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Research Article

Awareness and Availment of Services of Solo Parents as Provided in Republic Act 8972

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ABSTRACT

This research study was purposely conducted to determine the Level of Awareness and Extent of Availment of Services of Solo Parents as Provided in the Republic Act 8972. The concurrent-mixed method of research was utilized in the conduct of this study. From the results and findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: a) the level of awareness was interpreted as poor. This conclusion came from the following indicators: criteria for support as poor, qualifications of solo parent as high and the comprehensive package of social development and welfare services as very poor; b) extent of availment of services was interpreted as very low as the following indicators were assessed by the respondents as very low at all. These indicators are the livelihood development, counseling services, parent effectiveness services, flexible work schedule, educational benefits, housing benefits and medical assistance were all interpreted as very low; c) the difference in level of awareness and extent of availment among aspects across areas is significant. Proposed Intervention Plan was crafted to help the local government units particularly the City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices enhance the level of awareness and extent of availment of benefits of solo parents.

Keywords: *Availment of services, solo parents, Awareness of solo parents act, Republic Act 8972, 1st District of Albay*

Introduction

Many sectors need to be identified, given importance, and rendered appropriate services and interventions, and one of those groups of a specific population of interest is the solo parents. Solo/single parents have undergone various circumstances why they are important in

rearing their child/children. They, too, may experience discrimination and challenges that test their patience and sense of responsibility in raising their child/children. They depict greater accountability, especially in nurturing their children. Being left single-handedly with a father's and a mother's accountability may

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perplex them. Thus, these solo parents should be appreciated and render interventions and services for them to be helped in the situation that they are in.

Parenting is challenging enough, even under the best conditions. More so, with one parent, the challenges are multi-faceted. One of the articles entitled, "The Challenges Faced by Single Parent Families (2016)" states that being a parent is itself quite a difficult job, but being a single parent could be even more tedious and stressful. A single parent can be compared to a weighing scale constantly trying to maintain the balance between varieties of tasks. The problems faced by single parents and their children are numerous. Some of these are financial problems – single parents often face many financial issues. They find it difficult to make ends meet since the single parents have to pay for all the expenses; and sense of loss and feeling of loneliness – the feeling of a sense of loss and feeling of loneliness is experienced both by the single parent and the children, whatever the reason for single parent status, divorce, death or abandonment. A single parent might feel they are carrying the weight of all the responsibilities, but the children are equally burdened owing to the new and drastically changed life.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2016) stated that seventeen percent of the population of children aged 0-14 years old are living in single-parent households around the globe. In 2016/17, the proportion of children living in a single-parent household varied between 6% and 28% in the different OECD countries, with an OECD country average of 17%. It was lowest in Turkey (2015, 6%), Greece (8%), Croatia (8%), and Poland (10%), while it was highest in France (23%), the United Kingdom (23%), Belgium (25%), Lithuania (25%), United States (27%) and Latvia (28%). It was 19% in Ireland and Canada. Internationally, one-quarter to one-third of all families are headed by single mothers, calling into question the normativeness of couple-headed families. Developed countries, particularly, are experiencing an increase in single-parent families as divorce becomes more common.

In addition, the DSWD (2016) under the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) record shows that some of the one hundred seventy thousand (170,000) recipients are solo parents. In the Philippines, the Federation of Solo Parents Luzvimin (FSPL) estimated that around 15 million Filipino solo parents are struggling hard to support their families and raise their children alone. These are just a few of the literature that would tell that solo parenting is not happening in two or three countries but is happening in almost all of the countries. Solo parenting is now a worldwide concern.

In the Philippines, while it is the policy of the state to promote the family as the foundation of the nation, strengthen its solidarity and ensure its total development, there is a law that provides privileges to solo parents and it is known as Republic Act (RA) 8972 of 2000. This law has been approved last November 7, 2000 and took effect on November 28, 2000. It aims to develop a comprehensive package of social development and welfare services for solo parents and their children to be carried out by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), as the lead agency. Its implementing rules and regulations (IRR) was approved in April 2002. The comprehensive package of programs/services for solo parents includes livelihood, self-employment and skills development, employment-related benefits, psychosocial, educational, health and housing services.

