



**The Conditional Cash Transfer Program Watch Project**  
***The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Watch Project***

<b>CSO:</b>	CCAGG
<b>Years:</b>	2011 - 2012
<b>Country:</b>	Abra, Philippines
<b>Amount:</b>	\$ 35,500 USD
<b>Sector:</b>	Financial/Conditional Cash Transfer

<b>Corruption Problem:</b>	Wastage of local government funds to intended beneficiaries of the program were excluded from their rightful cash grants, while unqualified families were receiving the cash grants.
<b>Tools Employed:</b>	Baseline survey; community based monitoring teams; advocacy on good governance

The Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT or 4Ps) Program is at the centre of the Government’s effort to reduce the incidence of extreme poverty in line with its commitment to meet the poverty reduction target set by the Millennium Declaration of 2000. The CCT, also known as the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Project (4Ps), involves the giving of money to extremely poor families with school-aged children provided those families agree to undertake education and healthcare measures specified by the program (the conditionalities). In this way, the program is said to be not a subsidy but an investment in the children’s future. Each beneficiary family receives P500 per month as “health” subsidy plus P300 for every school-aged child up to a maximum of three. Beneficiaries may participate in the program for a maximum of five years. Following the example of other developing countries, the Philippine government initiated the CCT in 2007 and launched it in 2008 with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) as the agency responsible for its implementation and management. The CCT Watch project was organized in April 2011 with funding from PTF for a year to monitor the program’s implementation in the Province of Abra.

**Corruption Problem Addressed and Project Objectives**

Media reports in 2011 tended to show that a significant number of intended beneficiaries of the program were being excluded while unqualified families were receiving the cash grants. Moreover, errors that were reported and complaints that were lodged did not always lead to corrective action by DSWD. In addition, there were also complaints that beneficiaries were not receiving the full benefits they were entitled to. The CCAGG was worried that this was happening in Abra and that many would-be beneficiaries in this poor province were being excluded from the program or were not receiving full benefits.

The CCTP Watch Project had two objectives:

- To ensure the inclusion of the poorest of the poor as beneficiaries of the program; and,
- To ensure that government (public) money was not wasted.



## **Approaches, Methods and Tools Used to Address the Problem**

To address the primary concerns identified in the implementation of the 4Ps, the CCTP Watch Project used a community monitoring approach in order to validate whether or not these concerns were being properly addressed and the intended results met. The project had five components to achieve the objectives stated above, namely:

- A baseline survey in the 14 municipalities of Abra (out of a total of 27) that represented the first set covered by the program in the province when it started in 2008. The survey was intended to validate the beneficiaries list drawn up by DSWD, that is, to ensure that all those eligible were included in the list and all those ineligible were excluded from the list.
- To create community-based monitoring tools that would allow local people to assess the implementation of the CCTP with regard to how well the beneficiaries were able to fulfill the conditionalities set by the program.
- To organize community-based monitoring teams that would be trained to use the monitoring tools and continue to monitor the program post project.
- To conduct an advocacy on good governance through mass media.
- To conduct dialogues with DSWD provincial, regional, and national offices in order to disseminate project results and advocate for program and policy reforms.

CCAGG developed a set of proxy means indicators of the poorest of the poor in the communities as the basis for recommending who should be included and who

excluded from the list of beneficiaries. This was important for the validating team's judgment in identifying qualified households. The indicators consist of the following:

- Those who are living in a small bamboo house usually with cogon roof and earth flooring with barely any appliance;
- Those that could barely have three meals a day, at minimum only 1 meal;
- Those that barely earn what they need for the day;
- Those that could barely send their children to high school;
- Those that do not own lands and do not have steady income; and,
- Those who barely participate in public discussions because they are shy to express their opinions.

CCAGG reported the successful development of four monitoring tools, namely:

- CCTP Watch Monitoring Tool No. 1: Inclusion of the poorest of the poor in the list of beneficiaries and exclusion of the non-poorest of the poor from the list;
- CCTP Watch Monitoring Tool No. 2: Compliance with the conditions of the program in terms of schooling of children aged 5-14, visits to RHU centers or clinics of children aged 0-14, visits to RHU centers or clinics of mothers in reproductive age, and attendance in Family Development Sessions;
- CCTP Watch Monitoring Tool No. 3: Usage of cash transfer;
- CCTP Watch Monitoring Tool No. 4: Implementation of the Self-Employment



Assistance para sa Kaunlaran/Kapakanan (SEA-K Projects).

