

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study determined the conduct of community program planning particularly on the involvement of key players in the preparation and development of the nutrition program of Bakun, Benguet.

Three important research methods, namely: interviews, focused group discussion and participant observation were used to gather pertinent data for this study and were subjected for interpretation and analysis for complete qualitative methodology.

The respondents were the thirteen (13) members of the Bakun Municipal Nutrition Council (MNC) who were the key players in the planning process for the nutrition program.

Findings showed that there is a need for a defined planning process for the preparation of the Municipal Nutrition Action Plan (MNAP) of Bakun, Benguet. A formal planning process is necessary that would consider the development vision, mission, goal and objectives of the municipality and the nutrition program in the formulation of the MNAPs. The MNAP objectives are to be integrated in the municipal development plan as basis of allocating funds to support the nutrition program.

There were criteria but are not definite in prioritizing the projects and activities in the MNAP. MNAP preparation was not synchronized with the annual municipal development plan preparation because the time targeted was the deadline of submission of the MNAP at the Provincial Nutrition Office and not the annual investment programming of the municipality.

The MNAP was a consolidation of separate plans prepared by different offices implementing nutrition related projects and activities, prepared by the Municipal Nutrition Action Officer (MNAO) alone, using the guide sheet from the nutrition evaluation team. The other members of the MNC had limited involvement in the MNAP preparation because they only approved during meetings the Plan prepared by the MNAO.

Limited dedication, commitment, cooperation and involvement on the part of the MNC members were the factors identified that hindered the formulation of the MNAP. Hence these were further utilized to serve as contributing factors to support better and participatory planning process of the municipality.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Health development program (HDP) in the country is an important means to community development. It is the basis for a healthy citizenry, with sound mind and body. The Philippine HDP is subdivided into community health including health and nutrition, family planning, disease prevention among others. Based on this, it was observed that malnutrition is still the leading nutritional problem in the country that continues to afflict the Filipinos (NEDA, 2005).

As a problem, it is even more complicated because categorically, it incorporates under nutrition and over nutrition. Under nutrition is a form of malnutrition that can result from inadequate ingestion of nutrients, malabsorption, impaired metabolism, loss of nutrients due to diarrhea or increased nutritional requirements while over nutrition is a condition where there is excess of some nutrients in the body and usually results to obesity. Individuals with this condition are prone to diseases like hypertension, heart disease, and diabetes. The young and the elderly are considered vulnerable to malnutrition including the pregnant or lactating women who normally lack the capacity to defend themselves.

In the Philippines, the problem of malnutrition is caused by several interrelated factors. Some put the blame on neglect of parents and unhealthy lifestyle but others consider poverty as the main cause. Poverty leads to secondary malnutrition problems like food insecurity and inadequate knowledge on food handling. At the same time, poverty is closely associated to poor environmental sanitation (NNC, 2004b).

Furthermore, malnutrition is alarming and its effects are observed on individuals particularly young children. It affects the quality and capability of the Filipinos to be economically productive, competitive and socially active which is also a violation of the human right to adequate food (Flores, 2006). On the contrary, nutritional well-being of people is anchored on the individual's basic right to food and is important in bringing about social reform and economic development.

Malnutrition in the Philippines is manifested in several forms such as protein energy malnutrition (PEM), iron deficiency anemia (IDA), iodine deficiency disorders (IDD), vitamin A deficiency (VAD) and over nutrition (overweight or obesity and diet-related diseases like hypertension and diabetes) (NNC, 2004b).

Filipino parents want their children to grow healthy, productive and strong. But this cannot just happen and we have observed how this problem has affected so many Filipino children. Malnutrition is already on

the mainstream of human society. It is a reoccurring problem and must not be ignored so our efforts should not be put to waste (Cena, 2007). As a consequence, a malnourished child cannot wait support because this is the time to ask and efforts must be exerted.

The realities on malnutrition tremendously affect children, young adults, women, and other community members. It is in this light that government emphasize on health development programs and initiatives locally and nationally. The government recognizes nutrition as a fundamental concern in social reform and economic development and according to Larson (2007), countries suffering from hunger and malnutrition should make agriculture and nutrition as national priorities.

