



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6763



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE
AND DEVELOPMENT SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM
(DSWD-SLP)

EXPLANATORY NOTE

“Those who have less in life should have more in law” – President Ramon Magsaysay

The Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) is a community-based capability-building program for poor, vulnerable, and marginalized households and communities to help improve their socio-economic conditions through accessing and acquiring necessary assets to engage in and maintain thriving livelihoods. This livelihood support measure would ensure that current and exiting 4Ps and non-4Ps households, vulnerable, marginalized, and disadvantaged individuals, communities, and sectors are able to access resources and establish a livelihood project. This could contribute to basic well-being by supporting needs including food, shelter, education, and utilities or secure a source of income. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) through the SLP empowers program participants by developing their entrepreneurial skills and potential, enabling them to achieve self-sufficiency and overcome poverty.

The SLP of the DSWD is a progenitor program of the Self-Employment Assistance Kaunlaran (SEA-K) Program. In 1996, DSWD implemented the SEA-K Program for skills development, technical assistance, and seed capital provision to enable the poor to have access to financial services. The Program seeks to establish community-based, self-managed, and sustainable credit facilities to enable the poor, vulnerable, and informal sectors to engage in income generating activities. The SEA-K remained the core financial assistance program of the DSWD until the early to mid-2000s. However, due to the increasing demand for labor force and employment, the need for sustainable livelihood assistance was the prime concern of the Department hence, the issuance of Administrative Order No. 11 series of 2011 to formally introduce SLP with an expanded platform of livelihood interventions.

As the SLP becomes the DSWD's core livelihood program, these guidelines will strengthen its design and implementation, ensuring inclusivity for poor, marginalized, vulnerable, and disadvantaged individuals, households, and communities enabling their full participation in national growth and development. This supports the DSWD's strategic goal of transitioning these households from survival to self-sufficiency.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department issued Memorandum Circular No. 19 series of 2020, to enrich the livelihood assistance of the Local Government Unit (LGU) to those that were affected by the series of lockdowns, closures, disaster, and calamities by providing emergency subsidies and recovery interventions such as the provision of Livelihood Assistance Grant (LAG) to low-income families in the informal sector whose livelihoods or jobs were affected. Currently, the SLP has a Success Rate at 65.15% based on the monitored SLP tracks – Employment Facilitation and Microenterprise Development Track and 95.44% Success Rate for LAG on both Employment Facilitation and Microenterprise Development Track as of May 2023. The Program also issued Memorandum Circular No. 2 or the Special Guidelines on the Provision of Livelihood Assistance to Families Affected by Disasters Through the Sustainable Livelihood Program; this is to ensure that the Program covers those households affected by natural and/or human-induced disasters.

In recognition of the existing organizational strengths and capacities built by NGAs, the SLP likewise prioritizes organized associations established or supported by other government agencies, such as National Irrigators Associations under the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), irrigators and farmers' groups supported by the Department of Agriculture (DA), fisherfolk and coastal resource associations

under BFAR, workers' associations under the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), cooperatives recognized by the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), and MSME groups under the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). These groups, having undergone prior government capacity-building and resource mobilization, are strategically positioned for higher sustainability, stronger community enterprise management, and more effective utilization of livelihood assistance.

The program aims to enhance the capabilities of Filipino individuals, households, and communities by harnessing their skills, competencies, abilities, and resources in accessing income-generating opportunities to help improve their socio-economic well-being. Truly, this program served as a safety net for the poor households against the devastating impacts of disasters, human-induced hazards, and poverty. It is reported that the number of poor Filipinos could increase by 5.5 million if there weren't any social protection programs or market interventions that could provide livelihood development and basic entrepreneurship support. This scenario of sliding back to poverty is especially true for those Pantawid households exiting the Program through natural attrition.

Institutionalizing the SLP creates long-term opportunities for program participants to access livelihood support and achieve self-sufficiency and a stable pathway out of poverty through the livelihood projects.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



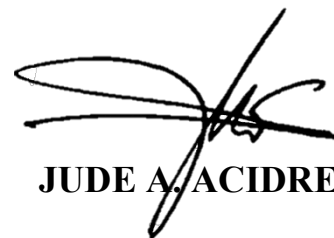
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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

Section 1. Short title – This Act shall be known as the “*DSWD Sustainable Livelihood Program Act*”.

