



## Community-Based Rehabilitation Program of Drug Surrenderees in the Municipality of Lingayen

Evangeline O. Pescador, LLB,

Municipal Information officer, MADAC Member, LGU-Lingayen

**Abstract** – Community-based rehabilitation is a beneficial treatment of addiction as it provides opportunities to learn how addiction settles into a healthy mind and body and how it can be beleaguered. The Municipality of Lingayen, Province of Pangasinan designed a community-based rehabilitation program to cater the health needs of drug surrenderees under the government program “TOKHANG”. It was conceptualized in 2017 and implemented by the Municipal Anti Drug Abuse Council of the LGU. No visible impact was identified hence the proponent undertook this study to assess its effectiveness for possible enhancement. Qualitative method was utilized where focus group discussion, key informant interview and observation were employed where thematic strategy were utilized in data analysis. There was an improvement noted to wellness of the surrenderees after the implementation of the said program. Moreover, the program contributed best to the peace and order of the community, strong family relationship and to the health and safety of the surrenderees. On the other hand, four significant areas were considered to enhance the program and strong support of stakeholders is vital. Indeed, high satisfaction with the program was noted

**Keywords-** Drug surrenderees, community-based rehabilitation program, physical and psychosocial wellness, Municipality of Lingayen

### INTRODUCTION

Addiction to prohibited substances was one of the major problems that the Philippine Government is facing nowadays. It was considered a complex but treatable disease affecting brain functions and behavior. Thus, addiction can be treated but it has to undergo processes through rehabilitation. At this point, project “Tokhang” was developed by the Philippine Government that is a practical and realistic means of accelerating the drive against illegal drugs in affected barangays. This concept involves the conduct of house to house visitations to persuade suspected illegal drug personalities to stop their illegal drug activities. Project “Tokhang” was launched by the Philippine National Police (PNP) to target the drug-infected barangays in coordination with the local government units through the Philippines Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 (Republic Act No. 9165) and the Philippines Local Government Code (Republic Act No. 7160) reinforced by Executive Order No. 4 of 2016 to provide establishment and support of drug abuse treatment and rehabilitation centers throughout the country. In rehabilitation, the residents learn new lifestyle, principles and coping mechanisms that will help them overcome drug addiction.

Treatment should include development of specific cognitive skills to help the offender adjust attitudes and beliefs that lead to drug abuse. This

includes skills related to thinking, understanding, learning and remembering (Orbon M, Mercado J, Balilaa J. , 2015). Further, it is the behavioral interventions designed to influence the behavior changes in a way that benefits addicts and the society for its goal is to return people to productive functioning in the family, workplace and community. Moreover, community-based treatment is a specific integrated model for people affected by drug use and dependence in the community which provides a continuum of care from outreach and low threshold services, through detoxification and stabilization to aftercare and integration in coordination of health workers, social and other non-specialist services with strong support by family and the community to ensure efficient and long-term results (Sereta BN, Amino FA, Ouma P, Ondimu TO 2016).

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In the Philippines, drug addiction is a major concern where rehabilitation facilities are not enough to accommodate surrenderees. The Philippine Government challenged officials to device their own rehabilitation programs to cater to the health needs of people involved. In responses, the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Lingayen conceptualized a community-based rehabilitation program (CBRP) in rehabilitating the surrendered drug personalities. However, the impact of the program is not yet visible and tangible and

prompted the author to undertake this study as a member of the Municipal Anti-Drug Abuse Council to assess the impact and effects of the program, its capacity to realize the Council's objectives and to formulate the possible recommendations as basis for enhancement.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Descriptive qualitative method of research was used and participants were the drug surrenderees of the entire municipality. Purposive-convenience sampling was utilized where selection of participants is criterion-based although some participants are entirely known. Available drug scholars during the scheduled data collection were likewise considered. Focus group discussion was the primary technique in gathering data. The question revolved around the implementation of CBRP focusing on its effectiveness, contributions to the community and suggestions on how the program can be enhanced. Moreover, an open-ended interview guide and an observation checklist based on the foci of this study were utilized to evaluate the effectiveness and contributions to scholars and the community, and recommendations for the enhancement of the program. Gathered data were transcribed into categories, synthesized then analyzed by themes and quantified.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **The CBRP Process**

Use of prohibited drug involves serious risks. The more a person use, the greater the risks. At this point, provision of a comprehensive therapy not only the mental and emotional but foremost, the physical wellbeing is vital. Psychological wellbeing is related to emotional and social knowledge that influences the overall ability to effectively cope with environmental

demands. The CBRP is a comprehensive therapy that was implemented which involves five steps. Organizing is the first step where a Community Rehabilitation Network (CRN) is developed and oriented on how the program is implemented. The next step is enrollment of drug surrenderees which requires medical tests by the Department of Health (DOH) for only low and medium risk users who need not be admitted in the rehabilitation centers but can be accommodated through community-based treatment. The third step is program orientation of both the enrollees and their families followed by the rehabilitation proper. This step involves sessions on the understanding of the individual as a patient, sharing of experiences, lectures/seminars, individual and group counseling, skills training, physical activities and community service. Evaluation is the final step that requires drug recovering patients to undergo an unannounced drug test after which they will be assessed on how well they fared with the activities done.