In addition, the Philippine government through the NNC (2004) came up with the Medium Term Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (MTPPAN) 2005-2010 with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of life for Filipinos through better nutrition, improved health and productivity. The plan has seven impact programs which serve as the country's guide for action. Under the nutrition improvement impact program, several activities support the overall community health and nutrition initiatives. These are home and community food production, micronutrient supplementation, food fortification, nutrition information, communication and education, food assistance, livelihood assistance, nutrition in essential maternal and child

health services, and the promotion of healthy lifestyle. These activities were the basis for the preparation and development of local nutrition action plan of specific communities which were implemented and were evaluated vis-à-vis the accomplishments.

In 2006 and 2007, the Municipality of Bakun emerged to have the highest malnutrition prevalence rate among preschoolers. (Benguet Provincial Health Office, 2007). The percentages of malnourished children among pre-schoolers are 9.04% and 7.84%, respectively (Bakun Municipal Nutrition Action Office, 2007). These ratings consistently generated a below benchmark rating. Though prevalence rates are decreasing, they are still considered high. As a result, health and nutrition was one of the sectors pointed out as attention areas.

The result was indicated in the annual Local Government Performance Measurement System (LGPMS) Capture Form particularly on identified respondents - children aged 0-71 months with below normal weights. The children serve as benchmark indicators under health and nutrition monitoring.

The LGPMS form is being used to gather data on certain indicators to assess performance of Local Government Units (LGUs) on five sectors, namely: governance, administration, social, economic and environmental



management. The data gathered are processed and graphically presented.

The Municipal Nutrition Council (MNC) of Bakun is annually preparing a Municipal Nutrition Action Plan (MNAP) to implement the municipal nutrition program which attempts to address the realities and issues on malnutrition in the municipality. Hopefully, the lined activities based on the MTPPAN Seven Impact Programs will improve the nutritional status of Bakun people particularly the preschool and school children.

The nutrition program is part of the Bakun municipal development plan which addresses the social, economic, and ecological development projects and initiatives of the municipalities. Based on this, the designated Municipal Nutrition Action Officer (MNAO) prepared the specific activities in the nutrition program as contained in the MNAP and coordinated its implementation.

Ironically, as per evaluation of the Benguet Provincial Nutrition Evaluation Team, Bakun won 3rd place for the Green Banner Award for calendar year 2006. The award is given by the National Nutrition Council to a municipality, city or province that has shown outstanding performance in implementing its nutrition action plan. This evaluation tend to create a question as to the impact of such outstanding performance vis-à-vis the

planning process of nutrition program of the municipality since it has not improve its state as with the highest prevalence rate of malnutrition in the province.

### Statement of the Problem

Although it was observed that there was a yearly preparation of Municipal Nutrition Action Plan in the Municipality of Bakun, it has not improved its condition as to service delivery and impact on its citizenry. Based on accomplishments, there was no clear indication on the impact of the nutrition programs implemented on the prevalence rate of malnutrition in the municipality. On the other hand, this might have caused a setback on the operational and systematic planning process that would entirely address the malnutrition problem. It was in this light that the research was conducted to determine the involvement of the people in community program planning. Also, the research study sought to answer how was the nutrition program planning conducted to prepare and develop a workable and realistic action plan for its citizenry.

Specifically, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What is the purpose of the nutrition planning process in the overall development vision, mission, goal and objectives of the Municipality of Bakun?

2. How is the planning process conducted in the development of the nutrition program?

3. What is the level of involvement of key players in the planning process of the nutrition program?

4. What are the influencing factors necessary in the development of the municipal nutrition program?

### Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to determine the conduct of community program planning and involvement of key players in the preparation and development of the nutrition program of Bakun, Benguet.

Specifically, this study aims to:

1. Identify the purpose of the nutrition planning process in the overall development vision, mission, goal and objectives of the Municipality of Bakun;

2. Determine the planning process in the preparation of the Bakun Nutrition Program;

3. Determine the level of involvement of key players in the planning process of the nutrition program; and

4. Identify the influencing factors in the preparation of the nutrition program of the Municipality of Bakun, Benguet.

### Importance of the Study

The evaluation of the nutrition program planning process in the Municipality of Bakun, Benguet was conducted to shed light to the queries made by concerned individuals as to the seemingly conflicting evaluations given to the municipality as 3rd place in the Green Banner Award for 2006 for Best Implementer of Nutrition Action Plans and its being ranked number one with the highest malnutrition prevalence rates among pre-school children for the years 2006 and 2007 in Benguet Province.

