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Effectiveness of Aftercare Program for Former Rebels

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Abstract

This study assessed program awareness, perceived implementation effectiveness, associated factors, and implementation challenges concerning government aftercare programs for former rebels in Sorsogon Province, Philippines, during 2022–2023. Anchored in Self-Determination Theory, the Capability Approach, and Diffusion of Innovations Theory, the research employed a descriptive-correlational design involving 102 former rebels and seven government program implementers. Data were gathered using a researcher-developed questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation. Findings showed relatively high awareness of livelihood programs (mean = 3.66), while educational programs received a lower awareness rating (mean = 3.11). Government aftercare programs were generally perceived as effectively implemented (overall mean = 2.99), with health programs receiving the highest implementation rating (mean = 3.02), followed by educational (2.98) and livelihood programs (2.96). Correlation analysis identified positive associations involving organizational factors and livelihood and educational program effectiveness, as well as social factors and educational and health program effectiveness. Respondents also identified substantial implementation challenges (mean = 2.98), particularly personal security concerns, insufficient manpower, inadequate funding, inconsistent policies, and interagency coordination difficulties. The findings emphasized the importance of sustained institutional support, accessible services, and coordinated community-based interventions. Accordingly, the study proposed the Strengthening Aftercare Protection and Sustainability Program to promote service continuity, livelihood development, educational opportunities, healthcare access, and institutional collaboration. The research contributes evidence to sustainable reintegration planning and supports Sustainable Development Goal 16 through its emphasis on peaceful communities and effective institutions.

Keywords: Former Rebel Reintegration; Post-Conflict Reintegration; Government Aftercare Programs; Program Implementation Effectiveness; Reintegration Challenges; Philippines

1. Introduction

Sustainable peace involves more than the cessation of hostilities; it also requires social, economic, and institutional conditions that enable former combatants to establish secure civilian lives. International reintegration guidance published in 2024 and 2026 emphasized coordinated livelihood assistance, community participation, psychosocial support, and responsive public institutions (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2024; World Health Organization [WHO], 2026). In the Philippines, the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) provided an institutional framework for assisting former rebels. This study examined aftercare programs for former rebels in Sorsogon Province during 2022–2023. Specifically, the study examined awareness of livelihood, educational, and health-related assistance; assessed perceived implementation effectiveness; investigated associations involving social, organizational, and economic factors; identified implementation

challenges; and formulated recommendations for strengthening the sustainability of government aftercare programs.

The Philippine government's peacebuilding responsibilities were grounded in the constitutional commitment to peace, protection of rights, and public welfare (Republic of the Philippines, 1987). Executive Order No. 70 institutionalized a whole-of-nation approach to ending local communist armed conflict by coordinating national and local efforts and prioritizing development assistance in affected communities (Office of the President, 2018b). The Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP), established through the enhancement of the Comprehensive Local Integration Program under Administrative Order No. 10, s. 2018, provided a framework for immediate, livelihood, and other reintegration assistance to eligible former rebels (Office of the President, 2018a). In its 2023 reporting, the government documented nationwide financial support to former rebels under E-CLIP (Presidential Communications Office, 2024); a subsequent report recorded continued implementation during 2022–2025 (Presidential Communications Office, 2025). Previous Philippine studies documented difficulties that former rebels encountered, including disrupted family relationships, economic insecurity, social stigma, and psychological distress. Francisco (2025) described trauma, limited resources, and the role of psychoeducation and livelihood activities in rebuilding civilian lives. Mamauag (2026) identified family acceptance, delayed benefits, uneven interagency coordination, and inadequate long-term follow-up as concerns among E-CLIP beneficiaries. International guidance likewise emphasized mental health and psychosocial support as integral to reintegration rather than optional assistance separate from livelihoods and community inclusion (WHO, 2026). These overlapping needs provided the rationale for examining whether former rebels in Sorsogon were aware of available aftercare services and how effectively those services were implemented.