### **Effects of Community-based Rehabilitation**

Wellbeing is essential to everyone's life. It denotes health, happiness and satisfaction. In this study, there were three (3) categories involved. These are physical, psychological and social wellbeing. The effectiveness of CBRP activities on physical wellbeing presented in Table 1 includes the following parameters: body physique, appearance, body strength and comfort.

The results revealed low percentage of responses noted because only 67 out of 90 surrenderees identified to participate in this study were available that time. The program implementers claimed that those who were not available were with their families at home to immerse in a more complex community environment.

**Table 1**  
**Physical Well-Being of Drug Surrenderees Before and After being Subjected to the Community-Based Rehabilitation Program**

<b>Before CBRP</b>	<b>After CBRPO</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Body Weakness	Regained Strength	14%	3
Neuropathies	Gradually healing through regular exercise	1%	7
Uneasy feeling	More comfortable	8%	4
Skinny and underweight	Better body built and gained weight	22%	1
Blurry vision and poor sense of hearing	Improved	3%	5
Frequent headache	Minimized	2%	6
Loss of Appetite	Improved appetite	17%	2

It can be gleaned from the table being skinny previously before being subjected to CBRP and gained weight ranked 1 among the physical signs and symptoms observed by surrenderees in terms of physical well-being, hence ranked 1, followed by loss of appetite which

improved, body weakness which became better. These are the top 3 among the physical well-being related factors

**Table 2**

**Psychological Well-Being of Drug Surrenderees Before and After being Subjected to the Community-Based Rehabilitation Program**

<b>Before CBRP</b>	<b>After CBRPO</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Irritable/temperamental	Calmer attitude/Controlled emotions	3%	8
Laziness	Active and willing to work	16%	3
Suspicious of others/Paranoia	Trusting	22%	2
Anxious/fearful	Confident	6%	7
Self-pity/hopelessness	Positive outlook/optimistic	8%	5.5
Insomnia	Improved sleeping pattern	13%	4
Confused/Unfocused	Clear mindset/Goal-oriented	8%	5.5
Ashamed of people	Renewed Self esteem	24%	1

The findings show that before being subjected to the CBRP, surrenderees displayed several behaviors which improved or were reversed after treatment, counseling and rehabilitation. Ranked as first is being ashamed of people which changed after CBRP to renewed self-esteem. Ranked second is paranoia and

third is laziness which turned to becoming more trusting and active with willingness to work, respectively. Sleeplessness or insomnia is ranked fourth which is one of the common manifestations of psychological disturbance that can lead to psychosis if prolonged.

**Table 3**

**Social Well-Being of Drug Surrenderees Before and After being Subjected to the Community-Based Rehabilitation Program**

<b>Before CBRP</b>	<b>After CBRPO</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Selfishness	Willingness to help others	6%	5.5
No faith in God	Attends religious services/Prays	19%	3
Poor interpersonal relationships due to paranoia	Improved social interactions	23%	1
Strange feeling	Self-assured	8%	4
Social stigma	Feels appreciated	20%	2
Fear of PNP	Fear minimized	4%	7
No respect for elders	Managed	3%	8
Feeling people have no trust in them	Minimized	6%	5.5

It has been noticed that improvement in socialization was the first observed and reported with better self-esteem. Good to know that their spiritual life was given significance. Though respect for elders was the least that was regardless of circumstances, it should be practiced. People can cope easily because human beings are social beings.

**Contributions of the Community-based Rehabilitation Program**

Peace in the Philippines related to drug abuse consistently ranked in the top five urgent national concerns in nationwide surveys since 2004. The community plays a vital role in resolving conflicts and

promoting peace most especially on matters involving drug abuse. Table 4 revealed that CBRP is an advantage and beneficial to peace and order because majority of the major factors disturbing the social welfare of the people in the community were reduced and minimized. Drug surrenderees became a part of the community's activities that were worthwhile and the usual violations they commit were reduced and eliminated. Through the CBRP, they have rejoined mainstream society successfully. The community became safer and more peaceful because no more drug-related troubles and scandals occurred.