To have a clearer understanding of the situation, this study made use of three research methods, namely: personal interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation. The convergence of these methods presented the actual condition of the municipality with complete interpretation and analysis. The triangulation of methods substantiated the findings of this inquiry on the contribution of the nutrition program to the overall strategic direction of the municipality; level of involvement of key players in the planning process of the nutrition program; how the nutrition program planning is conducted; and the influencing factors that are necessary in the preparation of the nutrition program.

This inquiry definitely supports the planning process of the nutrition program vis-à-vis the performance, ultimate goal of the nutrition program,

and prevalence of malnutrition among pre-school children in the municipality.

Result of this inquiry is a key to a more responsive and effective nutrition program because it pointed out attention areas which will be addressed by the respondents. The result of this study is an input in planning for future nutrition programs so that issues will be immediately resolved and will result to a better nutrition program. As a development program, this resulted to positive changes in the nutritional status of program beneficiaries congruent to the strategic direction of the community.

On the part of the respondents, the study is vital because of their active roles in the program. They are the key players that set direction to the development of the community with regards to nutrition. This study is a justification to help them in their decisions because it provided them impetus to realize the value of a well-planned program as well as its effect the community. The study also helped them identify the areas where they succeeded, areas where they need to exert more effort and opportunities available that they haven't discovered and tapped. It did not only provide them understanding of how they were involved but also provided analysis of the level of their involvement in the planning process.

Also, the study provided valuable recommendations in developing a nutrition program that supports the objective of addressing high incidences of malnutrition particularly those in the preschool.

Finally, the study contributes to the overall community development process especially in the formulation of plans and programs for people and their communities through more responsive, dynamic, relevant, and participatory planning process.

#### Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study focused on the planning process for the development of the nutritional program of the Municipality of Bakun. It evaluated the involvement of the key players who also serve as members of the Municipal Nutrition Council, which formulates the Municipal Nutrition Action Plan (MNAP).

The members of the Municipal Nutrition Council were the identified respondents which include the municipal mayor, who sits as the chairman, municipal vice mayor, a sangguniang bayan member, municipal employees, and representative from national government agencies particularly the Department of the Interior and Local Government and Department of Education.

Members of the community were not included in the study because they were envisioned to be the target beneficiaries of the prepared and developed municipal nutrition program. Furthermore, it was focused on the MNC because of their role and responsibility in the overall municipal nutrition development planning process.



## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Malnutrition remains to be the leading illness that afflicts the Filipino children. Flores (2006) mentioned that nutrition action plans are responses to the nutrition challenges a community is facing and the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN) is the country's guide in acting for nutrition improvement. The National Nutrition Council (NNC, 2005) stressed that the PPAN is to help national government agencies, local government units, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, business corporations, and international organizations align their actions accordingly. The seven impact programs under the plan will serve as guide for Local Government Units (LGUs) in formulating their own nutrition action plans and ensuring that nutrition plan is integrated into the LGUs annual investment plans.

### The Planning Process

The study of Karen Tontisirin and Stuart Gillespie on Linking Community Based Programs and Service Delivery for Improving Maternal and Child Nutrition supports the notion that success in nutrition programs requires the attainment of certain desirable outcomes by means of an adequate process (Tontisirin and Gillespie, 1999).



Program planning seldom follow steps as closely as you might follow a recipe. There are, however, certain activities that if accomplished, will help ensure a successful planning effort. The Colorado State University Extension (2007) gave three pointers in starting a planning process. First is to have a good sense of the issues and problems you want to address. Second is to form a team to begin planning but the team members should represent your target audience and should include representatives of all levels and other agencies that will be involved in carrying out the program effort. Thirdly is to develop the plan following steps that the team would design that will help them consider all aspects. The important thing pointed out is that the planning team should consider the importance of understanding the value of thoroughly analyzing the situation and base their planning decisions on sound data.

Allen (1998) made mention that planning process is rational and amenable to the scientific approach to problem solving. He pointed out a logical and orderly series of steps which were categorized as follows:

- a) defining the mission;
- b) conducting a situation analysis by assessing the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;
- c) setting goals and objectives;
- d) developing related strategies; and
- e) monitoring the plan.

McNamara (1997) stated the following phases in planning that should be customized by planners to meet the needs and nature of planners and the organization they are planning for: 1) stating the mission, 2) conducting environmental scan, 3) analyzing the situation, 4) establishing goals, 5) establishing strategies to reach goals, 6) establishing objectives, 7) associating responsibilities and timelines with each objective, 8) writing and communicating the plan document, and 9) acknowledging completion and celebrating success.