Moreover, Republic Act 11861, known as the Expanded Solo Parents Welfare Act, solo parents earning a minimum wage or below will receive a monthly cash subsidy of P1,000 from their respective local government units, provided that they are not a beneficiary of any other cash assistance program of the government. Solo parents who are earning less than P250,000 annually are also entitled to a ten percent (10%) discount and exemption from the value-added tax on their child's milk, food, micronutrient supplements, sanitary diapers, duly prescribed medicines, vaccines, and other medical supplements from the birth of the child until they turn six years old; will also be prioritized in low-cost housing projects through the National Housing Authority; automatic

coverage under PhilHealth's National Health Insurance program; and access to scholarships and other educational programs of the Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

Thus, these solo parents should be valued and render interventions and services for them to be helped in the situation that they are into. With the increasing number of solo parents in the country, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) appealed for more support for some 14 million single or solo parents in the country, who single-handedly raise their children. DSWD said that solo parents were among the most vulnerable sectors of the society (CNN Philippines, 2018).

Solo parents have their own ways of disabling their struggles as an individual and as a parent. Apart from it, they still need a helping hand to assist them in trying to become a good parent to their children thus, this sector needs to be identified, given importance and rendered appropriate services and interventions applicable to them.

In this light, the researcher conducted research regarding the awareness and availment of services as provided in R.A. 8972 since it is now over two decades after the approval of the law and an increasing number of this sector was noted. Also, the researcher would want to know if this sector could have government services as part of its support system. Thus, the researcher would like to know if solo parents received comprehensive packages and interventions from the local government units and other service providers especially there is an expanded law for solo parents.

Statement of the Problem

This study determined the awareness and availment of services of solo parents as provided in the Republic Act 8972. Specifically, the study answered the following questions:

1. What is the respondents' level of awareness of the Solo Parents Act (R.A. 8972) in terms of:
 - a. Criteria for support
 - b. Qualifications of solo parent
 - c. Comprehensive package of social development and welfare services

2. What is the respondents' extent of availment of the following services of solo parents along:
 - a. Livelihood development
 - b. Counseling services
 - c. Parent effectiveness services
 - d. Critical incidence stress debriefing
 - e. Flexible work schedule
 - f. Educational benefits
 - g. Housing benefits
 - h. Medical assistance
3. Are there significant differences in the level of awareness and extent of availment among the aspects of awareness and availment across areas?
4. What benefits and challenges do the respondents experience along the availment of the services provided to solo parents?
5. What intervention plan may be proposed based on the findings of the study?

Research Hypothesis

There is a significant difference in the level of awareness and extent of availment in the services provided to solo parents across areas

Research Design and Methodology

The study used the concurrent-mixed method of research. This mixed method of research is characterized by collection and analysis of quantitative data along with collection and analysis of qualitative data to accurately define the relationships among variables of interest for the purpose of confirmation, corroboration or cross-validation within a single study. The descriptive method was used to determine the level of awareness along Criteria for Support, Qualification Of Solo Parents And Comprehensive Package And Development Welfare Services and extent of availment of services along Livelihood, Counseling, Parent Effectiveness, Critical Stress Debriefing, Education, Housing And Medical Assistance. The comparative method was used to determine the significant differences along the level of awareness and extent of availment

The quantitative method was employed in determining the level of awareness of solo parents as to the services provided in the Republic Act No. 8972. The researcher employed a questionnaire adopted from the republic act.

The qualitative method was used to discuss the benefits and challenges encountered by the respondent in the availment of the services along the identified areas. The qualitative data needed for the study was primarily gathered through the conduct of a focused-group discussion (FGD).

Furthermore, the result of the findings of the study serves as the basis for crafting the intervention plan to enhance the level of awareness and extent of availment of services.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this research study were selected through a simple random sampling technique. They are the solo parents who are duly registered at the City and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices in the five (5) municipalities namely Tiwi, Malinao, Malilipot, Bacacay and Sto. Domingo and city of Tabaco in the 1st District of Albay. A total of three hundred eighteen (318) respondents participated in this research study, wherein 11 were from Tiwi, 46 from Malinao, 35 from Malilipot, 104 from Bacacay, 81 from Sto. Domingo and 41 from Tabaco City.