Recent research characterized reintegration as a multidimensional process involving social relationships, sustainable income, access to services, and meaningful community participation. Rodríguez-Castellón (2024) traced the evolution of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration from narrowly security-oriented interventions toward context-sensitive social and economic approaches. Barrios Sabogal (2024) highlighted stable local arrangements and community-based opportunities, while Jonsson and Pettersson (2026) demonstrated that separate measures of social, economic, and political reintegration revealed outcomes that a single overall assessment could overlook. UNDP (2024) also emphasized community participation as a substantive component of effectiveness rather than merely evidence that services had been delivered. Awareness and access to services. Program awareness was distinguished from actual access to timely and adequate assistance. A study of E-CLIP implementation in Bulan, Sorsogon reported weaker implementation in later sustainability and communication-building phases than during initial engagement, highlighting the importance of continuing outreach and follow-through (Figueroa, 2025). In the present study, awareness referred to former rebels' knowledge of available livelihood, educational, and health services, whereas implementation effectiveness referred to the delivery of those services and the extent to which intended assistance reached beneficiaries. Social factors. The literature identified stigma, community attitudes, family support, social networks, and opportunities for interaction as influences on reintegration. Hart and Tamayo Gomez (2023) identified barriers involving education, economic participation, and equal citizenship. Hernández Salazar et al. (2025) documented negative social perceptions of former combatants, whereas Lopez Alvarez et al. (2026) found that intergroup contact was associated with reduced social distance in Colombian receiving communities. Agneman et al. (2025) found that symbolic reconciliation practices did not necessarily improve public attitudes, reinforcing the importance of context-sensitive engagement. Vásquez-Cortés (2025) also demonstrated that wartime social networks could be associated with post-conflict risks under adverse economic conditions. These findings informed the examination of family and community support, social acceptance, and the broader social environment of former rebels in Sorsogon. Organizational factors. Previous research emphasized interagency communication, personnel and resource availability, coordination of benefits, and sustained monitoring as relevant to effective program delivery. UNDP (2024) stressed participatory management and coordination with receiving communities. In the Philippines, regional reporting linked improved processing of E-CLIP claims to direct coordination among receiving units, social welfare offices, and local administrators (Department of the Interior and Local Government Region VIII, 2025). The Bulan, Sorsogon evaluation likewise identified resource availability and weak implementation during the sustainability phase as concerns (Figueroa, 2025). These findings informed the study's assessment of organizational capacity, coordination, and service continuity. Economic factors. The literature considered livelihood training, employment, financial resources, and market opportunities important to longer-term self-reliance. Barrios Sabogal (2024) discussed how community-based reintegration linked former combatants and host populations through shared economic activities. Caldwell Marquez et al. (2026) explained how entrepreneurship-oriented intermediaries facilitated connections between divided communities, while Jonsson and Pettersson (2026) documented variation in employment and income among graduates of a reintegration program. Vásquez-Cortés (2025) further showed how economic conditions interacted with social networks in shaping post-conflict outcomes. These findings supported the examination of livelihood assistance alongside economic conditions and continuing community support. Collectively, the reviewed literature indicated that financial assistance, training participation, and reported satisfaction did not, by themselves, establish sustained reintegration. It supported a locally grounded evaluation that distinguished awareness, implementation

effectiveness, and surrounding social and economic conditions while examining barriers encountered after initial assistance (Figueroa, 2025; Mamauag, 2026; Rodríguez-Castellón, 2024).

At the global level, guidance and research increasingly emphasized community ownership, stable livelihoods, and psychosocial recovery rather than short-term individual assistance alone (UNDP, 2024; WHO, 2026). The United Nations Secretary-General (2024) reported continuing challenges in Colombia involving employment, housing, stigma, and the sustainability of livelihood initiatives. These international experiences offered comparative insights, although they were not assumed to describe conditions in the Philippines directly. At the national level, E-CLIP linked former rebels with financial and reintegration support administered through cooperating institutions (Presidential Communications Office, 2024, 2025). Regional records illustrated the roles of implementing agencies and local governments: the Department of the Interior and Local Government Region III (2024) documented immediate and livelihood assistance to former rebels in Aurora, while the Department of the Interior and Local Government Region V (2025) reported E-CLIP assistance in Albay. These records established that program activities had occurred but did not independently demonstrate beneficiaries' long-term outcomes. In Sorsogon, the study focused on former rebels who were undergoing reintegration and who had received or were awaiting livelihood, educational, and health-related services. The study covered 2022–2023 and involved 102 participants from a reported provincial population of 291 former rebels. A subsequent evaluation published in 2025 in Bulan, Sorsogon documented challenges involving resources, communication, and sustainability (Figueroa, 2025). The present research differed in its province-level examination of beneficiaries' awareness, implementation effectiveness, and relationships between social, organizational, and economic factors and service delivery during the specified study period.

