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**EFFECTIVENESS OF EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 70 OR THE
NATIONAL TASK FORCE TO END LOCAL COMMUNIST
ARMED CONFLICT: EXPERIENCES ON THE POVERTY
REDUCTION, LIVELIHOOD, AND EMPLOYMENT
CLUSTER OF THE SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN
KIBAWE, BUKIDNON, PHILIPPINES**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the experiences of the selected communities in the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) Poverty Reduction, Livelihoods, and Employment Cluster of Executive Order No. 70. It utilized qualitative research through the phenomenology approach as it studied the experiences of the selected communities in Kibawe, Bukidnon. It employed thematic analysis in this investigation to assess the study's focus group discussion. The study concludes that the whole-of-the-nation approach of the

government was an effective tool for the government to uplift the living conditions of the selected communities by reducing poverty through livelihood and employment programs, penetrating the most insurgency-vulnerable areas in the municipality, and increasing the representation of the selected communities in the local government units through their representatives. These programs and projects under NTF-ELCAC PRLEC have had a political, social, and economic impact on the lives of the selected communities by reducing poverty, providing work opportunities for the communities, and helping them to become self-reliant without revolting against the government.

Keywords: Terrorism, Insurgency, Poverty Reduction, Counterinsurgency, Livelihood.

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines, historically, has gone through many insurgency groups. The insurgent groups present in the country are MILF, BIFF, the Maute Group, Abu Sayaf, and the CPP-NPA. It was in the year 2017 that the Maute Group, one of the dominant insurgent groups in the Philippines, attacked Marawi. The conflict lasted for five months and killed hundreds of people. It leaves a trail of death and destruction. It affected the economic, social, political, and moral aspects of everyone living in the place where the conflict happened. This was one of the darkest chapters in Philippine history because it affected not just one life but the lives of thousands of Filipinos. With this, the government enacted steps to address the region's concurrent problems. To ensure efficient and effective implementation of the whole-of-nation approach to addressing insurgent roots and problems in the country, a National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict was created, aiming to end the decade-long insurgency in the country.

The insurgency has become a growing threat to local peace, national security, and the lives of those living in marginalized communities. Given this atrocity, the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) is a task force organized by the Duterte administration through Executive Order No. 70 to combat and raise awareness of the increasing insurgency or communist rebellion in the Philippines. Under the NTF-ELCAC is a cluster on Poverty Reduction, Livelihoods, and Employment that establishes decisive and institutionalized, as well as responsive, measures that

would significantly address poverty affectation among marginalized communities and primary sectors, as well as balance the equitable resource distribution and create dynamic economic, livelihood, and income opportunities. It shall address the pervasive issues of land conflict and other related rural community issues and develop stable employment conditions in different industries throughout the country. Strengthening the local government units would allow them to do what is best for their locality. To have an inclusive society, essential services should be delivered to everyone, especially in the marginalized areas of the country. Localized peace engagement is a cluster that sustains the gains of inclusive peace and operates primarily in conflict-affected and conflict-vulnerable areas. Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment Cluster deals with improving the quality of life of all Filipinos, highlighting the benefits that the marginalized sectors may receive.

The NTF-ELCAC Cluster on Poverty Reduction, Livelihoods, and Employment would enable us to effectively assess whether or not NTF-ELCAC has been an effective tool for suppressing terrorism or insurgency in the chosen locality, focusing on the Indigenous Peoples sector. Moreover, the Barangays of Kibawe, Bukidnon, would be a viable and feasible locale to assess this cluster as there is a high number of poverty incidences in the locality over time, as per the Local Government Unit's data records (Peleo, 2007). Moreover, there is also an active and constant presence of the Barangay Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative, led by the Municipal IPMR, who will be a valuable resource in conducting the study to assess the effectiveness of the chosen cluster in their sector. With this, the study aims to answer the research questions:

1. What are the government's mechanisms for Poverty Reduction, livelihood, and Employment as a cluster of NTF ECLAC to be visible to the local communities and the indigenous people?
2. How do Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment as an NTF-ECLAC cluster affect the political, economic, and social development of the selected local community and the indigenous people?
3. What are the perceived successes in implementing the NTF-ELCAC's Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment?

Moreover, with little to no research concerning this sector, this study becomes a valuable tool in assessing the effects of NTF ELCAC.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This session provides the related literature studies, including the synthesis and findings of the studies that contributed to relevant and additional information to this research.

Indigenous People and Poverty in the Philippines

The indigenous population of the Philippines is among the most oppressed and underprivileged social groups in the nation (De Vera, 2007). They have substantially higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy than the general population; remoteness, lack of access to essential services, and a high prevalence of sickness, death, and hunger are characteristics of IP settlements (De Vera, 2007). Furthermore, according to a report by the UN Development Program in the Philippines, about 15 million indigenous people (10% of the population) suffer from poverty and human rights violations, and their life expectancy is 20 years lower than that of civilized peoples (Digital, 2010). "The indigenous Filipinos are fighting every day against hunger and cultural degradation; they have no access to basic social services such as education, health care, and housing", says Jacqueline Badcock, UN coordinator in the Philippines (Digital, 2010).

In the book *Indigenous Peoples/Ethnic Minority and Poverty Reduction: the Philippines*, the majority of the indigenous peoples in the Philippines live in Mindanao, which is home to 23 per cent of the nation's population (Rovillos & Morales, 2002). The island is responsible for about 31 per cent of the nation's overall poverty, and Indigenous peoples are present in the provinces with the worst and deepest poverty (Rovillos & Morales, 2002). Furthermore, Western Mindanao is a part of NCIP's Northwestern Mindanao ethnographic area, which was placed second nationally in terms of the prevalence of rural poverty (Rovillos & Morales, 2002).

The Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA)

The Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997, also known as Republic Act No. 8371, signed into law by former President Fidel V. Ramos in October 1997, was enacted following constitutional requirements (Candelaria et al., 2007). The legal framework for addressing the poverty of indigenous peoples is established by this legislation, and by rectifying historical mistakes that led to the

systematic eviction and discrimination of indigenous peoples, it aims to improve the situation of the nation's "poorest of the poor" (Rovillos & Morales, 2002). Furthermore, the law defines indigenous cultural communities or indigenous peoples as the descendants of populations that inhabited the Philippines at the time of colonization and continue to live as homogenous societies in communally bordered ancestral territories, sharing common bonds of language, customs, and other distinctive cultural traits (Candelaria et al., 2007). Additionally, the IPRA established the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), which played a crucial role in ceding ancestral lands to destructive energy projects, capitalist mining, and other private interests (CpaPhils, 2014). According to the IPRA, development projects, programs, and activities must be created following a four-point agenda that prioritizes the recognition and defence of ancestral domain and land rights, self-governance, human rights, social justice, cultural integrity, and empowerment (Rovillos & Morales, 2002).

However, IPRA has proven to be a fragile protection for displaced indigenous communities (Bello, 2020). Furthermore, problems with the IPRA's implementation include resource shortages and delayed policy grounding; restrictions on the NCIP's part, particularly in terms of funding and human resources; a lack of understanding of the law's empowering provisions among IPs and ICCs; non-recognition of policy among outside stakeholders and interest groups; policy overlaps and conflicts over legal issues; and weak procedures and anthropological documentation (Domingo & Manejar, 2020). Fortunately, inequality in local body politics is no longer a problem because IP leaders are making progress in the political process (Villanueva et al., 2017). Some are even getting elected Sanggunian Members positions in the municipal government, as in the case of Palayan City, where some won seats in the barangay council after winning previous elections (Villanueva et al., 2017).

Indigenous Peoples and Terrorism

Indigenous people are increasingly called terrorists for standing up for and safeguarding rights granted for many years. This concerning tendency is being observed throughout the world. To address the problem through monitoring, mediation, analysis, and the development of specific recommendations for the effective protection of indigenous human rights defenders, it is critical that appropriate special processes of the Human Rights Council collaborate with other human rights organizations.