In addition, CCAGG developed guides for rapid rural appraisal and for community organizing. The CO guide is really a set of instructions or protocol for how CCTP Watch field researchers should conduct the community validation.

## **Results Achieved**

1. CCAGG conducted baseline validation surveys in 12 municipalities (out of a total of 27 in Abra), leaving out two due to concerns for the security of CCAGG personnel. All in all, 114 barangays were visited. The 12 municipalities covered a total of 16,572 individual beneficiaries, 4,616 households, 8,164 children aged 5-14 enrolled in schools, 3,940 children aged 0-14 that regularly visit the RHU Clinics, and 154 mothers in reproductive age. The surveys covered 34 percent of the total number of family beneficiaries in the province.

2. The survey was the primary data collection method used in this project. Using its monitoring tool no. 1, CCAGG was able to identify an additional 1,500 families that were not in the beneficiaries list to be included in it as well as 60 families that should have been excluded but were put in the list and unnecessarily received grants. The CCAGG estimated that, based on a maximum grant of P1,400 per month, the total leakage from this error would have been P4.2 million.

3. Using monitoring tool no. 2, CCAGG was able to confirm the positive short-term gains that CCTP programs are known to generate in terms of school attendance, maternal and child health, parenting, and participation in community activities. CCAGG found an 85 percent compliance in school attendance, regular medical check-ups for pregnant mothers and children, and good attendance in the Family Development

Sessions. This general compliance of the conditions of the program led to positive results with regards to:

- Good performance of children in school;
- Improved health conditions of children and pregnant mothers;
- Enhanced family values and relationships;
- The development of community awareness, participation and involvement; and,
- The emergence of new leaders in the community (parent leaders).

4. Using monitoring tool no. 3, CCAGG determined how beneficiaries were using the cash grants they received.

The cash grants were reportedly used as follows:

- To cover schooling expenses such as school supplies, daily allowance, payment of school contribution, school fees, projects in school, school shoes, uniform, bags;
- To meet the family's basic needs in terms of food (rice, coffee, milk, sugar) and clothing;
- To buy medicines and vitamins and to pay for checkups;
- To cover repairs to the house and to have electricity installed;
- To capitalize livelihood projects; and,
- To pay utility bills.

At the same time, problems related to the transfer of cash grants to beneficiaries were documented as well.

They included:

- Delays in the receipt of the full grant amount, sometimes lasting for several months;
- No cash grant received at all by qualified beneficiaries;



- Cash grants received for a few months before completely being stopped for no apparent reason;
- Problems in the manner the cash grants were released;
- ATM cards that were lost, burned, destroyed, or stolen, and the long wait for replacement cards; and,
- The long delay in the updating of the beneficiaries list for certain changes, such as in cases of transfer of residence.

5. The parent leaders who accompanied the validating teams became familiar with how to monitor the CCTP. In addition, two seminars on People's Participation and Social Accountability were organized for 67 parent leaders to become change agents and development facilitators.

6. CCAGG used radio (the organization's own weekly radio program called "Allangugan") and print media (CCAGG's column in *Abra Today*, the diocese of Bangued's weekly publication) to disseminate the results of the project. In addition, project team members spoke at various meetings, sharing their experiences and findings.

7. Through several policy forums and dialogues involving the DSWD, CCAGG presented the findings of the project and made recommendations regarding corrections that should be made in the beneficiaries list in order to avoid leakages and on the problems encountered by beneficiaries as documented by the project. The DSWD regional director commended the report and promised to look into its findings, particularly with regard to who should be included and excluded in the beneficiaries' list. The director also recommended that the department's other CSO

partners should follow CCAGG's example and utilize the same reporting format.

### **What worked well and what did not?**

*Monitoring the CCTP:* The CCTP Watch project was able to confirm that the program has had an overall positive result that is helping poor families cope with their immediate needs while at the same time ensuring that they are equipped to deal with medium and long-term concerns such as education and health. The project also pointed out how to potentially improve the effectiveness of the cash transfer program by fixing the problems encountered in the transfer of the cash grants to beneficiaries and by further developing the potential of parent leaders to lead in strengthening public participation in the implementation of the CCTP.