The study drew on three established perspectives and two researcher-applied conceptual lenses. Self-Determination Theory explains how autonomy, competence, and relatedness support motivation and participation (Ryan & Deci, 2000); it was used to interpret former rebels' participation in aftercare programs. The Capability Approach regards development in terms of people's substantive opportunities to pursue valued lives rather than assistance received alone (Sen, 1999); it guided the consideration of livelihood, education, and health services in relation to well-being and agency. Diffusion of Innovations Theory explains how information spreads through social networks and communication channels and influences adoption decisions (Rogers, 2003); it informed the study's treatment of program awareness and information dissemination. The theoretical framework was complemented by two analytical perspectives focusing on communication processes and social reintegration. The communication perspective emphasized the importance of information dissemination, beneficiary engagement, and effective interaction between implementing agencies and former rebels. The social reintegration perspective considered community acceptance, economic adjustment, family relationships, and institutional support as interconnected aspects of the transition to civilian life. Together, these perspectives provided additional context for examining program awareness, perceived implementation effectiveness, and sustainability challenges. Their application was consistent with existing research emphasizing community participation, psychosocial assistance, and coordinated reintegration services (UNDP, 2024; WHO, 2026). Following the study's input-process-output conceptual framework, the research assessed awareness of livelihood, educational, and health programs and examined social, organizational, and economic factors in relation to implementation effectiveness. Information obtained from former rebels and program implementers was used to identify challenges and inform the proposed Strengthening Aftercare Protection and Sustainability Program, which emphasized continuity of assistance, livelihood development, institutional coordination, and community participation.

Recent international studies documented community relations, employment, public attitudes, and reintegration outcomes, but their conflict histories and implementation settings differed from those in Sorsogon (Hart & Tamayo Gomez, 2023; Jonsson & Pettersson, 2026). Philippine studies highlighted the value of livelihood and psychosocial assistance while identifying limitations in program continuity (Francisco, 2025; Mamauag, 2026). The study published in Bulan in 2025 demonstrated that related local evidence existed; consequently, the research gap was not framed as a complete absence of E-CLIP studies in Sorsogon. Rather, it concerned the need for a province-level assessment that jointly examined aftercare awareness, implementation effectiveness, and social, organizational, and economic influences within the specified study setting (Figueroa, 2025). Accordingly, the study assessed awareness of livelihood, educational, and health programs; evaluated implementation effectiveness; examined the relationships between social, organizational, and economic conditions and implementation; identified challenges experienced by beneficiaries and implementers; and used the findings to formulate sustainability measures. The study examined whether social, organizational, and economic factors were significantly associated with perceived implementation effectiveness across livelihood, educational, and health programs. The purposively selected sample of 102 former rebels was not intended to provide statistically representative estimates for all registered former rebels in Sorsogon Province. By examining awareness, implementation conditions, and practical challenges together, the research was intended to inform more responsive post-conflict services in Sorsogon.

The study was most directly aligned with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) because it addressed reintegration, community trust, and public service delivery in relation to peaceful and inclusive societies. The United Nations Statistics Division (2025) identified continuing global challenges involving conflict, displacement, and inclusive institutions, while UNDP (2025) emphasized measurable, evidence-informed governance commitments. The study was also relevant to SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) through livelihood and employment concerns; SDG 4 (Quality Education) through educational and vocational services; SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) through health and psychosocial support; and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) through interagency and community cooperation (UNDP, 2024; WHO, 2026). These alignments reflected potential contributions rather than demonstrated achievement of SDG targets.