Out of three hundred eighteen (318) respondents, two-hundred one (201) of them belongs to the age bracket of thirty-five (35) to sixty-five (65) years old and comprises the highest percentage of 63.2% of the respondents and only four (4) from over sixty-five (65) years old has the lowest percentage of 1.3% of the over-all respondents. Among them, two hundred eighty-nine (289) are female and has a percentage of 90.9%, while the remaining percentage of 9.1% with a frequency of 29 respondents are male.

On the economic condition aspect, it was based on the monthly income of the respondents which were enumerated in the table. It shows that solo parent with a monthly earning of Php 1,000 to Php 5,000 a month made up the highest percentage of 77.0% of the total participants, while the lowest percentage of 1.3% consist of solo parent with a monthly income of Php 20,001.00 and above. Income bracket from Php 5,000 – 10,000.00 has 16.4% with 52 respondents; Php 10,001-15,000.00 has 2.2% with 7 respondents and Php 15,001-20,000 has 6 respondents or 1.9%. With this data, majority

of solo parent families belong to low income family as per NEDA income classification, that those earning less than Php 11,600.00 a month is considered poor, that is less than official poverty threshold (CNN Philippines: Computation from the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) PSA (2016A), Making use of Thresholds from Albert Et Al (2018). The daily life of poor children tends to be very difficult from that of children whose families are more affluent. This is because of the quality of their home, school neighborhood environment as well as access to material and social resources. Any solo parent whose income falls below the poverty threshold as set by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) and subject to the assessment of the DSWD worker in the area shall be eligible for assistance. A solo parent can directly inquire from the Health Services (DOH), Educational Services (CHED, TESDA), Housing (NHA), and Parental Leave (Employer, DOLE, CSC).

The number of children in a household being headed by a solo parent was identified as well, having two hundred twenty-three (223) participants with children under one (1) to three (3) years old with the highest percentage of 70.1%, and the lowest percentage of 1.3% which corresponds to four (4) participants with children ranging from ten (10) to twelve (12) years old. Small family size especially for solo parents presents more advantages than disadvantages. According to fairstartmovement.org, there are numerous social and emotional benefits in having small family size. Smaller families tend to have fair start in terms of decision making authority having less persons to consider and to be consulted. Greater sense of well-being among the family members is being looked after together with the sense of community. Smaller families tend to result also in a more equal distribution of parental responsibility. Since solo parenting already poses challenges to parents especially in terms of their financial resources, having smaller families helped them to manage their resources and yet the most important consideration is that parents can provide more time, attention and investment in each child.

The last characteristic which is the number of years as a solo parent was determined having 42.8% as the highest percentage with one hundred thirty-six (136) participants being a solo parent for one (1) to five (5) years. The least respondents with 2.2% as the lowest percentage with seven (7) participants have been a solo parent for twenty-one (21) years and up.

The characteristic with highest percentage of 38.7%, with one hundred twenty-three (123) respondents were classified as solo parent after their spouses died, and the lowest percentage of 0.9% with only three (3) participants were identified as solo parent after their spouses were admitted in an institution for mental impairment certified by a public health practitioner.

The respondents who were involved in the focus-group discussion has a total number of one hundred fifty-eight (158) across the six locale of the study. Their time availability was considered in their involvement and participant in the FGD.

Data-Gathering Instrument and Procedure

The researcher performed necessary steps to ensure that time, efforts and resources were safeguarded against unnecessary and untimely actions. The data gathering procedure started after the panel approved the respective research study together with its research instrument. After which the researcher asked permission from the Dean to conduct the study. Then, the researcher requested assistance from the respective Municipal and City Social Welfare and Development Officers for the conduct of the study together with the list and identification of the respondents. The researcher tapped an expert to translate the interview guide into vernacular language. An administration of a pre-test was also put in place to check the instrument before the actual administration of it to the respective respondents.

The researcher personally distributed the questionnaire. Personal conduct of interview and Focus - Group discussion were the main strategies in gathering the needed data. The researcher asked assistance from the Municipal and City Social Welfare and Development Offices to help her in administering the distribution, survey and retrieval of the questionnaires.

Concerted effort was made to ensure adequate presentation of each category of respondents.

The respondents were given instructions and were guided in answering the questionnaires. After finishing the gathering of data, all the information was organized, summarized, analyzed and interpreted. Then all the information was reviewed to make sure that everything is clear and all needed data are gathered.