The Effective Planning Guidelines of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 1999) gave pointers for planners in conducting the planning process. They pointed out the need to focus on the beneficiaries through out the planning process. The planners should recognize the characteristics and needs of the beneficiaries for they are the reason why planning is being done. Another insight given is for planners to be aware of their mandates and policy in a given situation. When managed well, the policy provides the basis for an operation's mission and strategic intent which will direct efforts and focus the plan. The importance of situational approach, objectives, participatory approach, technical expertise, standards is also mentioned. Further, they opined that the planning process should bring about results and impacts. Plans are only effective if they lead to the right results which are the

desired impact. To them, planners should determine the desired impact, identify the outputs which will have the impact, identify the activities which will achieve the right outputs, and determine the inputs needed to carry out the desired activities.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government – Philippine-Canada Local Government Support Program (DILG-PCLGSP, 2001) on their manual on how to formulate an Executive Legislative Agenda for local governance and development gave the following processes in planning: 1) convening of the planning team; 2) prioritizing issues – refers to the identification of issues at hand and coming out with an initial list of priority issues; 3) consulting stakeholders on the identified priority list of issues to come up with a validated priority issues; 4) revisiting the Municipality's vision, mission and goals; 5) prioritizing the programs, projects and 6) building commitment – is the securing of commitment of various stakeholders during the implementation of the nutrition program.

#### Purpose of Program Planning

Good programs start with a plan. According to the Colorado State University Extension (2007), programs don't just happen. They need to be designed to help people learn and solve or manage the problems they face. Programs that are planned result in a more effective, results-focused

developmental effort to meet high priority needs. Indeed, a good plan anticipates and considers everything and leaves nothing to chance and it plays a vital role in helping to avoid mistakes or recognize hidden opportunities.

Planning is the activity done to develop a plan. Planning helps in forecasting the future and makes the future visible to some extent so that we can undertake actions to influence such future. The Wikipedia (2008) gave three purposes why planning is undertaken. First is to help management clarify, focus and research their program's development prospects, second, is to provide a logical framework within which an organization can develop and pursue strategies over the next three to five years, and third, is to offer a benchmark against which actual performance can be measured.

McNamara (1997) in his field guide to nonprofit strategic planning and facilitation states that planning is setting forth the direction for something – a system and then guiding the system to follow the direction. Allen (1998) also pointed the need for organization to plan. According to him, every organization must plan for change in order to reach its ultimate goal. Effective planning helps an organization adapt to change by identifying opportunities and avoiding problems and it improves decision-making.

The UNHCR (1999) Effective Planning Guideline mentioned that effective management of the planning process and more effective planning processes will lead to better results delivered on time in a cost effective manner with the end result being the achievement of the organization's overall objectives in the most effective way.

The American Planning Association (2008) describes planning as a process which enables civic leaders and citizens to play a meaningful role in creating communities that enrich people's lives. They say that good planning helps create communities that offer better choices for where and how people live and planning helps community members envision the direction their community grow and will help them find the right balance to development and essential services.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA, 2007) in the study they conducted on nutrition education program to address the rising rates of obesity cited planning and accountability as very central to effective program management. Plan formulation should undergo sound planning which considered the actual scenarios and involved the stakeholders. Success of programs is the goal of planning and one consideration in planning given by the DA-PRISP, EU (1998) in their workbook for project development officers is an effective assessment process which will identify appropriate entry points and strategies.

Programs to be effective should be based on sound analyses, an honest to goodness assessment and analysis of situations.

### Influencing Factors in Planning

The planning toolbox of the Indiana Department of Transportation (2007) mentioned the need to assess local planning capacity before a planning activity is conducted. This local planning capacity also refers to the amount of planning resource available to achieve goals. This focuses on the technical, managerial, financial and political ability of the Local Government Unit (LGU) to carry out the planning task. The toolbox highlighted the following considerations to ask in order to have a good assessment of an LGU's capacity: 1) do we have professional planning staff and other trained technical staff; 2) do we designate regular financial resources for community planning projects; 3) do the planning team have focus; and, 4) are comprehensive plans updated.

The guidebook on the preparation of comprehensive land use plan published by the Housing and Land Use regulatory Board (HLURB, 2006) stated the need for funds to finance the planning activities; personnel to carry out the planning activities; and supplies, materials and equipments to be used.