The study addressed socioeconomic sustainability by examining livelihood opportunities and economic stability; educational sustainability by assessing awareness and delivery of learning and skills-development services; and public-health sustainability by considering access to health and psychosocial support. It also examined community sustainability through social acceptance, family relationships, and participation, as well as institutional sustainability through coordination, communication, resource management, and monitoring (Caldwell Marquez et al., 2026; UNDP, 2024; WHO, 2026). Recent Philippine studies underscored the importance of assistance beyond initial program entry (Figueroa, 2025; Mamauag, 2026). By bringing these domains together in a Sorsogon-focused assessment, the research was intended to inform a locally appropriate sustainability program; it did not presume that a single intervention would secure lasting peace.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to assess respondents' awareness of government aftercare programs, describe their perceptions of program implementation effectiveness, and examine associations between selected social, organizational, and economic factors and perceived implementation outcomes. This design enabled the researcher to describe existing conditions and examine associations without manipulating the variables (Bhandari, 2022). The descriptive component assessed awareness and implementation effectiveness in livelihood, educational, and health programs, while the correlational component determined the relationships between social, organizational, and economic factors and the effectiveness of program implementation.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Sorsogon Province, Philippines, where former rebels were undergoing reintegration under the supervision of the Philippine Army and the Philippine National Police. Data were gathered from custodial stations and participating government agencies responsible for implementing aftercare programs under the Provincial Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (ELCAC). The province served as the geographical setting for examining the delivery and implementation effectiveness of government assistance for former rebels.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The study involved 109 respondents, comprising 102 former rebels and seven government program implementers. The former rebels were under the custody of the Philippine Army and Philippine National Police during their reintegration process. The government program implementers represented seven participating organizations: the Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO), and Department of Agriculture (DA). The former-rebel participants provided information concerning program awareness and their experiences with government aftercare services, while the government program implementers contributed institutional perspectives on program implementation, associated factors, and operational challenges.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed homogeneous purposive sampling to select former rebels who shared characteristics relevant to the research objectives. Purposive sampling enabled the deliberate selection of participants based on their eligibility and relevance to the study (Stratton, 2023). Of the 291 former rebels registered under the Provincial Task Force ELCAC in Sorsogon, 102, representing approximately 35% of the population, participated in the study. Among the ten identified government implementing agencies, seven, representing 70%, were included. The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) were excluded because they had no available data directly concerning the aftercare programs. The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) primarily performed oversight and coordination functions, while assistance delivery involved coordination with participating agencies and local government offices, including the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO).

2.5 Research Instrument

A researcher-developed questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection. It consisted of four parts addressing the respondents' level of awareness of livelihood, educational, and health programs; perceived implementation effectiveness; the influence of social, organizational, and economic factors; and challenges encountered during program implementation. The awareness component was administered to the former-rebel participants, while former-rebel participants and individual government program implementers answered the components concerning perceived implementation effectiveness and influencing factors. The questionnaire underwent consultation and review by the research adviser and field experts before administration. Expert review and internal consistency assessment were considered relevant procedures in evaluating research instruments (Stefana et al., 2025). Internal consistency was determined using Cronbach's alpha, a coefficient commonly employed to assess the consistency of responses across questionnaire items (Menon et al., 2025). The instrument yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.942 for awareness, 0.973 for implementation effectiveness, and 0.955 for influencing factors. The reliability coefficients indicated high internal consistency across the three assessed domains of the questionnaire, supporting the consistency of responses within the awareness, implementation effectiveness, and influencing-factor measures. These results complemented the instrument's review by the research adviser and field experts. Responses were measured using a four-point Likert-type scale. For the awareness component, responses were coded from 1 (least aware) to 4 (fully aware), with intermediate response anchors of 2 (less aware) and 3 (moderately aware). Higher scores indicated greater reported awareness of the listed government aftercare programs. The use of a structured response scale provided a consistent format for recording and analyzing respondents' perceptions (Jebb et al., 2021).

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher developed the questionnaire and submitted it to the research adviser and field experts for review and approval. Following approval, permission to conduct the study was secured from the appropriate authorities. The researcher subsequently requested a list of former rebels from the implementing agencies and coordinated with custodial officers to facilitate data collection. The approved questionnaires were personally administered to former rebels at their respective custodial stations to facilitate retrieval of responses. Program implementers were likewise requested to complete the questionnaires assigned to them. After collection, the accomplished questionnaires were organized, checked, tallied, and prepared for statistical analysis and interpretation.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson's correlation coefficient. Frequency and percentage were used to summarize respondents and their responses, while the weighted mean was employed to determine the levels of awareness and perceived implementation effectiveness of livelihood, educational, and health programs. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to assess linear associations between the social, organizational, and economic factor scores and perceived implementation effectiveness scores for livelihood, educational, and health programs. This statistical technique measures the strength and direction of linear associations between variables (Kim et al., 2024). The descriptive results summarized respondents' assessments of government aftercare programs, while the correlation coefficients characterized the direction and magnitude of associations between the study variables. These findings informed the discussion of implementation challenges and the development of recommendations for strengthening aftercare program sustainability.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were incorporated into the conduct of the study to protect the rights, privacy, and welfare of participating former rebels and government program implementers. Participation was voluntary, and respondents retained the right to decline participation. Confidentiality was observed in handling information collected through the research questionnaires. The study also recognized the importance of protecting participants from potential harm, particularly given the sensitive circumstances associated with reintegration and the involvement of military and police institutions in facilitating access to respondents. Personal information was handled in accordance with the principles of Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012. These safeguards were intended to promote respectful participation and responsible management of the information gathered.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Awareness of Government Aftercare Programs Among Former Rebels