Ethical Considerations

To protect both the respondents, researcher and the institution, ethical considerations were put in place. This was to ensure the quality and integrity of the research study as well protecting the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents. The principle of beneficence was given utmost importance too. An Informed Consent Form was accomplished by the respondents before the administration of the questionnaire. This warrant that they participated voluntarily in the conduct of the research while allowing the researcher to gather only relevant information.

Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The statistical tools used includes mean and ranking. Mean and ranking were used to determine the respondent's level of awareness and extent of availment of services of solo parents as provided in Republic Act. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) or F-test through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version was utilized to determine the significant differences between the ratings given by the respondents to different indicators along level of awareness and extent of availment.

For the benefits and challenges experienced by the solo parents in the availment of the benefits the researcher conducted a focus-group discussion. Their answer was based on the personal experiences and they were given a chance to explain their responses by elaborating further and providing situations associated with their experiences.

The results revealed that among the three indicators, indicator qualifications of solo parents got the highest mean of 2.99 and interpreted as high, followed by criteria for

support with 2.41 mean and comprehensive package of social development and welfare services got 1.59 mean being the lowest among the indicators.

Table 1. Summary Table of Level of Awareness of Solo Parents in terms of Criteria for Support, Qualifications of Solo Parent and Comprehensive Package of Social Development and Welfare Services

INDICATORS	MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION
Comprehensive Package of Social Development and Welfare services	1.59	Very Poor
Criteria for Support	2.41	Poor
Qualification of Solo Parents	2.99	High
Mean	2.33	Poor

Legend: 1:00-1.75-very poor; 1.76-2.5 poor; 2.51-3.25-high; 3.26-4.00-very high

As for the indicators along the level of awareness, indicator qualification of solo parent got the highest mean while indicator comprehensive package of social development and welfare services got the lowest with 1.59 mean. The result relates the finding of Orbeta and Paqueo (2016). According to them, that for decades, government programs that were supposed to help the poor, especially those in far-flung areas, failed to reach them. And if they did, they were often ineffective or inadequate.

As they became hopeless and disaffected with the government, many were driven to participate in political destabilization, armed rebellion and other forms of violence. Arguably, such participation was motivated by a desire to bring about a brighter future for their children, if not for their own selves.

This is relevant to the result of the recent study in terms of failure to reach the target beneficiaries thus the awareness falls into poor.

Table 2. Summary Table of Extent of Availment of Services of Solo Parents along Livelihood Development, Counseling Services, Parent Effectiveness, Critical Incidence Stress Debriefing, Flexible Work Schedule, Educational Benefits, Housing Benefits and Medical Assistance

SERVICES	MEAN	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION
Housing Benefits	1.01	Very Low
Critical Incidence Stress Debriefing	1.04	Very Low
Parent Effectiveness	1.05	Very Low
Counseling Services	1.07	Very Low
Livelihood Development	1.10	Very Low
Medical Assistance	1.11	Very Low
Educational Benefits	1.13	Very Low
Flexible Work Schedule	1.18	Very Low
Mean	1.09	Very Low

Legend: 1:00-1.75-very low; 1.76-2.5 low; 2.51-3.25-high; 3.26-4.00 very high

The respondents' rating has a 1.09 mean and described as very low. The services include livelihood, counseling, parent effectiveness, critical incidence stress debriefing, flexible work schedule, education, housing and medical assistance. The top 3 services that got the highest mean were as follows: flexible work schedule with 1.18 as its mean followed by educational benefits with 1.13 mean and lastly the

medical assistance with 1.11 as its mean. The flexible work schedule was conferred by some of the employed solo parents.

Accordingly, during the focus group discussions, not all employed solo parents were accorded with the flexible work arrangement as it depends on the executive or management level. The solo parents on the other hand, as they shared, they do not have the courage to

assert their privilege with the fear of losing their job which may cause them more problems.

On the other hand, the group was in agreement that if their sector is active and with strong-willed leaders they might be able to assert their privileges. Educational benefits came second with highest rating. The educational benefits as shared by the respondents were the scholarship for their children especially in tertiary level. Their children were not granted as solo parents' dependent or exclusive scholarship for solo parents' dependents but the national and local government program for education. They just ascribed it to the solo parents' act as their children were given priority in terms of educational assistance. Meanwhile, the medical assistance was assessed with 1.11 mean. The same with the educational assistance, the attribution of the availment of medical and health related services as discussed during the focus-group discussion was mainly on the prioritization level. Discounts and other benefits are yet to be availed.

