequacy of the program.

The following conclusions were arrived at by the researcher: 1) Overall, the administrative capability of the program is high. The leadership of the governor is very high. The distribution of incentives and allowances has become timely since 2013 when the program became the priority of Governor Ryan Singson. However, the personnel are understaffed. There are no items for the personnel. With respect to the policies, the allowance appears to be inadequate and the quota of 100 new scholars per year is relatively low. 2) The outputs in terms of scholars who graduated are many.

By way of recommendation, PGIS should review and upgrade regularly the scholarship program guidelines to make sure that the program could address the needs of the truly deserving students of the province. It should be able to promote the value of education and skills development to further develop skills and competencies of the scholars. The LGU

may consider assigning additional staff for the program, creating permanent positions for them and providing permanent office for the program. Relative thereto, deserving scholar graduates may be given priority in the hiring of personnel. The policy on the amount of allowance be reviewed with the end view of increasing the same. PGIS may consider increasing the quota of new scholars from 100 to 150 per year depending on the number of applicants.