3.1.1 Awareness of Livelihood Programs

The findings revealed that former rebels were fully aware of government livelihood programs, with an overall mean of 3.66. The DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program obtained the highest mean of 3.81, followed by the Local Social Integration Program (3.78), Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (3.77), Kabuhayan Starter Kits Program (3.54), and Swine Production and Seed Money Programs (3.39). All indicators were classified as "Fully Aware," indicating consistently high reported awareness of livelihood assistance among the respondents. These findings suggested that livelihood assistance was among the more familiar components of

government aftercare services. Lodangco (2022), in a study conducted in Casiguran, Sorsogon, emphasized the importance of livelihood opportunities and continued government assistance in addressing the challenges experienced by former rebels during reintegration. Similarly, Cubero et al. (2024) identified employment, livelihood, and educational opportunities as important elements of government support for rebel returnees. The findings also corresponded with Alcantara and De Castro (2023), who documented the implementation of livelihood and financial assistance under E-CLIP in Sorsogon. The high awareness ratings therefore highlighted the visibility of livelihood interventions, although awareness alone did not establish their long-term effectiveness.

3.1.2 Awareness of Educational Programs

Educational aftercare programs obtained an overall reported awareness mean of 3.11, which was lower than the corresponding livelihood-program awareness mean of 3.66. The TESDA Training Program for Welding, Driving, Dressmaking, and other skills received the highest mean of 3.44, followed by the Alternative Learning System for Former Rebels (3.31), Accreditation and Equivalency Programs for Elementary and Junior High School (3.11), Basic Literacy Program (3.05), and Rural Employment Generation for Social Equity Program (REGSE) (2.67). The TESDA Training Program and Alternative Learning System were classified as "Fully Aware," while the remaining educational initiatives received lower awareness ratings. The findings indicated that former rebels were more familiar with vocational training and alternative education than with other educational assistance programs. This suggested differences in the visibility and dissemination of information concerning available learning opportunities. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA, 2024) emphasized the provision of technical-vocational training to former rebels and marginalized communities through institutional partnerships. Antonio (2024) likewise identified consistent communication, institutional engagement, and community-based training as relevant to the transformation of former combatants into productive community members. These findings supported the importance of strengthening information dissemination regarding less-recognized educational programs, particularly REGSE, to improve awareness of available reintegration opportunities.

3.1.3 Awareness of Health Programs

The assessment of health-related aftercare programs identified relatively high reported awareness of several government healthcare services among former rebels in Sorsogon Province. The Medical Check-Up Program obtained a mean of 3.84, followed by the COVID-19 Vaccination Program (3.83) and the Dental and Oral Health Program (3.66). The Payapa at Masaganang Pamayanan (PAMANA) Program received a mean of 3.22. These results suggested that respondents were more familiar with direct healthcare services than with the broader assistance associated with PAMANA. As a government peace-and-development initiative, PAMANA supports various forms of community assistance rather than functioning exclusively as a healthcare program. Its inclusion in the assessment provided additional context regarding beneficiaries' awareness of government support for conflict-affected communities. The findings underscored the importance of maintaining accessible medical services and improving communication regarding available healthcare and related reintegration assistance. The Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU, 2024) documented an interagency agreement to strengthen medical assistance for former rebels and decommissioned combatants. Similarly, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2026) emphasized the importance of integrating mental health and psychosocial services into reintegration initiatives. These developments highlighted the continuing relevance of accessible and coordinated health-related assistance for former combatants and their communities.