The United Nations - Department of Economic and Social Affairs stated that Indigenous peoples continue to experience serious human rights breaches daily despite recent improvements in international human rights laws. Indigenous communities encounter violence and brutality, ongoing assimilation policies, marginalization, land appropriation, forced removal or relocation, denial of land rights, the results of large-scale development, abuses by military forces and armed conflict, as well as a plethora of other violations. Around the world, there have been numerous reports of brutality and cruelty, usually directed toward indigenous people who are protecting their rights and their lands, territories, and communities.

Lutz (2005) concluded that most indigenous peoples are physically and politically isolated, and many still lack proper access to adequate legal or other institutional systems to resolve disputes peacefully. Most indigenous peoples in the state do not have the same access to political participation, economic possibilities, income, educational chances, or social standing as other groups. Because they are frequently disadvantaged and poor, indigenous peoples are also more prone to the temptation of economic incentives that lure them into other people's conflicts and cause conflicts within indigenous groups. Finally, through centuries of suffering, maltreatment, and discrimination, the confidence that indigenous peoples formerly had in governments or other outside interests has been lost. As indigenous peoples unite and gain power, using self-defence techniques to stop additional violence becomes more critical.

Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment Cluster of NTF-ELCAC

The National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict's (NTF-ELCAC) Poverty Reduction Livelihood and Employment Cluster (PRLEC) targets "self-reliant, productive, resilient, and sustainable communities" in the countryside through a whole-of-nation convergence and good governance approach (Kabagani, 2022). The Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment Cluster of the NTF ELCAC (PRLEC) covers training, skill development, technology, transfer, vocational programs, livelihood, job facilitation, and micro-finding assistance to empower the citizens in the communities, and its lead agency is the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Official Facebook Page National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict). To carry out the stated mandate as prescribed by Executive Order No. 70, it brings

together specific government entities into a single force, also known as “institutionalizing the whole-of-nation approach to attaining inclusive and sustainable peace, creating a national task force to end local communist armed conflict, and directing the adoption of a national peace framework” (Arbon, 2022).

Through the Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment Cluster (PRLEC) of the NTF-ELCAC, which is led by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, the government has already performed over 4,500 livelihood and skills training around the nation (TESDA) (Kabagani, 2022). In addition, creating community poultry, vegetable, and processing centres, as well as the implementation of Tubig Kalikasan para sa Barangay (TUKABA), Project iPEACE for the indigenous communities, and Photovoltaic Systems Installation NC II (Project TALA), wherein communities also benefited from installations, are some of these skills training and livelihood projects (Kabagani, 2022).

Through the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict, the government has provided free livelihood and skill-training opportunities to about 50,000 people from conflict-cleared barangays nationwide (NTF-ELCAC); in contrast to its intended 802 priority conflict-affected barangays and geographically remote and disadvantaged locations, the PRLEC has so far reached 822 communities (GIDAs) (Kabagani, 2022).

Indigenous Peoples’ Vulnerability and Susceptibility to Insurgency

There is a growing factor in the indigenous peoples’ vulnerability to recruitment and insurgency. Alvaran (2021), a Lieutenant Colonel of 79IB of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, claimed that the IP communities are most vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation by armed and communist rebels. This has gravely affected development and economic growth, especially in these areas and the countryside (Sadongdong, 2022). Furthermore, this has disrupted the exercise of self-governance, consequently affecting stability, peace, tranquillity, and unity (Capuyan, 2022). Therefore, the creation of NTF ELCAC was meant to destabilize and suppress the 53-year-old communist insurgency that forced indigenous communities to take arms and put into their hands the fight for the lack of education, poverty, non-delivery of essential services, and injustice (Sadongdong, 2022). With the existence of several insurgency cases across their population

across the country and the implementation of the NTF-ELCAC under Executive Order No. 70, there is an imperative need to conduct a study about the effectiveness of EO No. 70 on the lives of the indigenous peoples.

There is a handful of research about NTF-ELCAC and its implementation but little to no research concerning the Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment Cluster. Most importantly, there was no research linking the indigenous peoples and the implementation of the NTF-ELCAC, making them the most vulnerable sector in battling the insurgency. Thus, this study is of the highest value of timeliness and relevance.

METHODOLOGY

The following is the methodology used in the study. This part of the study included the research design, method, instrument, respondent, tool, and locale.

Research Design

This qualitative research study utilized the phenomenology approach as it studied the experiences of the selected indigenous people in Kibawe, Bukidnon, of the implementation of the NTF-ELCAC's Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment in the municipality. According to Ploeg (1999), an honest description of people's actual experiences is the goal of the phenomenological method of qualitative research. As the lived experiences of the individuals serve as the foundation of phenomenological research (Ploeg, 1999), this approach is applicable because the researchers ought to take an in-depth analysis and examination of the said tribe and its people's experiences. Furthermore, in-depth focus group discussion is used to gather the data because the subject's life environment served as the main source of information.

Research Method

This research is conducted through the use of a phenomenology research approach, as this study intends to provide an accurate and detailed representation of the phenomena concerning the experiences of the selected indigenous people of Kibawe, Bukidnon, to the NTF-ELCAC of the Duterte Administration. Rich et al. (2018) claimed that the primary goal of descriptive research is to measure a particular

feature of reality for its own sake and seek to describe what it is. Additionally, the researcher's objective is to gather valuable facts and essential data, and this research strategy aids in developing knowledge of the world because it can offer precise information about what is and what is not (Rich et al., 2018).

Research Instrument

In conducting the research, the researchers prepared two (2) sets of open-ended questions. The first set will be used during the in-depth interview with the LGU-Kibawe IPMR, and the second set will be utilized in the focus group discussion participated by the respondents. The researchers designed the prepared questions to meet the research's objectives. The first set comprises three questions, and the second set is divided into two (2) sections with three (3) questions each.

The first section under the second set of prepared questions examines how Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment as a cluster of NTF-ELCAC affect the respondents' political, economic, and social development. It consists of three (3) open-ended questions that directly answer the study's second objective. The first question tackles political development. The second question tackled economic development, and the third one tackled social development. The second section under the second set of prepared questions identifies the respondents' perceived successes in implementing Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment as a cluster of NTF-ELCAC. It is composed of three open-ended questions that answer the third objective of the study.

Respondents

Using purposive sampling, the researchers chose several participants from the tribe from several barangays of Kibawe to serve as the study's respondents. Moreover, the researchers used purposive sampling to select respondents according to the poverty, livelihood, and employment incidents in their barangay. Additionally, the researchers chose purposive sampling as they will only be choosing the ten (10) council of elders and the Municipal Indigenous People's Mandatory Representative to participate in the study so that the data needed for this paper will be discussed appropriately as the elders have much experience than the young ones. Among the respondents are the Barangay IPMR of Barangay Romagooc (2), Old Kibawe, West Kibawe, East Kibawe, Gutapol/Kiorao, Kisawa (2), Labuagon, and the municipal IPMR- Datu Lomer Mambantayao.

Research Tool

The researcher employed thematic analysis in this investigation to assess the study's focus group discussion. To provide accurate interpretations of the data gathered from the respondents, the researchers found it easy to interpret through themes and expound on each theme being used in the discussion.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the Philippines' Region X municipality of Kibawe, Bukidnon. The municipality has a land area of 304.13 square kilometres, or 117.43 square miles, constituting 2.90 per cent of Bukidnon's total area. Its population, as determined by the 2020 Census, was 41,897. This represented 2.72 per cent of the total population of Bukidnon province or 0.83 per cent of the overall population of the Northern Mindanao region. Based on these figures, the population density is computed at 138 inhabitants per square kilometre or 357 inhabitants per square mile. The researchers chose to study in the municipality of Kibawe because of the high poverty rate and insurgency incidents. According to the data provided by the office of the Municipal Mayor for the year 2018, the poverty threshold is P25,624 annual income per family, P2,135 income per month; and the food threshold is P17,874 annual income; P1,489.50 monthly income. This equals a poverty incidence of 22.3 per cent for families and 27 per cent for the population. Among these numbers are the marginalized indigenous people residing in the municipality. Therefore, it is justifiable to study the NTF-ELCAC's PRLEC in this municipality, given the above numbers.