Section 2. Declaration of Policies - It is declared the policy of the State to promote livelihood and entrepreneurship for all, as a means to achieve sustainable development and inclusive growth.

It is likewise the policy of the State to uplift the socio-economic conditions of the poor and vulnerable through the provision of market interventions and livelihood development through Microenterprise Development Track, and by facilitating and supporting basic employment through the Employment Facilitation Track.

Towards this end, the State shall respect and strengthen Filipino households, individuals, groups or communities by providing assistance that may be utilized through such inherent skills to achieve positive livelihood outcomes through community mobilization and community-driven enterprise development.

Section 3. Definition of Terms – For the purpose of this Act, the following terms are defined, as follows:

- (a) **Capability-Building** - refers to the provision of institutional assistance to program participants geared at enhancing their competencies to start, manage, and sustain their established livelihood projects.
- (b) **Disadvantaged** - refers to an individual, family, or group who is considered economically, physically, and socially deprived or has inadequate means to protect oneself including indigent children, out-of-school youth, physically unfit and persons with disability, distressed individuals and families.
- (c) **Disaster-Affected Individuals, Families, or Communities** - refers to Individuals, households, or groups whose lives, livelihoods, properties, or access to basic services have been disrupted or adversely impacted by natural or human-induced disasters or calamities.

- (d) **Employment Facilitation (EF) Track** - refers to a track of the SLP that provides assistance to eligible program participants who prefer formal employment rather than engaging in microenterprise.
- (e) **Existing Associations of Other Government Agencies** – refer to organized groups, cooperatives, or people's organizations duly recognized, accredited, or supported by national government agencies, particularly the National Irrigators Associations, farmers' cooperatives, fisherfolk organizations, agrarian reform beneficiary organizations, training associations, and similar groups.
- (f) **Micro-enterprise Development Track (MD Track)** - refers to a track of the SLP which focuses on the establishment of micro-enterprise through the provision of financial capital, enhancement of skills, and building/re-building physical and natural assets.
- (g) **Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)** - refers to the national poverty reduction strategy and a human capital investment program that provides conditional cash transfer to poor households for a maximum period of seven (7) years, to improve the health, nutrition, and education aspect of their lives. The National Advisory Council (NAC) may recommend a longer period under exceptional; circumstances.
- (h) **Poor** - refer to individuals or families whose income falls below the poverty threshold as defined by the National Economic and Development Authority

(NEDA) and/or who cannot afford in a sustained manner to provide their minimum basic needs of food, health, education, housing, or other essential amenities of life, as defined under Republic Act No. 8425, otherwise known as the “Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act”.

- (i) **Program Participants** - refers to an eligible individual or members of the SLPAs who are in need of livelihood assistance and will be provided through the various modalities and interventions of the Program.
- (j) **Sustainable Livelihood Program Association (SLPA)** - refers to a beneficiary Civil Society Organization (CSO) organized by DSWD through SLP with minimum of 15 and maximum of 30 members in an association and is issued with Certificate of Accreditation (CoA) to be eligible recipients of SLP assistance under the Microenterprise Development Track.
- (k) **Sustainable Livelihood** - refers to a livelihood that can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base. (Department for International Development, Adapted from Chambers, R. and G. Conway (1992)).
- (l) **Vulnerable** - refers to households confronted by ex-ante risk that, if they are currently non-poor, will fall below the poverty line; if they are currently poor, they will remain in poverty. It is defined in terms of exposure to adverse conditions related to welfare, not just their exposure to poverty.

Section 4. The Sustainable Livelihood Program - The Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) is a livelihood capability-building program for the identified poor, vulnerable, marginalized, and disadvantaged individuals, households, and communities that provide assistance in the form of Microenterprise Development and Employment Facilitation Tracks to help qualified SLP program participants achieve self-sufficiency and socio-economic resilience.

Section 5. Modalities of Assistance - The SLP shall have two (2) Tracks mainly: (i) Microenterprise Development Track that provides support for the establishment of microenterprise livelihoods; and (ii) Employment Facilitation Track that provides support in securing and maintaining gainful employment.