**Table 4  
Contribution of the Community-based Rehabilitation Program to Peace and Order**

<b>Before BBRP</b>	<b>After CBRP</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Stealing personal properties	Reduced	8%	6.5
Drunkenness/Alarm and Scandal at Night	Minimized	21%	2
Fights between community gangs	Reduced	3%	11
Violation of community ordinances	Reduced	16%	4
Motorcycle races disturbing the silence of the night	Minimized	23%	1
Stealing dogs and other pets	Minimized	18%	3
More bystanders and strangers in the community	Reduced	8%	6.5
Unable to help in the community	Willing to extend help	7%	9
Disobedience/Disrespect of barangay Officials	Minimized	6%	10
Drinking late at night until early dawn	Minimized	8%	6.5

The effectiveness of the program to peace and order is somewhat a standpoint to remember. If this program is effective to drug addicts that made changes to the community, how much more if it will also be applied to other community related problems that affects the peace and order of a locality. On the other hand, good community relationship is the basic and most important social skill that come from families. It

has a great impact on the society and the society influences the operations of a country.

Table 5 exhibits contributions of the program to family relationship. There were factors affecting the relationship of drug surrenderees to their families brought by prohibited drugs or substances that made their personality different from who they are prior to their involvement with drugs. As gleaned from the table, most of them were found to be more responsible with closer family ties which is opposite to who they were before

the therapy. Moreover, changes in their lives is comparable to a 360-degree turn. This means that CBRP

is an essential program in promotion of relationship of the drug surrenderees with their families.

**Table 5**

**Contribution of the Community-based Rehabilitation Program to Family Relationships**

<b>Before BBRP</b>	<b>After CBRP</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Disrespect/Disobedience	Positive relationship	13%	5.5.
Doesn't pray	Leads prayers	16%	4
Poor communication with family members	Good family relationship	11%	8.5
Unhealthy relationship/irresponsible	Healthier relationship/responsible	86%	1
Rarely stays or sleeps at home	Sleeps and works with his family	12%	7
Talks harshly	Kind and respectful	19%	3
Illegal sources of income	Works and earns through legal means	3%	10
No bonding time with family	Eats with family members, is home early, tells stories of his day	22%	21
Doesn't join his family in hearing mass	Joins them every Sunday	13%	5.5.

The family gives the strength needed to get through the bad times and celebrate the good times. Strong relationships among family members are essential in keeping the family together, being the smallest and most basic social unit of society. People who become victims of drug abuse and dependence are offered help by the CBRP to improve the overall quality of their life and wellbeing through social support for rehabilitation and reintegration.

It can be gleaned from table 6 that health and safety of drug surrenderees were improved, managed and minimized. There were remarkable changes in their health and safety where majority of them regained their physical strength and energy making them feel better about themselves while gradually purging out their undesirable behaviors and character because of drug dependency.. These reformation of drug surrenderees is the valuable contribution of the BBRP and signifies the effectiveness in the implementation of the program.

**Table 6**

**Contribution of the Community-based Rehabilitation Program to Health and Safety**

<b>Before BBRP</b>	<b>After CBRP</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Lack of energy to work/Body fatigue	Improved physical energy/renewed stamina	36%	1
Underweight	Normal weight	8%	5.5
Body malaise and discomfort	Comfortable	27%	2
Sleeping Problems	Managed	23%	3

Engaged in various vices aside from drugs	Minimized	19%	4
Breathing difficulties	Improved	3%	7
Frequent Headaches	Reduced	8%	5.5

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Effectiveness in the implementation of the community-based rehabilitation program was noted for it has great contributions to peace and order, family relationships and health and safety of the community. Further, it is contributory to the development of good and positive mindset and physical outlook, worthy relationship with family and community members showing desirable spiritual values, respect and sense of social responsibility.

It is recommended that sustainability of the program should be maintained to cater those who are not able to avail of them; intensive anti-drug campaign, community awareness and capability-building should be seriously implemented; and strengthen the community support system for drug prevention by building healthy public policies that foster the health of the community.

To enhance the implementation of the CBRP in the Municipality of Lingayen, here are four (4) significant areas recommended to enhance the effectiveness of the program implementation. First is Holistic Approach that integrated physical, mental and spiritual model. This approach helps in preparing the surrenderees' reintegration with the community. Second is the Family Support and Involvement which is significant during the stay-in program contributing a positive impact on psychological wellbeing. Third is Community Support and Involvement which is a patient-centered style of therapeutic interaction that facilitates support wherein, treatment becomes faster if community people understand the situation. Lastly is Partnership with stakeholders and community in support to the restoration of wellness of drug surrenderees because this needs a collaborative effort, teamwork and multisectoral cooperation and involvement.

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