*Success Indicators and Community Empowerment:* CCAGG cited broad indicators to show the relative usefulness of the government's cash transfer program not only in alleviating poverty but also in possibly encouraging broader public participation both by raising local community awareness and social responsibility, and by developing local leaders (parent leaders) for ensuring development outcomes through the Family Development Sessions. This building of the self-confidence and self-respect of the poor was singled out as a great achievement of the program.

*Engagement with Government:* A Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the CCAGG and the DSWD, which made it possible for the project to access the four basic documents that the CCTP Watch needed: (i) the beneficiary lists; (ii) the monitoring forms maintained by the Provincial Link and the Municipal Links; (iii) the lists of students enrolled; and (iv) the lists of pregnant mothers and their schedule of visits to RCUs. Without such a formal agreement, the project



would have been at a high risk of not achieving its aims or of being able to implement project activities.

*Development of Monitoring Tools:* An important achievement of the project was in developing community monitoring and feedback tools. These tools may be used by other CSOs conducting a similar project with appropriate adjustments made for differences in context and environment. In particular, the Rapid Monitoring Tool that was developed for the CCTP Watch project enables a quick assessment of the impacts of the CCTP and is useful to identify gaps in implementation. The results of the survey undertaken through the project was extensive and was not restricted to the 4Ps alone but also covered other services/programs of the DSWD and other government agencies.

*Organizing Community-based Monitoring Teams:* A key component of the project, the training of community-based teams to undertake the monitoring of the 4Ps across the 14 project-focus municipalities, proved to be unrealistic. The project found that it was hard for community monitoring teams to stay in a barangay for a week and so perhaps a more realistic initiative would have been to pilot the community-based teams in a more limited number of municipalities. This would have been a useful experiment for discovering the effectiveness of community-based teams.

*Policy Dialogue:* The relatively limited timeframe of twelve months made accomplishment of any significant policy dialogue within the project lifespan a greater challenge for CCAGG. This is an important weakness to be recognized since effective delivery of this component is perhaps particularly needed for the longer sustainability of such projects.

## **Lessons Learned**

The CCT Watch Project provided important lessons for further improving the 4Ps, while also validating the credibility of the program in changing behavior that leads to improvements in education and health, and the empowerment of the poor. It also confirms that public participation in the monitoring of project implementation can help the government objectively evaluate the outcomes of such projects. Such participation also contributes to the formation of positive public perception regarding such efforts.

An important bottleneck in DSWD's implementation of the project was found to be the inability of the department's municipal links (local project implementers) to cope with their caseloads. While this has led to the DSWD lessening the caseloads of its municipal links, it may be that a more efficient system for delivering project services should be developed.

The supply side challenges that the effective compliance to 4Ps conditionalities depends on became apparent from feedback garnered through this project. This gives credence to various reports' contention that the program expanded too rapidly in 2011, straining the resources of DSWD. The issue of supply side unpreparedness threatens to diminish the impacts of the program if it is not properly addressed. This issue can be explored in greater depth in future iterations of this project.

## **Sustainability**

The CCTP Watch project has brought to the fore the important value added in developing mechanisms and tools to engage with the community to improve the effectiveness of government programs such as the 4Ps. The ways of using CSOs to build awareness of the 4Ps, to assist in engaging citizens to better target



beneficiaries, and to use them to build the capacity of parent leaders, as piloted through the CCTP Watch project, are all methods that the DSWD is standardizing across the 4Ps. The tools developed by CCAGG will be particularly useful in this larger effort that can make these community-based monitoring and feedback tools a more sustainable outcome beyond the project duration.

The project noted specific areas for improvement in 4Ps implementation that could be facilitated by CSOs, such as the updating of the beneficiaries lists due to changes in the circumstances of community members. It is in meeting these challenges to effective delivery that community-based initiatives like the CCTP Watch project can have an important role. The participation of CSOs enhances the integrity of the 4Ps and builds trust among beneficiaries that can further improve their compliance with the program's conditionalities.

The wider awareness on the 4Ps created by the project through radio, print, and website will be less likely to be sustained in the longer-term without additional funding.