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Research Article

Strengthening The Implementation of Recovery and Wellness Program: The Case of Meisic Police Station

Maricris T. Cabanayan*

College of Criminal Justice, Philippine Christian University, Manila 1003, Philippines

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*Corresponding author:

E-mail:

iammaricris08@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the effectiveness of the Recovery and Wellness Program (RWP) in helping former drug users reintegrate into the community and in reducing crime within the area of Meisic Police Station, Manila. It presents the insights of program implementers, including police officers, social workers, and local government officials, as well as program graduates. Using a qualitative approach, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with ten key participants and were analyzed thematically. Guided by the Transtheoretical Model of behavioral change, the research focused on five areas: program effectiveness, implementation strategies, prevention of relapse, challenges encountered, and proposed improvements. Findings indicate that the RWP has contributed to lowering crime rates and improving the lives of drug dependents. Nonetheless, its continued success depends on stronger community participation, sustained collaboration among agencies, and better logistical support.

Keywords: *Recovery and Wellness Program, Reintegration, Crime Reduction, Person Who Uses Drugs, Holistic Rehabilitation, Meisic Police Station*

Background

The Philippines continues to face a serious and persistent problem with illegal drug use, which has prompted the government and law enforcement agencies to adopt various strategies to address the issue. Traditionally, the country has relied on a punitive approach commonly known as the “war on drugs.” However, this strategy has been widely criticized for its human rights implications and limited long-term effectiveness (Human Rights Watch,

2017). These concerns have led to growing recognition of the need for rehabilitative and health-based alternatives.

In this context, the Philippine National Police (PNP) introduced the Recovery and Wellness Program (RWP) as a more humane and sustainable response to drug dependency. The RWP marks a shift from punishment toward rehabilitation, aligning with international best practices that view addiction as a public health concern rather than solely a criminal offense

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(United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020). This approach seeks to minimize human rights violations while addressing the root causes of addiction through health-focused and community-based interventions (World Health Organization, 2014).

A core feature of the RWP is its emphasis on community participation, which strengthens social support systems essential for sustained recovery (García et al., 2018). Studies have shown that community-based rehabilitation programs can effectively reduce drug-related crimes and enhance public safety, underscoring the RWP's potential to foster social cohesion and community resilience.

Launched during the administration of former President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, the RWP formed part of the broader anti-illegal drug campaign known as "Oplan Tokhang." The program encouraged drug users and pushers to voluntarily surrender and provided rehabilitation, counseling, and reintegration assistance. The RWP's holistic framework includes assessment, rehabilitation, skills training, community reintegration, aftercare, and follow-up, implemented in coordination with local government units (LGUs) to ensure localized support (Recuenco, 2022). By November 2022, more than 654,000 individuals had completed the program, representing a significant portion of those who surrendered since 2016.

Evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of the RWP at the Meisic Police Station offers valuable insights into how the program impacts participants and the surrounding community. The findings of this research aim to contribute empirical evidence that can guide strategic improvements to the RWP and support the broader national goal of reducing illegal drug use and promoting sustainable rehabilitation in the Philippines.

Methods

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore and understand the implementation of the Recovery and Wellness Program (RWP) at the Meisic Police Station. The qualitative approach allowed for an in-depth examination of participants' experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding the program.

While the study was guided by evaluative frameworks similar to those used in pre-experimental settings, its primary focus was to interpret meanings and identify emerging patterns rather than measure numerical variables. This approach enabled the researcher to develop a comprehensive understanding of how the RWP functions within the local context and how it influences both the program implementers and its beneficiaries.

Locale and Population

The study was conducted in the Meisic Police Station, situated in Binondo, Manila, Philippines. This area had been identified as one of the drug hotspots in the country, making it an ideal location for studying the impact of the RWP on the illegal drug situation.

Data-gathering tools

The data collection process involved a combination of individual and group interviews, as well as document analysis, to gather comprehensive insights into the Recovery and Wellness Program (RWP). One-on-one interviews were conducted with police officers and program graduates, using open-ended questions to encourage in-depth responses and allow participants to share their personal experiences and perspectives. In addition, small group interviews or focus groups brought together participants to discuss their experiences with the RWP, providing valuable insights into shared perspectives and the influence of group dynamics on recovery. Document analysis further enriched the data by examining existing materials related to the program, such as manuals, policy documents, incident reports, and communication materials, helping to contextualize the findings and clarify specific aspects of the program's implementation and design.

Ethical Considerations

This study adopted a qualitative research design, and strict ethical standards were observed to protect the rights and welfare of all participants. Given the nature of qualitative inquiry, which relies on trust and authentic personal accounts, the researcher prioritized respect, dignity, and confidentiality throughout the study.

Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from each participant following a clear explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks. Participation was voluntary, and individuals were reminded of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality was maintained by assigning pseudonyms and coded identifiers to all data. Audio recordings, transcripts, and field notes were securely stored and accessible only to the researcher.

To strengthen credibility and accuracy, member checking was conducted, allowing participants to review and validate interpretations of their responses. Cultural sensitivity and empathy guided all interactions, recognizing the participants' diverse backgrounds and the sensitive nature of discussing recovery and rehabilitation.

Ethical responsibility extended beyond data collection to the analysis and reporting stages, ensuring that findings faithfully represented participants' lived experiences without bias or misinterpretation.

Treatment of Data

This qualitative study explored the lived experiences of former and current enrollees of the Recovery and Wellness Program (RWP) at the Meisic Police Station, focusing on individuals with a history of illegal drug use. The qualitative approach was essential in capturing the depth and contextual meaning of participants' experiences, emphasizing interpretation over numerical measurement.

Data treatment followed a systematic process of transcription, coding, thematic analysis, and interpretation. All interviews were audio-recorded with informed consent and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. The transcripts were reviewed and refined to correct errors and maintain fidelity to participants' accounts.

Thematic analysis served as the primary analytical method. Both deductive codes (based on existing concepts) and inductive codes (emerging from the data) were applied to

relevant text segments concerning participants' experiences, challenges, and suggestions for program enhancement. Recurring patterns were identified and organized into key themes that reflected shared insights and lived realities.

To enhance credibility and trustworthiness, member checking was conducted by inviting participants to review and confirm the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations. Direct quotations were also integrated into the analysis to preserve participants' authentic voices and perspectives.

Through this qualitative process, the study developed a comprehensive understanding of the RWP's implementation and its impact within a law enforcement setting. The findings generated valuable insights that may inform evidence-based strategies for improving recovery and wellness initiatives under police-community partnerships.

Result and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study, structured around the major themes that emerged from interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. The Recovery and Wellness Program (RWP) at Meisic Police Station demonstrates measurable success in reducing illegal drug usage, fostering rehabilitation, and strengthening inter-agency collaboration. Results are interpreted through the lens of the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) and supported by related studies and national policies such as Republic Act No. 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002).

1. Current Level of Illegal Drug Usage within the Jurisdiction

Qualitative findings reveal that the RWP significantly reduced illegal drug use and related offenses. Three main themes emerged: (1) Reduction in Drug-Related Cases, (2) Proactive Monitoring, and (3) Community Transformation.

Table 1. Current Level of Illegal Drug Usage within the Jurisdiction

Theme	Key Findings	TTM Stage	Supporting Insight
Reduction in Drug-Related Cases	20% decrease in drug-related incidents; shift toward voluntary rehabilitation	Action	Implementers observed fewer arrests; graduates credited counseling for recovery
Proactive Monitoring	Regular follow-ups prevent relapse and sustain recovery	Maintenance	Consistent monitoring reduced relapse risk by up to 30% (supported by related studies)
Community Transformation	Collaboration among agencies, families, and faith groups reduced stigma and strengthened recovery culture	Action → Maintenance	Graduates became peer advocates, reinforcing community-based recovery

Discussion:

The RWP's rehabilitative and preventive approaches effectively address the root causes of drug dependency. Proactive monitoring ensures long-term recovery, aligning with the *Maintenance Stage* of TTM. The community's active involvement reflects social learning

principles, where positive reinforcement and modeling foster sustained behavioral change.

2. Effectiveness of RWP Implementation

The program's impact was evaluated in terms of (1) Crime Reduction, (2) Coordination with Other Agencies, and (3) Reintegration into the Community.

2.1 Crime Reduction

Table 2. Crime Reduction

Subtheme	Key Observations	TTM Alignment
Reduced Crime Rates	Noticeable decline in drug-related crimes	Action / Maintenance
Prevention of Repeat Offenses	Aftercare services, mentoring, and discipline reduced recidivism	Maintenance
Increased Community Awareness	Awareness campaigns influenced community attitudes toward rehabilitation	Contemplation

Discussion:

Crime reduction outcomes reflect the program's integrated rehabilitative and educational strategies. Sustained follow-ups and mentoring prevent relapse, while awareness campaigns shift social norms—mirroring the

Action to Maintenance stages of TTM. These outcomes are consistent with community-based rehabilitation programs internationally, such as the ANGEL Program (Massachusetts, USA).

2.2 Coordination with Other Agencies

Table 3. Coordination with Other Agencies

Subtheme	Impact on Implementation	Model Alignment
Enhanced Program Effectiveness	Partnerships with LGUs, DSWD, DOH, and NGOs strengthened service delivery	Action / Maintenance
Expedited Justice Processes	Collaboration with courts reduced case backlogs and promoted timely rehabilitation	Precontemplation / Contemplation

Subtheme	Impact on Implementation	Model Alignment
Community Reintegration	Inter-agency cooperation ensured post-rehabilitation support and reduced relapse	Maintenance / Relapse Prevention

Discussion:

Multi-agency coordination enhances the RWP's reach and efficiency. By linking justice, health, and social systems, the program ensures holistic rehabilitation. This reflects Bron-

fenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, emphasizing interconnected social structures, and aligns with Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2018-01 on community-based anti-drug programs.