3.1.4 Overall Awareness of Aftercare Programs

The findings demonstrated differences in the reported awareness of government aftercare programs among former rebels in Sorsogon Province. Livelihood programs obtained an overall mean of 3.66, indicating relatively high awareness of available livelihood assistance, while educational programs received a lower mean of 3.11. Within the health-related category, medical check-up, vaccination, and dental and oral health services obtained relatively high individual awareness ratings. These results suggested that beneficiaries were more familiar with certain government services than others, particularly livelihood assistance and direct healthcare interventions. The comparatively lower awareness of educational programs emphasized the importance of strengthening information dissemination, community outreach, and beneficiary orientation regarding available learning and skills-development opportunities. Alcantara and De Castro (2023) documented the implementation of multiple E-CLIP assistance components in Sorsogon, while Figueroa (2025) identified weaknesses in sustainability and communication-building activities during program implementation in Bulan, Sorsogon. Taken together, these findings supported continued beneficiary engagement and more consistent dissemination of information to promote access to available reintegration services.

3.2 Implementation Effectiveness of Government Aftercare Programs

3.2.1 Implementation Effectiveness of Livelihood Programs

The findings showed that livelihood aftercare programs obtained an overall implementation effectiveness mean of 2.96, interpreted as "Very Effective." The Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) received the highest mean of 3.08, followed by the DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (3.01), Local Social

Integration Program (2.93), Kabuhayan Starter Kits Program (2.91), and Swine Production and Seed Money Programs (2.84). All livelihood programs were rated "Very Effective," although their mean ratings differed. These findings indicated that respondents generally perceived livelihood assistance as effectively implemented. Alcantara and De Castro (2023) similarly documented substantial implementation of livelihood and financial assistance under E-CLIP among former rebels in Sorsogon. Lodangco (2022) emphasized the importance of employment and livelihood opportunities during the transition to civilian life. More recent findings by Gumela (2025) also identified stable income, livelihood support, and community acceptance as important aspects of former rebels' adjustment. However, Figueroa (2025) reported weaknesses in the later sustainability phase of E-CLIP implementation in Bulan. These findings suggested that favorable perceptions of initial livelihood assistance should be considered alongside the need for continued economic support.

3.2.2 Implementation Effectiveness of Educational Programs

Educational aftercare programs obtained an overall implementation effectiveness mean of 2.98, interpreted as "Very Effective." The TESDA Training Program for Welding, Driving, Dressmaking, and other skills received the highest mean of 3.24, followed by the Alternative Learning System for Former Rebels (3.21), Accreditation and Equivalency Programs for Elementary and Junior High School (3.14), and Basic Literacy Program (2.93). REGSE obtained the lowest mean of 2.37, interpreted as "Effective," while the remaining programs were classified as "Very Effective." The findings indicated that vocational training and alternative education were perceived more favorably than REGSE. This suggested that skills-oriented and accessible educational interventions were important components of aftercare implementation. TESDA (2024) emphasized technical-vocational education as a means of expanding employment-related skills among former rebels and marginalized groups. Francisco (2025) similarly documented the contribution of vocational training and psychoeducational activities to the reintegration experiences of former rebels in the Philippines. The findings highlighted the relevance of education and skills development while identifying REGSE as a program requiring further implementation attention.

3.2.3 Implementation Effectiveness of Health Programs

Health-related aftercare programs obtained an overall perceived implementation effectiveness mean of 3.02, reflecting generally favorable respondent assessments. The COVID-19 Vaccination Program obtained the highest mean of 3.26, followed by the Medical Check-Up Program (3.15), Hospitalization Assistance Program (3.07), Dental and Oral Health Program (2.94), and PAMANA Program (2.71). These findings indicated that vaccination, medical check-ups, and hospitalization assistance received comparatively favorable implementation ratings, while PAMANA obtained the lowest mean among the listed health-related interventions. Because PAMANA addresses broader peace-and-development objectives, its results were interpreted within the wider context of government reintegration assistance. The findings suggested that vaccination, medical examinations, and hospitalization assistance were perceived as relatively effectively delivered components of government aftercare. OPAPRU (2024) subsequently documented strengthened cooperation with the Department of Health to provide medical assistance to former rebels and decommissioned combatants. WHO (2026) further emphasized that sustainable reintegration required attention to psychological well-being, trauma recovery, and coordinated health-related services. These publications supported the importance of comprehensive healthcare in reintegration, while the lower rating of PAMANA indicated a need to examine its implementation more closely.