RESULTS

This section provides the findings and discussion on the effectiveness of the NTF-ECLAC cluster (Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment) in terms of the indigenous people's political, economic, and social development. Based on their personal experiences, the IP's assessments of the cluster's effectiveness have been examined. Investigations have also been made into the elements influencing the IP's experiences. The first part of data gathering was done through an in-depth interview with the Kibawe Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative Datu Lomer L. Mambantayao to discuss and identify the government's mechanisms for Poverty Reduction, Livelihood,

and Employment as a cluster of NTF ECLAC to be visible to the lives of indigenous people.

Question: As the indigenous people’s representative, what mechanisms do you use for information and programs related to NTF ELCAC’s Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment to be disseminated to your constituents?

Table 1

Presentation of Government Mechanisms Related to PRLEC

THEMES	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE RESPONSE
Active Coordination between the Government and the Communities	4	<i>The Local Government Unit, together with the Philippine National Police, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines conducted a series of meetings in every barangay. As the Municipal Indigenous Mandatory Representative, I have been a part of this activity.</i>
		<i>I became the voice of my fellow community for us to deliver and give our wants and demands to our government. I also became an instrument of the government for the delivery of services to my community.</i>
		<i>I became an effective liaison between the government and the community so we to provide a solution to the terrorism in our locality.</i>
		<i>Wholehearted participation of my fellow communities in their respective barangays and the unconditional support of the government towards the attainment of the common good.</i>
Strengthening PRLEC through initiating Constant Community Involvement	2	<i>I was given a part in our community to help me encourage my fellow constituents to go back to the government as there are a lot of opportunities that will be given to us.</i>
		<i>There is an allocated budget for NTF ELCAC that helps these communities, especially in the provision of basic goods and services.</i>

Active Coordination between the Government and the Communities

The National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF – ELCAC), particularly the Poverty Reduction Livelihood and Employment Cluster (PRLEC), aims to harness and build self-reliant, productive, sustainable, and resilient communities through harmonized and culturally responsive development programs (Arbon, 2022). This coordination among the local and community sectors is imperative to create and achieve functional and practical law implementation. With this, the Local Government Unit of Kibawe has actively fought the insurgency in some of its barangays, especially in the Upper Pulangui Region.

The Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative of LGU Kibawe, Datu Lomer L. Mambantayao, together with his fifteen (15) Barangay IPMRs and fifteen (15) Barangay Chieftains, have initiated an Active Coordination between the government and its respective communities. They have seen the importance of coordinating these two parties as the success of the implementation of the law requires coordination and cooperation between the government and the community. Moreover, according to IPMR Mambantayao, it is widely known that there are existing communities with insurgencies today in their locality. Therefore, proper and constant coordination with the affected localities can help ensure that the programs and initiatives under this law shall be implemented not immediately, but in due time. This reinforces Section 16 of RA 8371, in which cultural communities and indigenous peoples should have the right to fully participate at all levels of decision-making in matters affecting their lives; thus, coordination with these communities can be seen as an imperative and effective mechanism in providing grassroots solutions to the occurring insurgency in various indigenous communities.

Datu Mambantayao, as an Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative, reinforces Domingo and Manejar's (2020) argument that IPMR serves as the representative body of the indigenous political structure and speaks for the group's interest. His commitment to closely coordinating the Local Government Unit towards the indigenous communities is an effective instrument to make decisions to promote community well-being. This active coordination of the IPMR with the barangay IPMRs also supports that inequality in local body politics is

no longer a problem because IP leaders are progressing in the political process (Villanueva et al., 2017).

NTF ELCAC's effectiveness in the locality towards addressing insurgency through active coordination between the government and the indigenous communities through the IPMR opposes the argument of Lutz (2005), wherein the author concluded that most indigenous peoples are physically and politically isolated. With these indigenous communities' ongoing and constant coordination, programs under this Executive Order are seen to be delivered to these communities.

Strengthening PRLEC through Initiating Constant Community Involvement

The programs under PRLEC require active and constant Active Community Development (Kabagani, 2022). Quisumbing (2022) asserts that to push for self-reliant, productive, resilient, and sustainable communities, it is also crucial that constant community involvement implement sustainable programs for the insurgency-affected communities and achieve an increased economic impact for these programs.

The LGU Kibawe IPMR has been in continuous efforts to bridge the insurgency-affected communities to the government by encouraging various indigenous communities to take part in the government's effort to batter insurgency as there will be several benefits that the community can avail, specifically, the essential social and economic services that these communities were lacking. Moreover, programs such as skills training and livelihood projects, the establishment of organic farms, and trading centres for agricultural products promise privileges should the community cooperate and be involved with the government's programs against insurgency. IPMR Datu Mambantayao and the Barangay IPMRs conducted simultaneous community consultations, especially on what the community needs and how the government can help. Additionally, IPMR Datu Mambantayao has asserted that encouraging constant community involvement will significantly aid the success of implementing the PRLECs programs in various indigenous communities.

Question: What are the programs implemented in the Municipality of Kibawe that are under the NTF ELCAC's Poverty Reduction,

Livelihood, and Employment, and how do these programs be implemented?

Table 2

Presentation for Programs Implemented in the Municipality under NTF ELCAC PRLEC

THEMES	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE RESPONSE
Alleviating Poverty through Implementing and Integrating the Barangay Development Program	2	<i>There were several activities implemented by the Local Government Unit in our community, such as the farm-to-market road construction where the accessibility of these communities to the capital of their locality is largely improved. With these, government services were improved in our locality.</i>
Promoting Resilient Communities through Culturally Responsive Programs	1	<i>Several privileges were also provided in several communities such as the provision of Php 1,000,000.00 as an incentive to several barangays that are insurgency-free. This cash assistance was used by our community to rehabilitate our public infrastructures and utilities.</i>
		<i>Training and seminars were also given by the Local Government Unit to equip our community with the needed skills, especially in our livelihood. These programs were tailored-fit under our culture and customs.</i>

Alleviating Poverty through Implementing and Integrating the Barangay Development Program

Several issues and problems were identified by the Municipal IPMR and the Barangay IPMR, such as road access, deteriorating water systems, and lack of barangay infrastructures, especially in daycare centres. These were seen to hinder the indigenous communities' cooperation with the government. In response, the IPMRs, with the aid of the Local Government Unit and the NTF ELCAC, assess the needs of all affected areas in the municipality and look for solutions under the PRLEC where the government could intervene to solve the problems.

The Whole-of-the-Nation Approach of the Duterte Administration was an effective tool for the government to penetrate the most insurgency-vulnerable areas in the country. According to one of the Barangay IPMRs, Guinito of Kisawa, and one of the surrenderers from the militant groups, the armed groups can penetrate, influence, and control the far-flung barangays if it is weak and puny to no government action and presence in the area. Similarly, the areas of Kibawe that still have insurgency cases today were barangays far from the government's presence. However, through the consistent efforts under the NTF ELCACs PRLEC, there has been a gradual decrease in insurgency cases in these areas. Implementing and fostering Basic Economic and Social Services like providing farm-to-market roads, improving water systems, and constructing barangay facilities are effective Anti-Poverty Mechanisms.

Promoting Resilient Communities through Culturally Responsive Programs

Addressing insurgency problems, especially with the indigenous peoples, need culturally responsive programs. These programs consider the cultural background of the community. The presence of IPMR, especially in looking for solutions that will address the insurgency problems, aids the government in producing solutions that are also culturally responsive to the indigenous communities. These communities have their cultural practices that should also be practised. Apart from having a political representation of the indigenous communities in local governance, the involvement of IPMR can enable the mechanisms and interventions of the government to become culturally appropriate and responsive. This supports Cabig (2020) by providing agricultural products endemic to the specific IP communities and supporting civil-military operations to the 403rd Infantry Brigade, 4ID, which consists of livestock animals. Furthermore, this also asserts Kabagani (2022) for providing free Livelihood and skills training opportunities from conflict-cleared barangays.