While the bottom three indicators were parent effectiveness, critical incidence stress debriefing and housing benefits. The parent effectiveness services got a mean of 1.05, critical incidence stress debriefing with 1.04 and housing benefits with 1.01 as its mean. These findings as discussed in their respective tabular and narrative discussions depicts that the solo parent as claim-holder of the republic act were not given the benefits due to them. This supported the findings of MacClune and McGinn (2017) in their study entitled "Design, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for Climate Resilience: A guidance Paper for the Philippines" that monitoring represents day to day (or, more usually monthly report) of gathering of reporting of critical information, together with a snapshot analysis, usually of an immediate

and practical matters at hand. That monitoring represents an opportunity to flag issues or problems whether- external or internal – that may be influencing smooth implementation or highlight that changes in strategy, targets or personnel may be necessary.

From the result, it can be depicted that there is a connection between the level of awareness and the extent of availment. One of the factors shared by the respondent was that they were not properly introduced to the services they may/can avail of as duly registered solo parents. Further, should they have known it, they would not discard the opportunity to avail as it is a big help for them as sole earners and single handedly raising and keeping their family. The services as described were as comprehensive as it was; however, it was of no use since none of them benefited from such. It can be suggested here to utilize the 'sandwich method'. In layman's concept, it is a top-bottom and bottom-up approach to check on something. The worker and the beneficiaries may join hands and exercise responsibility to keep abreast of the services they must share with the beneficiaries.

Likewise, the beneficiaries to check upon themselves the services they can avail. Further, it can be concluded that coordination, human resource, and networking, and linking between and among the parties involved are essential to ensure a certain program, project or activity be implemented successfully and effectively. Also the monitoring and evaluation should also be considered to exercise the check and balance principle between and among the concerned social welfare agencies. Similarly, learning the best practices of the other local government units and social welfare agencies can be replicated or scaled up to promote the advancement of the solo parents as the clientele group.

Table 3. Significant Difference in the Extent of Availment among aspects Livelihood Development, Counseling Services, Parent Effectiveness, Critical Incidence Stress Debriefing, Flexible Work Schedule, Educational Benefits, Housing Benefits and Medical Assistance across Areas

Source	df	F	Sig	INTERPRETATION
Aspects	7	1.673	0.148	Difference is not significant
Areas	5	10.767	0.000	Difference is significant
Aspects*Areas	35	472.580	0.000	Difference is significant

Dependent variable: the extent of availment

It shows the difference among aspects of livelihood development, counseling services, parent effectiveness, critical incidence stress debriefing, flexible work schedule and educational benefits across areas. The difference across areas was found to be significant at significance level of 0.000. The results indicate that the level of awareness of solo parents to the republic act directly affects the extent of their availment of those services. There is no significant difference on the extent of availment among the different aspects as provided in the RA 8972 namely the livelihood development, counseling services, parent effectiveness, critical incidence stress debriefing, flexible work schedule, educational benefits, housing benefits and medical assistance.

This finding was supported by the results in the different indicators in the extent of availment parameter wherein along the livelihood development services it was noted it a very low availment, the same goes to counseling services with a very low availment. The parent effectiveness services and critical incidence stress debriefing services also have a very low availment as rated by the respondents. Along with flexible work schedules, educational benefits, and medical assistance, respondents rated this with a very low availment also.

Based on the data gathered, the primary reason for such very low availment of the services as stipulated in RA 8972 was that the solo parents were not aware of these benefits thus they were not able to avail such. It was noted during the focus group discussion that the reason for not being aware were attributed to the fact that they are not fully oriented about the salient features of the law. They submit forms applying for solo parents, undergo an interview process for assessment for their identification card. On the other hand, organization factor such as functional structure and active leader were being considered as one of those factors that can be capitalized to enhance their extent of availment.

Benefits and Challenges along the Availment of the Services

Based on the collated and collective data during the focus-group discussion, the benefits availed by the solo parents includes the

emotional support as one respondent shared that *"Igwa ako na naging barkada na kapareho ko single parent na nasasabihan ko kan sakong pinag-aagihan tapos nagkaka intindihan kami ta pareho ang samung estado. Su may kai-storyahan ka na pareho kamung lebel, maray siya ta nakakagian nin pamati* (I have a friend who is also a solo parent whom I can share my problems and since we are having the same status, I feel relieved to have someone I can talk to and understand my emotions), (Participant 1, 2019).