3.2.4 Overall Implementation Effectiveness of Aftercare Programs

Government aftercare programs received an overall perceived implementation effectiveness mean of 2.99, interpreted as "Very Effective" under the study's rating system. Health programs received the highest mean of 3.02, followed by educational programs at 2.98 and livelihood programs at 2.96. All three categories received favorable implementation ratings, with relatively small differences in their overall mean scores. These findings indicated that government aftercare services were generally perceived as effectively implemented across the three program categories. However, perceived effectiveness did not necessarily establish sustained improvements in beneficiaries' livelihoods, education, or health. Rubio (2026) emphasized the multidimensional nature of E-CLIP reintegration support, while Mamauag (2026) identified the importance of continued monitoring, psychosocial assistance, livelihood sustainability, and interagency coordination. Similarly, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2024) emphasized community participation and sustained support in reintegration initiatives. These findings reinforced the importance of evaluating program continuity beyond favorable implementation ratings.

3.3 Relationships Between Social, Organizational, and Economic Factors and Implementation Effectiveness

The correlation analysis examined the associations between social, organizational, and economic factors and perceived implementation effectiveness across livelihood, educational, and health aftercare programs. Social factors showed positive correlations with educational program effectiveness ($r = .320$) and health program effectiveness ($r = .289$), while their correlation with livelihood program effectiveness was weak and negative ($r = -.093$). Organizational factors showed positive correlations with livelihood program effectiveness ($r = .351$) and educational program effectiveness ($r = .354$), whereas their correlation with health program effectiveness was

weak (r = .055). Economic factors exhibited a weak positive correlation with educational program effectiveness (r = .198), followed by livelihood program effectiveness (r = .118) and health program effectiveness (r = .063). The largest observed correlations involved organizational conditions and the implementation of livelihood and educational programs, suggesting that institutional coordination, administrative capacity, and service delivery arrangements were relevant to respondents' assessments of program implementation. Social factors were also positively associated with the perceived effectiveness of educational and health programs, highlighting the potential importance of community acceptance, family support, and social participation. The weaker economic correlations suggested that the measured economic conditions were less consistently associated with implementation ratings across the three program categories. Figueroa (2025) identified resource availability as an important consideration in E-CLIP implementation in Bulan, Sorsogon, while Rubio (2026) emphasized the combined relevance of community engagement, livelihood support, education, and psychosocial assistance in reintegration. Hernández Salazar et al. (2025) likewise documented the importance of social attitudes in former-combatant reintegration. These findings supported the relevance of examining institutional, social, and economic conditions together when developing sustainable aftercare interventions. The relationships were interpreted as exploratory associations rather than evidence of causal effects.

3.4 Challenges Encountered in Implementing and Sustaining Aftercare Programs

The respondents reported an overall challenge mean of 2.98, interpreted as "High." Personal protection and security received the highest mean of 3.24, followed by insufficient manpower and excessive workloads (3.16), inadequate government funding (3.15), inconsistent policies, procedures, and information dissemination (3.13), and limited political engagement and support (3.13). Other reported challenges included the absence of concrete sustainability strategies (2.96), inadequate training opportunities and facilities (2.91), difficulties in interagency coordination and communication (2.89), and insufficient recognition of individual and organizational accomplishments (2.70). Poor working conditions and unhealthy work-life balance received the lowest reported challenge mean of 2.50, indicating a comparatively lower rating than the other listed implementation challenges. These findings indicated that security, personnel availability, financial resources, policy consistency, and institutional coordination were major implementation concerns. Lodangco (2022) similarly identified continuing security and employment-related difficulties among former rebels in Casiguran, Sorsogon. Figueroa (2025) reported resource limitations and weaknesses in sustainability-related implementation in Bulan, while Mamauag (2026) documented delayed benefits, fragmented coordination, inadequate monitoring, and livelihood sustainability concerns among E-CLIP beneficiaries. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD, 2024) also conducted field research in Sorsogon to inform more comprehensive case management and psychosocial interventions. These findings reinforced the need for coordinated institutional responses that addressed beneficiaries' security and long-term reintegration needs alongside resource and administrative limitations.