Question: Do you think these mechanisms are enough to encourage more cooperation and participation among the indigenous people?

Table 3

Presentation of Mechanisms for Active Involvement

THEMES	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE RESPONSE
Strengthening PRLEC through initiating Constant Community Involvement	2	<i>The government remains constant in its actions and its programs to uplift our community. There were a series of constant interventions to our problems and consistent follow-ups and assessments in the community.</i>
		<i>My fellowmen were already attending Barangay Assemblies to participate in the government assemblies for the people.</i>
Sustainability of NTF ELCAC's PRLEC Implementation	1	<i>Sustainability was present in most of the programs given by the Local Government Unit. These programs that were implemented became the reason why our community is constantly improving today.</i>

Sustainability of NTF ELCAC's PRLEC Implementation

The Whole Nation Approach of the NTF ELCAC should be sustained as it is the most effective way of addressing the decades-long communist insurgency (Galvez, 2022). This push toward advancing the country's peace and development agenda has more concrete results than the national-level peace talks, as the left has weaponized and exploited rather than aiming to achieve genuine peace across the conflicted regions. Furthermore, sustainable and inclusive peace throughout the country can only be achieved by pursuing the whole-of-nation approach and immersing the communities in government-led programs.

The affected areas in Kibawe received various programs under NTF ELCAC PRLEC. With their objective of sustaining this development in these communities, IPMR Daru Mambantayao and the barangay IPMR hope to continue these programs for the IP communities as they have seen the vast improvement in the lives of these communities during the implementation of Executive Order 70. Moreover, developing a sense of community was also seen by the IPMR as an effective tool for the local government to decrease the presence of the local communists in the locality.

The NTF-ECLAC cluster, focusing on poverty reduction, Livelihood, and employment, has been assessed in terms of its effectiveness in promoting the political, economic, and social development of indigenous peoples (IPs). This evaluation is based on the personal experiences of the IPs themselves, taking into account their assessments of the cluster's impact. Additionally, various factors that influenced the IPs' experiences have been investigated. Two themes emerged in the first question about the respondents' participation and cooperation: (1) participation in government processes and (2) disinclination toward CPP-NPA. The second question is regarding the benefits the respondents received from the NTF-ELCAC cluster in terms of poverty, Livelihood, and employment, from which two different themes also emerged: (1) livelihood programs such as grants of farm animals and cash incentives; and (2) road construction.

Question: In terms of participation and cooperation, can you say that you are more encouraged to participate in government processes? How do you say so?

Table 4

Presentation of Participation and Cooperation in Government Processes

THEMES	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE RESPONSE
Absence of Program in Terms of Citizen Participation	1	<i>The government's program to encourage the IPs to participate in the community is not felt because insurgencies are absent in our barangay.</i>
Disinclination Toward CPP-NPA	4	<i>They even gave us weapons to fight against them (CPP-NPA) because we did not want to be persuaded to join them.</i> <i>We have our law, according to the IPRA Law or Republic Act 8371, an act to recognize, protect, and promote the rights of indigenous people... This is our law now, so we do not follow the NPA.</i> <i>When I was still with the CPP-NPA, there was no peace but always war. I realized it was better to cooperate with the government.</i>

(continued)

THEMES	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE RESPONSE
Participation in the Government Processes	5	<i>Let's follow the government, not the NPA; we have a law, the Republic Act 8371.</i>
		<i>Yes, it's better to be on the government's side because, when it comes to ELCAC, they could help us there, and I can't deny that.</i>
		<i>Yes, they (indigenous people) are okay in terms of participation and cooperation. I even encouraged senior citizens to join. The youth can go to school. For all the benefits, I made sure that they were included...I included them in any way possible."</i>
		<i>Yes, I am grateful to the government because it provided a law we should follow. Where else can we find that? Nowhere. Did the NPA show us and provide us with a law? No</i>
		<i>I encourage them, the IPs, to participate. I even debated in session whether to include us whenever there are programs or activities.</i>
		<i>I worked on something for the IPs for the livelihood programs; that's why they benefited from the livelihood program. Because I'm the representative in our barangay.</i>

Participation in the Government Processes

Five (5) out of ten (10) respondents indicated their participation in political and social government processes due to the government's initiative of NTF-ELCAC, and the acknowledgement of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) Law and its provision, the Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative (IPMR), suggests positive outcomes and impact. The respondents, IPMR themselves, encourage their IP constituents to engage in and participate in government activities intended for them. Respondents' acknowledgement of the IPRA Law indicates their awareness of the legal framework that safeguards their rights as IPs.

As their respective barangay IPMRs, they could represent and advocate for the rights and interests of indigenous peoples (IPs) within the local legislative body. The respondents indicated they serve as spokespersons for IPs within the local legislative body, ensuring their concerns, issues, and aspirations are effectively communicated. Thus, they were able to advocate for the recognition and protection of IP rights and promote policies and initiatives that support the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental development of their IP communities.

The respondents mentioned that their participation in political and social processes demonstrates the positive impact of the government's initiative of NTF-ELCAC and the IPMR provision. By actively engaging in government processes, the respondents indicated that they could influence policies, programs, and development plans that directly affect their communities and participate, allowing them to address specific IP issues.

Disinclination toward CPP-NPA

The testimonies of the six (6) respondents highlight the positive impact of government initiatives such as the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) and the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA Law) on their decision to disengage from the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA). Establishing the IPRA Law and the provision of IPMR greatly influenced the respondents' disinclination towards the CPP-NPA.

According to the respondents, this law ensures that they, as IPs, have a dedicated representative who can effectively advocate for their rights within the local legislative body. This recognition of their rights and representation encourages IP communities to engage with the government and seek redress for their concerns. The provision of essential resources and support by the government, including cash grants, livelihood programs, farm animals, and fishponds, has played a significant role in their choice to align themselves with government efforts. The respondents mentioned that through the NTF-ELCAC, the government provided them with tangible support such as cash grants, livelihood programs, farm animals, and fishponds. These resources contribute to the socioeconomic development of IP communities

by offering opportunities for income generation, food security, and sustainable livelihoods. The availability of these programs and resources through government initiatives creates a sense of trust and reliance on the government as a source of support for their well-being.

They have also compared the benefits they have gained from the government, unlike the NPA. The respondents emphasized that the government’s support, including the mentioned resources, is something that the CPP-NPA cannot provide. The government’s capacity to implement programs, allocate resources, and support development initiatives on a larger scale sets it apart from insurgent groups. The provision of comprehensive support from the government, encompassing financial assistance, livelihood programs, and infrastructure development like fishponds, demonstrates a commitment to addressing the needs of IP communities.

Question: In terms of poverty, Livelihood, and employment, what are the NTF-ELCAC programs that you benefit from, and in what way it benefits you?