The following are the modalities under the Micro-Enterprise Development (MD) Track:

- a) Seed Capital Fund - a grant used as start-up capital to purchase raw materials, small tools, and common service facilities such as machinery, equipment, and plants needed in starting or expanding a microenterprise.
- b) Skills Training Fund - a grant used for the acquisition of knowledge and skills needed by the members of the SLPA in the management of the microenterprise. The grants cover the following components: a) technical-vocational skills training fee; b) meal, lodging, and transportation allowance; c) training supplies and materials; and d) program participants' assessment fee.

- c) Cash for Building Livelihood Assets Fund - an allowance or stipend is provided to SLPA members who have rendered work for labor-intensive projects to build, re-build, and/or protect natural and physical assets necessary for more profitable, self-sustaining, and resilient microenterprises. 100% of the present regional standard minimum wage set by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) for a maximum of 11 days.

The following are the modalities under the Employment Facilitation (EF) Track:

- a) Employment Assistance Fund is a grant provided to program participants pursuing the Employment Facilitation Track for the following purpose: a) processing of employment documentary requirements; b) for required medical exams; c) purchase of basic employment tools and materials; d) transportation and meal allowance, and board and lodging until the first 15 days of employment.
- b) Skills Training Fund is a grant received by the program participants for his/her acquisition of technical and vocational knowledge and skills delivered in the form of orientations and lectures, demonstrations, and other similar skills acquisition methodologies for the program participants. The grants cover the following components: a) technical-vocational skills training fee; b) meal, lodging, and transportation allowance; c) training supplies and materials; and d) program participants' assessment fee.

Section 6. Eligibility Requirements – Filipino individuals, households, and those in the vulnerable, marginalized, and disadvantaged communities that are in need of

livelihood assistance. Provided, that the program participants are at least sixteen (16) years old, with a written legal consent from the parents or legal guardians to participate in the Microenterprise Development Track; and at least eighteen (18) years old upon employment, following legal employment standards, for Employment Facilitation Tracks.

Section 7. Beneficiaries of SLP - Eligible program participants may avail of the modalities within the chosen track as needed for the microenterprise or employment facilitation. The following may avail of the livelihood program:

- a) Pre-identified participants through the use of approved identification tool/systems or a combination of the following:
 - i) Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS);
 - ii) Other approved DSWD identification systems; and
 - iii) SLP Eligibility Assessment and Profile Form.
- b) Disaster-affected participants by natural disasters and human induced hazards.
- c) Area-Based Convergence participants identified through formal agreement between DSWD and its internal or external partners or stakeholders.
- d) Referred participants to SLP by internal or external partner(s)/stakeholders, or walk-in clients.

- e) Previously served SLP program participants that have served at least five (5) years ago from the time they receive the grants.
- f) Associations registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), or Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), or those not initially organized by the SLP that are endorsed to the Program for livelihood assistance.
- g) Priority shall also be given to existing people's organizations, cooperatives, irrigators associations, and other sectoral or community-based associations duly recognized, accredited, or registered under national government agencies such as, but not limited to, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), Department of Agriculture (DA), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and other similar entities. These associations should also be prioritized to the DSWD's Sustainable Livelihood Program for appropriate livelihood assistance that complements and strengthens their existing government-supported initiatives.

Section 8. Livelihood Sustainability Plan – The Sustainability Plan encompasses the five (5) Phases of SLP which includes continuous monitoring and technical assistance of the livelihood projects, capability-building activities, partnership linkages, and additional grant incentives for successful SLPAs until program graduation. The individual livelihood projects and EF Track program participants will be monitored and provided technical assistance for one (1) year from the time they receive the grants before being mainstreamed to the concerned LGUs.

Section 9. Grant Release - The DSWD shall release grants to individual program participants and SLPAs under the Microenterprise Development and Employment Facilitation Tracks through cash, cheque, or Auto Debit Arrangement (ADA), following existing government auditing and accounting rules and procedures.

Section 10. Partnership Building - The DSWD shall link public and private partners with SLP program participants to strengthen its implementation through the provision of complementary and/or supplementary interventions. The partnership building will sustain, provide funding support, link institutional markets, and develop community-based life skills and technical assistance to the livelihood projects.

Section 11. Institutional Arrangements – The DSWD shall serve as the lead agency for the central coordinating, planning, implementing, and monitoring body on the Program's overall management. The SLP National Program Management Office (NPMO) shall have the steering and oversight functions and tasks while the SLP Regional Program Management Office (RPMO) shall take charge in the implementation of the Program stages.