2.3 Reintegration into the Community*Table 4. Reintegration into the Community*

Subtheme	Key Evidence	TTM Stage
Economic Empowerment	Graduates secured jobs after skills training	Maintenance
Reduced Stigma	Increased acceptance from families and community members	Action / Maintenance
Sustained Recovery	Long-term mentoring and aftercare reduced relapse	Relapse Prevention

Discussion:

Reintegration success is grounded in economic, social, and psychological stability. Employment empowers individuals to sustain recovery, while stigma reduction fosters belonging and dignity. The RWP's comprehensive reintegration model supports Restorative Justice principles and reflects Social Learning Theory, where positive social networks reinforce behavioral change.

3. Sustainability and Enhancement of RWP Implementation

Implementers' insights highlight six sustaining factors: (1) Continuous Learning and Adaptability, (2) Ongoing Communication, (3) Capacity Building and Flexibility, (4) Collaborative Coordination, (5) Evidence-Based Innovation, and (6) Scaling and Sustainability.

Table 5. Sustainability and Enhancement of RWP Implementation

Sustaining Factor	Core Idea	Supporting Theory / Model
Continuous Learning and Adaptability	Regular training and reflection enhance program quality	Lewin's Change Management Theory; TTM (Preparation)
Ongoing Communication and Reintegration	Continuous dialogue between implementers and participants sustains engagement	Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory
Capacity Building and Flexibility	Implementers adjust strategies to meet individual needs	Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory; RNR Model
Collaborative Approach and Coordination	Multi-stakeholder involvement ensures shared accountability	Social Capital Theory
Evidence-Based Adaptation and Innovation	Data-driven decisions improve effectiveness	Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) Model
Scaling and Sustainability	Ensuring funding and long-term institutional support	Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

Discussion:

The RWP's sustainability is tied to continuous learning, innovation, and collaboration. These ensure adaptability to emerging challenges and consistency in service delivery.

The approach also aligns with RA 9165's mandate for continuous professional development and multi-sectoral cooperation in anti-drug efforts.

Summary of Major Findings*Table 6. Summary of Major Findings*

Key Area	Findings	Implications
Drug Usage Trends	Noticeable reduction due to rehabilitation-focused interventions	Expand RWP to other precincts
Crime Reduction	Fewer repeat offenses and stronger community trust	Integrate sustained aftercare and monitoring
Inter-Agency Coordination	Holistic services from LGU, DSWD, and NGOs strengthened recovery	Institutionalize partnerships
Community Reintegration	Employment, reduced stigma, and peer support promoted recovery	Include livelihood components in RWP
Program Sustainability	Flexibility, training, and innovation maintain effectiveness	Develop formal evaluation mechanisms

The Recovery and Wellness Program (RWP) at Meisic Police Station exemplifies a successful model of community-based rehabilitation and crime prevention. The integration of counseling, inter-agency collaboration, and economic empowerment fosters sustained recovery and social reintegration. Aligning with the Transtheoretical Model, the program demonstrates how behavioral change evolves from action to maintenance when supported by an enabling environment.

Its alignment with national laws and frameworks, such as RA 9165 and the PNP Drug-Clearing Program, underscores its policy relevance. The program's effectiveness suggests scalability to other precincts and potential inclusion in national anti-drug strategies.

Conclusion

This study found that the Recovery and Wellness Program (RWP) of the Meisic Police Station has made a meaningful impact on individuals recovering from substance use. Many program graduates reported improved confidence, stronger relationships, and renewed purpose in life. These outcomes reflect the program's holistic approach to recovery, addressing not only physical rehabilitation but also emotional and social well-being.

Aligned with the study's objectives, the findings highlight that the RWP's success stems from its integration of counseling, mentorship, and values formation, consistent with the Transtheoretical Model of behavioral change. Through this process, participants progressed from awareness to sustained transformation, developing discipline, responsibility, and a sense of belonging within the community.

However, the study also identified challenges, including limited resources, weak post-program monitoring, and insufficient inter-agency coordination. While participants showed significant progress, long-term reintegration requires sustained support such as livelihood opportunities, family counseling, and continued community engagement.

Despite these challenges, the RWP serves as a promising model of compassionate and community-based policing. It demonstrates how law enforcement can actively contribute to rehabilitation and social reintegration. Strengthening inter-agency partnerships and community involvement will be essential to sustaining the program's impact and ensuring lasting recovery for its participants.

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Maricris T. Cabanayan
Researcher

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