Table 5

Presentation of PRLEC Benefits

THEMES	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE RESPONSE
Livelihood Program	8	<i>The program prioritized areas where there are people who are on the other side (CPP-NPA). However, there were none in our barangay, but a livelihood program was implemented for the Lumad.</i>
		<i>In our barangay, it is a normal situation. Hon. Zubiri gave us Livelihood; I was given 25k and distributed it by giving my constituents swine.</i>
		<i>Though insurgencies are absent in our barangays, livelihood programs are still provided.</i>
		<i>The livelihood program is not felt because it is near the proper Kibawe; the government prioritized those areas with members of the NPA.</i>

(continued)

THEMES	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE RESPONSE
Road Construction	2	<i>There was a livelihood program, but it was under investigation. As time went by, the livelihood program stopped. However, our barangay is still okay.</i>
		<i>They gave a fishpond, gave goats, and Livelihood; everything was given there.</i>
		<i>There were some assistance, goats, and other things there, 20 million. There is a fishpond there, and even the soldiers themselves are... guiding us toward the right path so we will not get lost on a bad path</i>
		<i>Nobody else can provide benefits and a better future than the government, not the CPP-NPA.</i>
		<i>Our area has roads. Because if a barangay or sitio does not have roads, the NPA would be happy about it. It would favor them to organize the people. A farm-to-market road is necessary, and now we have roads.</i>

Livelihood Program

Five (5) of the respondents have benefited from the livelihood program under the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) and say that the construction of farm-to-market roads has been helpful for indigenous peoples (IPs) in the innermost barangays or sitios. These developments indicate potential positive outcomes regarding economic empowerment, market access, and enhanced security. The fact that the respondents have received cash assistance and farm animals through the livelihood program demonstrates the government’s commitment to supporting the economic well-being of IPs. The respondents indicated that cash assistance could provide immediate financial relief and help address pressing needs. At the same time, providing farm animals offers long-term livelihood opportunities, such as income generated from selling livestock or utilizing their by-products. Thus, implementing livelihood programs for Indigenous Peoples (IPs) is crucial for promoting economic empowerment and reducing poverty.

Furthermore, through this livelihood assistance from the government, according to the respondents, the IPs wanted to avoid connecting with or cooperating with the NPA since the government had provided for their needs. The respondents mentioned that the NPA cannot provide what the government provides for them, and there is peace in the government, unlike in the NPA. Thus, the respondents concluded that siding with the government was the best decision.

One of the Datus said they received a different heaviness and effectiveness of the program than the other barangays since their barangay is located near the proper Kibawe. Hence, the program's effectiveness is not felt since none of its constituents are part of the CPP-NPA, nor have they received financial assistance from the government. However, they have also benefited from livelihood programs and road construction because of the government.

Road Construction

Road construction is essential for IPs and non-IPs. According to the respondents, it improves access to essential services such as healthcare facilities, schools, markets, and emergency services. It enables transporting goods, services, and resources, making it easier for IP communities to meet their daily needs and access vital services. It also improves road connectivity, which stimulates socioeconomic development within IP areas. It facilitates trade, commerce, and economic activities by providing better access to markets, enabling the transportation of goods, and attracting investments, which lead to job creation, increased income opportunities, and overall economic growth for IP communities. Moreover, in times of NPA presence or emergencies, well-constructed roads in IP areas facilitate prompt response and aid delivery, especially by the Army. They enable emergency vehicles, relief supplies, and personnel to reach affected areas quickly, enhancing the community's resilience and ability to recover.

Through the construction of cemented roads in their barangays and sitios, according to the respondents, the NPA cannot easily organize or recruit IPs because road construction projects often involve the presence of government agencies and security forces, which can act as a deterrent to the NPA's activities. The government's presence,

especially military personnel and local authorities who work to maintain peace and security in the area makes it challenging for the NPA to operate openly. Furthermore, according to the respondents, these road construction projects are accompanied by government counterinsurgency efforts to combat and reduce the influence of insurgent groups like the NPA. These efforts can include community engagement programs aimed at winning the support and trust of local populations, thus leading to skepticism towards the NPA's objectives and methods, which can prevent widespread support and recruitment.

Question: In terms of service provision, has the local government of Kibawe effectively carried out the services to reduce poverty, aid livelihoods, and provide work for your community?

Table 6

Presentation of service provision carried out by the PRLEC

THEMES	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE RESPONSE
Counterinsurgency Efforts	3	<i>Yes, there were many surrenderees from the NPA because of the implementation of the NTF-ELCAC program here in Kibawe.</i>
		<i>Yes, the government wanted to take back the IPs, who are members of the NPA, through livelihoods, encouragement, and any other benefits.</i>
		<i>In areas or barangays where there is still the emergence of CPP-NPA, livelihood programs are implemented to mitigate or reduce the insurgency.</i>
Development Projects and Livelihood	5	<i>Yes, because of the NTF-ELCAC services, cash incentives and livelihoods were provided.</i>
		<i>We have a tribal office in Kisawa. The government gave us many benefits, and the government has given us attention.</i>

(continued)

THEMES	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE RESPONSE
		<i>Yes, compared to before, when there was no NTF-ELCAC, the IPs were uplifted, especially those who were insurgents.</i>
		<i>Yes, before, indigenous people were so poor. When Duterte became president, leads have now been developed.</i>
		<i>Yes, NTF-ELCAC, the government's program, is good for us, the IPs.</i>
Livelihood Opportunities	1	<i>Yes, I even engage with any of the municipality's programs in the areas where services and jobs are provided.</i>
Social Services and Welfare Programs	1	<i>Yes, there was a free legal consultation from the lawyers, just like in Sampaguita. There were free haircuts and free circumcisions led by our doctors, as well as medical missions.</i>

Counterinsurgency Efforts

According to the respondents, the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) has implemented counterinsurgency initiatives to address armed conflict and advance peace and development. Through these initiatives, it also seeks to fight the impact of the New People's Army (NPA) and offer alternatives to the insurgency. The program aims to offer economic development and livelihood programs to IP communities, particularly former CPP-NPA members. These activities include initiatives that improve economic stability and lessen vulnerability to NPA recruiting. According to the respondents, programs for reintegrating IP ex-rebels, who have chosen to end the violent conflict, also seek to offer socioeconomic support, particularly livelihood assistance and cash incentives. Further, according to the respondents, there have been surrenders because of the establishment of NTF-ELCAC and the benefits offered by the program. Thus, the local government of Kibawe has successfully mitigated or reduced the spread and existence of the CPP-NPA through NTF-ELCAC.

Development Projects and Livelihood

The respondents indicated that development projects and livelihoods were improved because of NTF-ELCAC. The government of Kibawe carried out services such as jobs and livelihood assistance to the IP communities. IPs have been economically and politically successful through these programs established by the government. According to the respondents, providing jobs and livelihood assistance to IP communities enhanced their economic well-being and stability. By creating income-generating opportunities, IPs improved their living conditions, increased economic independence, and reduced their vulnerability to poverty and exploitation. Through the government's programs, IP communities also experience increased political empowerment. Establishing IPMR, participation in decision-making processes, and engagement with local governance structures enhanced IPs' political representation and participation. This led to a stronger voice in advocating for their rights, influencing policies that affect their communities, and contributing to their people's overall development and well-being.

Social Services and Welfare Programs

According to the fourth respondent, the NTF-ELCAC facilitated livelihood assistance programs to support economic empowerment among IP communities. This includes skills training, the provision of equipment or resources for income-generating activities, and access to credit or financial support. By promoting sustainable livelihood opportunities, IPs improve their economic well-being and reduce their vulnerability to recruitment by insurgent groups. The municipality also collaborated with relevant government agencies to provide social welfare and assistance programs to IPs. This includes free legal assistance, free medical missions, mobile health clinics, and the provision of essential medicines. Thus, the local government of Kibawe has effectively carried out services to reduce poverty, aid livelihoods, and provide work for the IP community.

This part of the paper will examine the perceived successes in implementing the NTF-ELCAC's Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment in the Municipality of Kibawe, limiting only to the Indigenous groups (Manobo) residing in the municipality. Firstly, the researchers asked the respondents what aspect of the said cluster of NTF-ELCAC they found to be successful and visible to the community.

The respondents have answered different codes but are interrelated with each other. These codes were then identified into three (3) different themes: (1) Alleviating Poverty Through Monetary/in-kind Assistance; (2) Strengthening Livelihood for an unmarginalized IP community, lastly (3) Consistency in Implementing the Policy. The second part is the discussion of the second question, which seeks to identify how the NTF-ELCAC’s Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment were able to uplift the respondent’s living. Among the answers of the respondents, the researchers generated three (3) themes: (1) Community Engagement; (2) Battle for a Marginalized-Free Municipality; and (3) Sustainability of Programs. The last part, under the third objective of this study, tackles the proper implementation of the policy and the respondents’ perception of its implementation. The researchers have collated the codes into one theme: Sustainability and Equitability of the NTF-ELCAC’s Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment Programs. Below are the thematic tables and their interpretations based on the respondents’ responses.