Livelihood training invitation, participation to team and capacity building activities and improvement on social relationship were among the highlights of the benefits solo parents' received.

On the other hand, the challenges encountered by the respondents in availing the services for solo parents comprises discrimination, financial constraints, inactive solo parents' organization and lack of communication and inadequate support of government. The collective response of the respondents as to the areas of the different duty-bearers that needs improvement so they can access and benefit from the privileges that is due to them includes the level of prioritization along program planning that they should be accorded with what the republic act is all about. *"Gusto mi na magkaigwa na meeting na yaon ang mga representate kna gabos na imbuelto na ahensya para magkahuron asin malatag ang mga program kung igwa mananggad* (We want to have a meeting to be conducted by those in authority with all the representatives coming from all the agencies involved so we can discuss programs if there is)", Participant, 71, 2019).

Apart from the meeting, the respondents shared that the government must improve on how they are implementing programs to different sectors, that it must be inclusive. Other respondents observed that the implementing agencies lack in coordination and information dissemination mechanisms, they lack support to the solo parents group, they are not prepared with the set of programs, lack of funding and the political orientation and affiliation. These observations of the respondents boil down to the organizational, communication and information- dissemination as well as

capacity of the workers. In this, respondents collectively shared that the staffs assigned to them during the process of application were only familiar with the process of ID application, apart from that, they no longer know how the solo parents can avail of the services specified in the law. This is the main reason why the solo parents in the 1st District of Albay were not fully aware of the services hence they were not able to avail such.

An intervention plan is crafted to help the different stakeholders to come up with activities, projects and program that would enhance the level of awareness and extent of availing of services of solo as provided in the Republic Act 8972.

The intervention plan's general objectives includes a) to provide recommendations and suggestions on how to enhance the awareness and availment of services of solo parents to Republic Act 8972; b) to present and propose a doable and realistic activities aimed to address the challenges experienced by the solo parents along with awareness of the Republic Act and extent of availment of services and c) identify the needed resources, persons involved, time frame and the expected output and outcome for the proposed intervention to be realized.

The activity/strategy falls into a) advocacy and communication campaigns; b) capacity building; c) linking networking and d) team building. For advocacy and communication campaign, it aims to increase the level of awareness of solo parents with regards to the qualifications of solo parents, criteria for support and comprehensive package of social development and welfare services. Activities under this includes conduct of comprehensive orientation of RA 8972 along with the salient features of RA 11861, printing and distribution of information and education campaign materials translated Bikol dialect for easy understanding, organization of solo parent group for each barangay and conduct of regular session/meeting for the organization.

Capacity building aims to equip the key persons in the local social welfare and development offices regarding the solo parents. Activities under this strategy includes conduct of live-in and inclusive trainings, seminars and workshop to solo parents, provision of

technical and capital assistance to solo parents who completed the series of training, seminars and workshop. Strategy in linking/networking aims to implement a cost-effective and efficient services to solo parents that includes activities as to planning and budgeting workshop to be integrated with persons with disabilities, senior citizens and gender and development concerns and forging of memorandum of agreement or understanding with key government offices to carry out the intervention.

For team building strategy, it carries to help the solo parents to develop further their social and interpersonal skills and to create a support system between and among groups of solo parents. This will be carried out through conduct of leadership training, cornerstone training, proposal crafting and interpersonal enhancement training.

Conclusions

The level of awareness was interpreted as poor. This came from the indicators: criteria for support as poor, qualifications of solo parent as high and the comprehensive package of social development and welfare services as very poor; 2) extent of availment of services was interpreted as very low. These indicators are the livelihood development, counseling services, parent effectiveness services, flexible work schedule, educational benefits, housing benefits and medical assistance were all interpreted as very low; 3) there is a significant difference in the level of awareness and extent of availment across areas; 4) benefits solo parents experienced were the emotional support they gained from their fellow solo parents, livelihood training invitation, participation in capacity and team building activities and improvement on social relationships. The challenges they encountered includes discrimination, financial constraints, inactive organization, lack of communication and inadequate support of the government.

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