The Program shall assign Project Development Officers that shall serve as the community facilitator responsible for identifying, organizing, capacitating the new program participants and shall validate the utilization of grants to ensure that the approved project has been duly implemented. A field monitoring Project Development Officer shall be assigned to ensure that the modalities of assistance

are sustained by the program participants through the conduct of regular monitoring visits and assessments.

The SLP NPMO shall perform and implement the following functions:

- a) Development and enhancement of Program policies, tools, and guidelines;
- b) Setting of performance standards and compliance monitoring;
- c) National Program Planning and Coordination;
- d) Human Resource Management and capacity-building for national and regional program personnel;
- e) National Program Budget Management;
- f) National Program Monitoring and Evaluation such as program milestones, accomplishments, results monitoring, and evaluation of program outcomes; and
- g) Other related tasks as required and necessary for the management of the Program.

The SLP RPMO shall perform and implement the following functions:

- a) Full implementation of the Program Stages based on the approved process, timeline, and program implementation parameters;

- b) Compliance to implementation standards and policies;
- c) Beneficiary level monitoring and evaluation for technical assistance and reporting;
- d) Participation to human resource development and capacity-building sessions;
- e) Obligation and disbursement of funds; and
- f) Regional, provincial, and city/municipality level coordination.

Section 12. Regular Program Monitoring, Reporting, and Transparency - The DSWD through the SLP NPMO and RPMO shall regularly monitor the implementation of the Program and report its status in order to ensure the attainment of the goals enumerated in this Act. The Program shall annually publish a full report of the SLP covering the implementation and accomplishments of the previous fiscal year. The said report shall include the total number of households and individuals served, its physical and financial accomplishments, notable achievements, success stories, and list of recommendations on how to further enhance the implementation of the SLP. The report shall be published in the DSWD official website for transparency.

Section 13. Appropriations - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be charged against those authorized in the current and subsequent General Appropriations Act.

Section 14. Oversight Committee – Upon the effectivity of this Act, a Congressional Committee, hereafter referred to as the SLP’s Oversight Committee is hereby constituted. The Committee shall be composed of members from the Committee on Poverty Alleviation, Committee on Labor and Employment, and Committee on Social Services. The oversight committee shall be chaired by the Chairperson of the Committee on Poverty Alleviation, while the Chairperson of the Committee on Social Services shall serve as co-chair of the Committee. Additional composition of the oversight Committee shall be within the purview of the legislative body.

The Committee shall conduct periodic reviews to ensure the proper implementation of this Act as regards the expenditures of the earmarked funds, cost parameters of the modalities, accomplishments of the Program, and the performance of its implementing offices.

Section 15. Compliance to Data Privacy Act of 2012 - The DSWD SLP shall comply with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173 otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Additionally, the Program shall further comply with the organizational, physical, technical and security measures prescribed in the SLP Data Privacy Policy and Sharing Protocol Manual.

Section 16. Data Sharing – Data sharing between government agencies for the purpose of public function or provision of a public service shall be covered by a Data Sharing Agreement; Provided, that the DSWD SLP shall comply with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173 otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012; Provided further, that all information filed with the DSWD SLP, and other

database system used by the DSWD shall be made available to the stakeholders, institution, government agencies, departments and non-government agencies, including obligations to protect personal data and information.

Section 17. Implementing Rules and Regulations - Within twelve (12) months from the effectivity of this Act, the DSWD Secretary shall, in coordination with appropriate government Departments and Agencies with the participation of the local government units, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Section 18. Convergence of Programs and Services for Livelihood Support - Within the scope of social protection and national poverty alleviation strategies, stakeholders such as other National Government Agencies, the private sector, volunteer groups, the academe, among others, implementing multi-stakeholder programs and services for the poor and vulnerable, shall converge and complement the modalities offered by the DSWD SLP. Such convergence shall focus on the enhancement of operational efficiency, provision of additional financing, access to resources, enhancement of program modules and capability-building activities, and strengthening of external partnerships and linkages.

Section 19. Separability Clause – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions shall not be affected and shall remain valid and subsisting.

Section 20. Repealing Clause – Any law, Presidential Decree or issuance, Executive Order, Letter of Instruction, Administrative Order, rule or regulation

contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Section 21. Effectivity - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,