Question: What aspect of NTF-ELCAC’s Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment have you found to be successful and visible in your community?

Table 7

Presentation of the visibility and successes of NTF ELCAC PRLEC

THEMES	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE RESPONSE
Alleviating Poverty through Monetary/ in-kind Assistance	4	<i>The government has accomplished its mission as they always give us cash assistance to help us with our day-to-day needs</i>
		<i>We can already basic goods as the government is giving us constant cash assistance and cash incentives.</i>
		<i>Those surrenderees in our community have also received a hefty amount to aid them in restarting their lives. This assistance given to our surrenderees helped them in building their dreams.</i>

(continued)

THEMES	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE RESPONSE
Consistency in implementing the policy	3	<i>Livelihood animals like livestock and poultries were also distributed to the families in our communities.</i>
		<i>The government and the surrenderees have a harmonious and stable relationship. The government constantly creates programs for them, while our surrenderees have been cooperative with the government's programs intended for them.</i>
		<i>A series of monitoring and assessments were given by the government, which is why this program was successful.</i>
Strengthening Livelihood for an unmarginalized IP Community	3	<i>The Local Government Unit of Kibawe never failed with its promise to help our ailing communities. Their constant intervention has paved the way to build a much more stable community that was once devastated by the rebels.</i>
		<i>The creation and improvement of our Farm-to-Market Road became the major reason why we were able to sell our products in the Poblacion (the municipal capital).</i>
		<i>The program also became successful since we were given work or my brothers and sisters were employed.</i>
		<i>Outreach programs for our children were also given to us. This has made sure that</i>

Alleviating Poverty Through Monetary and In-Kind Assistance

Poverty alleviation is one of the goals of the Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment as a cluster of NTF-ELCAC. Numerous mechanisms are being used by the government for the goal to be realized. In this analysis, the government's effort, through the local

government of Kibawe Bukidnon, provides monetary assistance to the concerned respondents to the battle insurgency in the municipality.

As a background provided by the IPMR of the Municipality of Kibawe- Datu Lomer Mambantayao, several people are revolting against the government because of poverty. People often resort to unlawful acts to sustain the needs of the family and the community. One of the vulnerable sectors is the Indigenous community, which is considered the marginalized sector. The long history of discrimination and colonization has led to a marginalized indigenous community.

Out of the ten focus-group discussion participants, four answers were classified under this theme. The first respondent mentioned that the government gave them cash assistance to have a fresh start, whether in business or another field where they would best live. The second respondent mentioned that they had received in-kind assistance from the government due to the lobbying process made by the municipal and barangay Indigenous People's Mandatory Representative (IPMR). The third respondent stated that monetary assistance proves that the government is determined to uplift the lives of the former insurgents and non-insurgent IPs. The government convinces surrenderers through this assistance as it is what these people are lacking: sustenance and survival. Lastly, the fourth respondent mentioned that in their barangay (Kisawa), the surrenderers were given goats and cows to care for so that if they produced offspring, it could be another way of generating income to sustain their needs. These may be little things, but they have helped to improve the lives of the former insurgents gradually. These four codes fell under this theme because these four codes mentioned the assistance provided to them by the government and how the assistance helped them survive an insurgent-free life.

The Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment cluster of NTF-ELCAC is successful in its goal to reduce poverty through monetary or in-kind assistance. Monetary assistance is essential to indigenous people, particularly those living in poverty or facing economic challenges. Respondents emphasized that problems like limited access to education, healthcare, employment, and economic opportunities, monetary assistance can help address these challenges. The main reason the government's move assists the IP community is that it not only helps the community buy the necessities but also guarantees the respondents that they can access different services

through the government's assistance. This means they would resort to revolt because of poverty and other struggles indigenous people face. However, as far as the result of this research is concerned, the government successfully provides monetary or in-kind assistance to the marginalized sectors as it prevents the people from revolting. Moreso, it is essential to note that this assistance that the government is giving to the people, as per the respondents, is only aid to them. The government's initiative is for the vulnerable sectors, like the IP community, to practice self-reliant and sustainable living. Thus, NTF-ELCAC's Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment are thriving and visible in the IP community.

Strengthening Livelihood for an Unmarginalized IP Community

Most of the indigenous people in Kibawe Bukidnon, also respondents of this study, reside far from the area where goods from the farm are sold. Indigenous people are farmers who want their products sold to the proper market for proper pricing and income. However, they cannot transport their goods to the market due to circumstances not under their control—reasons also why their farm products like Bananas get overripe. Being part of the programs and projects of NTF-ELCAC's livelihood cluster, these problems of the IP community are solved.

The problem the respondents raised is their years-long struggle on their muddy road. Aside from the fact that they do not have a permanent vehicle, they also struggled their way out of their *sitio* because of the roads. Farm-to-market roads are essential for the sustainable development of rural communities. As writer Garcia (1984) mentioned in his journal entitled "*The Impact of Rural Roads*," farm-to-market roads support economic growth, improve food security, and provide access to essential services. Governments must invest in building and maintaining this critical infrastructure to support the agriculture sector and promote rural development. Farm-to-market roads provide rural farmers access to markets, making transporting their produce to buyers easier and more affordable. This helps increase farmers' income and supports the local economy's growth. Farmers can transport their goods to markets faster and cheaper with farm-to-market roads. This means they can earn more money by selling their products at a lower price, and consumers can purchase goods at a lower cost. Farm-to-market roads help ensure that food can be transported to areas where

it is needed, reducing the risk of food shortages and improving food security for communities. Building and maintaining farm-to-market roads can also create employment opportunities in rural areas, supporting economic growth and reducing poverty. Farm-to-market roads provide access to markets and allow rural communities to access essential services such as healthcare, education, and emergency services (Garcia, 1984).

Fortunately, the government has fixed the road problem through the effort of the barangay and municipal IPMR to cement their roads so they could access what they called farm-to-market roads. Through this, indigenous people can now easily access the market to sell their products. They can also easily access the different services of the government, for example, health services and more. Creating a farm-to-market road allows them to be present at the different assemblies and meetings called by the LGU. Most importantly, through creating a farm-to-market road, they are assured that there is cash in return for their sold farm products to sustain the needs of their family. This has gradually helped elevate the IP life's situation by having a permanent source of income, especially for incidental and basic needs like health and education. Thus, the respondents highlighted that by creating the farm-to-market road, NTF-ELCAC's effort to self-reliant living of the IP is flourishing as it helps the community have more sources of income and a proper and lawful way of generating income.

Additionally, part of the implementation of the NTF-ELCAC is the programs that provide work for the IP community. This paper finds that one way to prevent IP communities from joining insurgency is to provide them with work that will allow them to generate gradual income. Two of the respondents mentioned that among the programs provided by the NTF-ELCAC are the municipality's tailoring and public construction services. These programs allowed the community to have work that would sustain the family's daily needs. The Municipal IPMR also reinforces this information as he mentioned that it is their initiative, in compliance with their duty mandated by the IPRA law and the NTF-ELCAC, to provide programs that will help the community to compete with the once-in market and for them to be unmarginalized. There are also extension programs authored by the local government of Kibawe that extend assistance to the IP community, especially children and elders.

With those mentioned above, the respondents strongly argue that the government has succeeded in preventing the IP community from joining insurgent groups by allowing the IP communities to access the market by creating farm-to-market roads and by providing the community with a gradual source of income.