3.5 Proposed Strengthening Aftercare Protection and Sustainability Program

Based on the identified implementation challenges, the study proposed the Strengthening Aftercare Protection and Sustainability Program to support sustainable peace, social protection, community participation, and continued access to livelihood, educational, and health services. The proposed intervention emphasized income-generating opportunities, technical and vocational training, microfinance support, self-help initiatives, and community-centered capacity building. The proposed implementation framework identified the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Information and Communications Technology, Department of Education, Philippine National Police, Philippine Army, and Provincial Government of Sorsogon as potential implementing institutions. Naga College Foundation and the Regional Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict were identified as potential institutional partners, subject to formal coordination and agreement. The original program framework outlined a June–December 2023 implementation schedule consisting of stakeholder consultation, project identification, technical preparation, implementation planning, pilot activities, evaluation, and program launching. These activities constituted the proposed intervention framework developed from the study findings. The proposed program responded to the identified concerns involving personal security, manpower limitations, inadequate financial resources, inconsistent policies, and weak interagency coordination. Its emphasis on community participation and institutional cooperation was consistent with UNDP (2024), which highlighted the importance of community-based approaches to sustainable reintegration. Francisco (2025) emphasized the integration of livelihood development and psychosocial support, while WHO (2026) identified coordinated health, psychosocial, and community-based interventions as important components of reintegration. Figueroa (2025) and Mamauag (2026) further emphasized strengthening program sustainability, communication, monitoring, and institutional coordination. Accordingly, the proposed intervention provided a framework for addressing the reported implementation challenges, although its actual effectiveness remained subject to implementation and subsequent evaluation.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that government aftercare programs in Sorsogon Province received generally favorable assessments from participating former rebels and government program implementers. Awareness of livelihood assistance was comparatively high, while educational programs demonstrated lower awareness ratings, highlighting differences in respondents' familiarity with available government services. Livelihood, educational, and health-related aftercare programs were generally perceived as effectively implemented, with health programs obtaining the highest overall implementation rating. Correlation analysis identified positive associations between organizational factors and perceived livelihood and educational program effectiveness, as well as between social factors and perceived educational and health program effectiveness. These findings emphasized the importance of institutional coordination, administrative capacity, social support, and community participation in the implementation of reintegration assistance. Nevertheless, respondents identified substantial challenges involving personal security, insufficient manpower, inadequate funding, inconsistent policies, and interagency coordination. The findings indicated that favorable perceptions of program implementation should be complemented by sustained institutional support and coordinated interventions addressing the continuing needs of former rebels. Strengthening service accessibility, organizational cooperation, livelihood opportunities, educational assistance, and healthcare support may contribute to more responsive and sustainable reintegration initiatives in Sorsogon Province.

Based on the findings, the study recommended strengthening information dissemination and beneficiary orientation concerning government aftercare programs, particularly educational opportunities and services available in geographically isolated communities. Implementing agencies should sustain livelihood assistance, technical and vocational training, educational support, and accessible healthcare services while addressing the operational challenges associated with personal security, limited manpower, inadequate funding, inconsistent policies, and interagency coordination. Greater collaboration among national government agencies, local government units, educational institutions, and community organizations was also recommended to promote service continuity and more responsive assistance delivery. The proposed Strengthening Aftercare Protection and Sustainability Program may serve as a framework for improving institutional cooperation, community participation, livelihood development, and access to social services. Its implementation should prioritize beneficiary needs, administrative coordination, resource mobilization, and regular monitoring of program activities. Future research may employ longitudinal and comparative designs to examine employment stability, livelihood sustainability, educational participation, healthcare access, psychosocial well-being, and community acceptance among former rebels. Further studies may also investigate the long-term effectiveness of integrated aftercare interventions and the institutional conditions that support successful reintegration.

The study involved 102 purposively selected former rebels from a reported provincial population of 291 and seven government program implementers representing participating organizations in Sorsogon Province. The nonprobability sampling procedure and limited number of implementing-agency representatives restricted the generalizability of the findings beyond the participating respondents. The assessment also relied on self-reported awareness and perceived implementation effectiveness, which may have been influenced by respondents' experiences, expectations, and willingness to disclose concerns. The health-program awareness findings were presented at the level of interpretable individual indicators because an inconsistency in the hospitalization-assistance summary prevented the use of a complete health-category awareness mean. In addition, the correlational analysis described associations among the measured variables and did not establish causal relationships. The study was cross-sectional and did not track beneficiaries' reintegration outcomes over an extended period. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of respondents' assessments and implementation experiences rather than direct measurements of long-term program impact. These limitations underscore the value of future longitudinal studies incorporating objective indicators of livelihood stability, educational participation, healthcare access, and community reintegration.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The study incorporated safeguards intended to protect respondents' privacy, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and welfare throughout data collection. Participation was voluntary, and respondents retained the right to decline participation. Personal information obtained through the research process was handled in accordance with the principles of Republic Act No. 10173, or the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Particular consideration was given to the sensitive circumstances of former-rebel participants and the responsible handling of information associated with their reintegration experiences.

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