Consistency in Implementing the Policy

Putting policy into practice takes work; it requires the investment of scarce funds and time. Consistency ensures that policies are implemented fairly and equally for all individuals or groups, regardless of who is beneficiary of a specific policy. Consistency also allows for clear accountability and transparency in policy implementation, making it easier to appropriately identify and address deviations or irregularities. Moreover, consistent implementation of policies creates predictability for all stakeholders, reducing uncertainty and allowing them to plan and make informed decisions. Consistency increases policy implementation efficiency by reducing confusion, minimizing errors, and optimizing resources. Lastly, consistency builds trust and credibility in the policy-making process and the governing institutions responsible for implementing policies (Engen et al., 2019). This is how important it is to implement the NTF-ELCAC consistently as this paper finds that it helped in many aspects and goals of the NTF-ELCAC, which is to lessen the insurgent groups in the country.

This paper confirms that the Philippines government, through its local government of the Municipality of Kibawe, has succeeded in the consistent and strict implementation of the NTF-ELCAC. As per this paper's respondents, among the 147 surrenderers, no one wants to become an insurgent again because of how the government worked hand in hand with the former insurgents. The municipal IPMR-Lomer Mambantayao, confirms this information as the office of the indigenous municipal council worked to lessen the insurgents in the municipality through obtaining the goal of providing the surrenderers with assistance, programs, and a source of income.

Question: Through the aid of the NTF ELCAC's Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment, you were able to uplift your life situation. How do you say so?

Table 8

Presentation of NTF ELCAC PRLECs Aid that Uplifted the Community

THEMES	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE RESPONSE
Battle for a Marginalized-free Municipality	3	<i>Some programs will enable us to understand the government processes that also became the reason why a lot of former rebels surrendered to the government because they heed our needs.</i>
		<i>Yes, because there are a lot of laws that are intended to benefit us, and we also became partners in developing our community.</i>
		<i>This is a government program that ensures that we are never going back to being a rebel. The government is always persistent that we remain to be loyal to our country and the government.</i>
Community Engagement	2	<i>There is a slow yet constant improvement with the programs that are being implemented, may it be through the constant participation of the community or the series of seminars that the government has made for us.</i>
		<i>The government has always been understanding to us. They always give solutions to our problems and they always answer our calls. Some programs were implemented for the non-IP communities for them to understand our culture.</i>
Sustainability of Programs	5	<i>They sustain this program by giving constant cash assistance.</i>
		<i>By cementing our local roads and the farm-to-market roads, we were able to sell our fresh products to the market where we could earn something.</i>
		<i>This government program helped us holistically since our community can now earn incomes based on the livelihoods that were given to us.</i>
		<i>The hopes that can be seen in the eyes of my community are evident after the implementation of this program.</i>
		<i>In terms of employment, there was a series of livelihood training and seminars that helped us to be equipped with the necessary skills that can be utilized in finding jobs</i>

In identifying whether the NTF-ELCAC's Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment has uplifted the lives of the IP community, all respondents affirmed that the said order had helped the community in different aspects discussed in this paper.

Community Engagement

Datu Lomer Mambantayao stated during the interview that the indigenous community has the most sensitive culture among other groups. It is good that there is a legal order that would allow the indigenous people to engage in the community through the programs implemented through the NTF-ELCAC's poverty reductions, Livelihood, and employment. According to Datu Lomer and the rest of the respondents, community engagement is crucial for the Indigenous community as it promotes self-determination, cultural preservation, trust and respect, inclusive and sustainable development, and the recognition of Indigenous peoples' rights. This means that engaging in the community empowers Indigenous communities to make decisions that align with their cultural, economic, and social values. Community engagement ensures that Indigenous knowledge, traditions, and cultural practices are preserved, celebrated, and passed on to future generations. Moreover, engagement with Indigenous communities demonstrates respect for their cultural traditions, builds trust, and establishes partnerships based on mutual understanding and respect. It also enables their participation in the development process, ensuring their needs, aspirations, and perspectives are considered in decision-making. Lastly, Engagement with Indigenous communities promotes sustainable development that balances economic, social, and environmental priorities and respects the natural resources upon which Indigenous peoples depend.

This paper finds that through engagement in the community, especially in attending assemblies and selling their products to the market, the IP communities were also engaged, improving their lives. The IP community is now willing to attend assemblies so the officials will hear their voices. They voice problems so the officials know how to solve specific issues—for example, the issue of unsold farm products because of how marginalized their place is. The government took action because, as the respondents mentioned, it is part of the government's effort not to give any reason to the most vulnerable sector to be convinced to revolt against the government.

Battle for a Marginalized-Free Municipality

In every barangay in the Municipality of Kibawe, several IP communities reside. However, this paper confirms that not all municipality barangays have an insurgent group. Issues surrounding the IP community in the municipality are the issue of poverty and low rate of employment, which one respondent said is why the vulnerable sector revolted against the government. One of the ways the government employs to prevent the community from joining insurgent groups is to unmarginalized the marginalized sector as they are prone to recruitment (Municipal IPMR- Datu Lomer Mambantayao). Through the creation of farm-to-market roads, allowing the community to sell their products to the right market, aiding them with the assistance provided in the EO 70, it enables the community to live a better life, with a gradual but proper source of income, employed, and living an insurgent-free community.

The respondents have provided five substantial impacts on the battle to unmarginalized the vulnerable and prone to insurgent recruitment communities. First, elevating a community involves promoting inclusion in political, social, and economic life, which can reduce the sense of exclusion and marginalization that can drive people toward insurgent groups. Second, elevating a community can build trust and cooperation between the community and the government or other actors involved in the conflict, making negotiating and implementing peace agreements easier. Third, elevating a community can help address the underlying grievances that may fuel the insurgency, such as discrimination, poverty, landlessness, or other forms of injustice. Fourth, elevating a community can provide them with opportunities for education, employment, and political participation, reducing their vulnerability to recruitment by insurgent groups. Lastly, elevating a community can help strengthen its resilience to the effects of conflict, making it more difficult for insurgent groups to gain support and control.

Through the efforts of the public officials with their compliance to the NTF-ELCAC's goal of erasing insurgency in the country, they were able to uplift the lives of the IP community, allowing them to grow while preserving their culture to be passed across generations.

Sustainability of Programs

In their study about sustainability, Kuhlman and Farrington (2010) define sustainability as the attainment of fundamental human rights and necessities. It must be attained by all people, which means everyone can access resources to secure their families. This includes having leaders who ensure personal, labour, and cultural rights are respected by all people and protected from discrimination. It is when sustainability comes (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010). This paper's respondents highlighted that it is significant for programs implemented by the government to address specific issues like the insurgency in the country to be sustainable. Unsustainability can lead to temporary improvements in living conditions, but it may not have a lasting impact on problems sought to be solved.

As previously discussed in this paper, through the efforts of the local government of Kibawe, a farm-to-market road was created, which allows the marginalized community to sell their products to the market and eventually have sources of income to sustain the needs of the family not only in a day but also, for days to come. The government also provided cash assistance, monitoring seminars, and work to the IP community. These programs are efforts to gradually uplift the life situation of the community while also addressing the insurgency problem in the municipality. The respondents affirmed that through the sustainability of the programs and projects implemented by the government, they could gradually improve and sustain the needs of the family without resorting to revolt against the government.

Question: In what way do you feel that the NTF-ELCAC's Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment is adequately implemented by the Municipality of Kibawe?

Table 9

Presentation of programs frequently implemented by NTF ELCAC

THEMES	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE RESPONSE
<p>Sustainability and Equitability of the NTF-ELCAC's Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment Programs</p>	<p>10</p>	<p><i>We felt all the programs being implemented, especially from our Mayor here in Kibawe, Bukidnon, are really for our community. It helped with our living conditions and improved our ways of life.</i></p>
		<p><i>Even though we only have very minimal cases of insurgency in our Barangay, it has still provided us with opportunities that improved our community from the way it is.</i></p>
		<p><i>Through the government's assistance, several out-of-school youths from our community have started to enroll themselves in public schools, free of fees. This has entirely helped our children.</i></p>
		<p><i>Because of the employment opportunities that the government has poured into our community, it helped us find better opportunities and helped us with our needs.</i></p>
		<p><i>This program is ultimately sustainable in our communities because, throughout its implementation, there is a gradual increase of insurgencies and recruits happening in our community and the neighboring community.</i></p>
		<p><i>These cash incentives and cash assistance that the government has been giving have let my fellow brothers and sisters use this as their capital in starting their small livelihoods and small businesses-making us thrive to success.</i></p>
		<p><i>With the number of surrenderees, none of them came back to the mountains and became rebels again. This is one of the testaments that this program helped us improve our lives.</i></p>
<p><i>Everyone benefited from this program. None of us was spared, everyone in the community was able to enjoy the benefits of this program.</i></p>		

(continued)

THEMES	FREQUENCY	SAMPLE RESPONSE
		<i>There was also a monitoring of the government for us, to ensure that we are on track towards progress and development.</i>
		<i>The government remains to be committed to helping our communities. This is evidence that the government today is serious about battling insurgencies and helping the people.</i>

Sustainability and Equitability of the NTF-ELCAC's Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment Programs

This paper finds that the sustainability and equitability of programs and projects that implement this policy prosper. The respondents affirmed that the NTF-ELCAC's Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment is implemented correctly because the results of its implementation are a manifested outcome of the government. It lessens the insurgents in the municipality while alleviating poverty by allowing the IP community to be self-reliant. In terms of poverty alleviation, it is attained in a way that the IP community has gradually improved and was able to uplift their standing in the status quo. Livelihood and Employment programs, on the other hand, are attained by allowing them to access the right market for their products. Moreso, surrenderers are employed through the effort of this policy. Thus, this paper confirms that the NTF-ELCAC, through its Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment cluster, has properly implemented programs sustainably and equitably.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This session summarizes the findings the researchers analyzed and the conclusions and recommendations of the study obtained through data gathering and analysis.

This study assesses the effectiveness of Duterte's Executive Order No.70 or the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict- Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment (NTF-ELCAC PRLEC) among the Indigenous people in the municipality of Kibawe.

The objectives of the study were to (1) identify the government's mechanisms for Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment as a cluster of NTF ECLAC to be visible to the lives of Indigenous people; (2) determine how the Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment as an NTF-ECLAC cluster affect the political, economic, and social development of the Indigenous people; and (3) examine the perceived successes in the implementation of the NTF-ELCAC's Poverty Reduction, Livelihood, and Employment.

There were eleven (11) respondents in the study, which consisted of one (1) municipal Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative (IPMR) and ten (10) barangay councils of elders. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling. The data is collected through an in-depth interview with the municipal IPMR and focus group discussion with the ten (10) council of elders.

Qualitative research designs were employed in this study. The researchers prepared two (2) sets of open-ended questions. The first set was used during the in-depth interview with the LGU-Kibawe IPMR, and the second set of questions was employed in the focus group discussion. The in-depth interview was conducted to answer the study's first objective, and the focus group discussion was utilized to answer the second and third objectives. Each objective consisted of three (3) open-ended questions.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data gathered through open-ended questions. In analyzing a thematic approach, the researchers generate codes from each answer. From the codes, the researchers create themes expounded using the respondents' answers during data-gathering. The salient findings of the study are summarized as follows and arranged per objective:

The Municipal Indigenous People Mandatory Representative, together with the Barangay Indigenous People Mandatory Representative, paved the way for more active government coordination with the IP communities. The IPMRs became the linkages between the parties and, thus, became effective instruments for fostering cooperation and coordination. They also became effective instruments in assessing and advocating for the community's needs to the government. With these, inequality in local body politics is no longer a problem as IP leaders are already progressing in the political process, and active

coordination and consistent active involvement of the community is noticeable. With the strengthened PRLEC through constant community involvement and active coordination between the government and the communities, the NTF-ELCAC PRLEC, through its effective implementation of government mechanisms, is visible in the lives of the Indigenous People. Moreover, a push for self-reliant, productive, resilient, and sustainable communities remains vital to sustaining this program.

The study also highlights the positive outcomes of Indigenous People's active participation in government processes facilitated by the NTF-ELCAC PRLEC. The recognition of their rights and the provision of IPMR have empowered them to advocate for their interests and promote their socio-cultural, economic, and environmental development. Government initiatives, including the NTF-ELCAC and the IPRA Law, have influenced their decision to disengage from the CPP-NPA, with government support and resources playing a crucial role in building trust and promoting socioeconomic development in Indigenous communities. The livelihood program under NTF-ELCAC, mainly through the construction of farm-to-market roads, has contributed to economic empowerment, market access, and increased security for Indigenous People. Well-constructed roads have also deterred the NPA's activities by hindering their recruitment efforts and facilitating prompt response and aid delivery during emergencies. Furthermore, the Municipality of Kibawe has collaborated with government agencies, offering social welfare services such as free legal aid, medical missions, and essential medicines. These efforts have successfully alleviated poverty, supported livelihoods, and generated employment for IPs.

The implementation of NTF-ELCAC PRLEC has succeeded in many different aspects. Economically, the findings affirmed that the program had brought positive changes to the lives of Indigenous people as it aims to empower them to be self-reliant and independent living. The program has provided much-needed funding for community development projects like infrastructure and livelihood programs. Moreover, the program has also helped improve access to essential services, such as daily necessities, healthcare, and education, which has positively affected the social development of these communities. The government succeeded in reducing poverty and providing programs supporting Indigenous people.

Moreover, the program's implementation has impacted the Indigenous people politically. This paper confirms that IPs are now politically inclined. IPs are now attending assemblies of the barangays and seminars authored by the LGU. Most significantly, IPs are now peacefully lobbying the government through their barangay and municipal IPMR. This paper also finds that implementing NTF-ELCAC's PRLEC has reduced the number of insurgency incidents and the number of insurgents in the municipality. Lastly, in terms of social development, this paper finds that through NTF-ELCAC's PRLEC, Indigenous people can now easily access essential services such as healthcare and education because, apart from being considered in the decision-making processes of the municipality, they can now easily travel from their barangay to the población where opportunities of work, education, and other services locate.

Thus, this study entails that Duterte's NTF-ELCAC PRLEC is effectively implemented in the municipality of Kibawe, particularly in the marginalized and vulnerable sector of the community- Indigenous people. Mechanisms of the implementation are through programs and projects led by the municipal IPMR. These programs and projects under NTF-ELCAC PRLEC have had a political, social, and economic impact on the lives of the Indigenous people. Lastly, the programs mentioned above are successful because they reduce poverty, provide work opportunities for the IPs, and help them to become self-reliant communities without revolting against the government.

Recommendations

In the course of the conduct of this research, the researchers found the following recommendations:

The research found that there is only a minimal number of research and journals related to the effectiveness of Executive Order No. 70 or the NTF-ELCAC, particularly on the several implemented clusters and the various sectors in society such as Candelaria et al. (2007), Domingo and Manejar (2020), and Lutz (2005). Therefore, it is recommended that future academic research should target the NTF-ELCAC and its implementation in various social sectors to assess and identify whether or not the whole-of-nation approach is successful with its goals and objectives across all sectors.

This research also found that there are still several insurgency cases across the locality that the local government is still resolving today.

Therefore, it is recommended that there be a more extensive scope of research on this field, especially in the province, to assess the effectiveness of implementing the NTF-ELCAC on a larger scale.

The research also found that Indigenous People or cultural communities are the most vulnerable sector to manipulation and exploitation by communist rebels, leading to becoming susceptible to recruitment. It is recommended that the government continue to formulate and enforce research-based policies to combat the issue.

The research also found that the high rate of poverty, lack of education, injustice, and non-delivery of essential services are factors of why communist rebels continue to persist in the countryside and far-flung areas. Therefore, it is recommended that the government should divert its focus toward these communities and implement extensive economic and social programs that will alleviate the socioeconomic status of the marginalized.

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