Shapiro (2008) in its CIVICUS toolkits pointed out considerations in action planning that could influence the results. To them, certain things need to be in place before you can begin action planning activities. Foremost is the need for the action planning to be related to a strategic planning framework or context so that the action planning does not take place in a vacuum. The actions of the planning team must be related to a clear strategy aimed at helping the organization achieve long-term goals and objectives. Action planning can be done simply as a way of getting through tasks that need to be done but this should not be the case. Planning should be related to a strategic framework. This is very important because when it is done outside a framework, it tends to be a hit-and-miss affair. You might do something useful but, you might not.

Shapiro (2008) specified the following under a strategic framework:

- 1) clear vision of the kind of society you are working towards and a clear understanding of the problems that lies on the way;
- 2) a set of values of what you believe in and are the basis for what you are trying to achieve;
- 3) a clear mission statement that states what your organization does, how it does it, for whose benefit and, where appropriate, in partnership with whom;
- 4) an overall goal that rephrases the specific problems the organization wants to address;
- 5) an immediate objectives or program

purpose; and 6) key result areas which give shape to your strategy for achieving your immediate objectives.

Other consideration in planning according to Shapiro (2008) is timing. Under timing, there are two aspects to consider. We should decide first if when to do the planning activities and plan the time needed to carry out the planning activities. They also emphasized that action planning should be done only when you know what you want to achieve and you only need a plan to spell out the activities required to achieve it. There is also a mention of the need for outside facilitator or technical input in action planning particularly when problems were encountered in past planning activities. This is suggested to prevent the same problems from happening.

#### Development Vision, Mission, Goal and Objectives

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM, 2006) in their Budgeting Operations Manual for Barangays (BOMB) pointed out the importance of having a vision, mission, goals and targets. The manual defined vision as a desired future state of the organization or locality and its people (men and women) and it is what the community or organization wants to become in the long run. A vision statement of the organization is then important because it inspires people, provides direction and guides



all development efforts of the organization or community. The BOMB defined goal as a future target or end result that an organization wishes to achieve. Goal is important because it increase performance, clarifies expectations, facilitates the controlling function and increases motivation. Objectives are also important and they are more specific statement of a short range desired outcome or result. An objective may be viewed as a subset of a goal and therefore contributes to the attainment of a stated goal and responds to specific problem situations usually sectoral in nature.

Buildingbrands (2008) opined that the vision and mission of an organization is its driving force which sets its strategic direction. They define vision as the description of what the organization want to be, a mental image produced by the imagination which involves seeing the optimal future for the organization and vividly describing this. Mission, on the other hand, is defined as the special assignment being undertaken by the organization thus it describes the needs that are being met. They have considered the actual practice that everything just jumbled up but they have set three considerations so that a vision and mission statement will have good chances of attaining strategic development: a) the vision and mission statements should bring focus and clarity to the desired future of the organization, b) the vision and mission statements should inspire people to works towards that future, and c) the vision and mission

statements should guide people in their decision-making as they reach for this future.

Wirth (2006) opined that a vision is solely future oriented and that it provides an organization a forward-looking, idealized image for itself. To him, a vision concentrates on the end goal, not the means to reach the goal. His definition of vision is a collective belief in what the organization can become. In this way, it is similar to a truly desired wish for the future. The difference, however, is in how we mold ourselves to adopt to the environment without expecting to be able to change the environment itself. Yes, there is an implicit assumption about the future. However, if the vision is sufficiently broad it will suffice for providing a framework for current decisions. Granted, all decisions are made in the present. Yet, to work toward something grander than the present employs some probability of future outcomes upon which to make decisions, all other things being equal.

Wirth (2006) also mentioned that the mission of an organization should be brief and easily understood. This mission should clearly answer the basic questions of what services the organization should provide, for whom these services are, how will these services be delivered and why the organization exists.

Ward (2008) defined a vision statement as much more than an organization's picture in the future. To her, a vision statement is the organization's inspiration and the framework for all its strategic planning. In brief, she describes vision as answering the question, "Where do we want to go?" and she encourages planners crafting a vision to let their imagination go and dare to dream because their vision should capture their passion. She also described a mission statement as an answer to the question, "Why do we exist?", a description of an organization's fundamental purpose.

The UNHCR (1999) distinguished goal from objectives with goals referring to higher level and longer term desired results while objectives refer to specific results with definite time frames. They refer to goals as established at the organizational and program levels and objectives as statement of desired result or specific accomplishment often established at the sectoral level.

A program is said to be efficient if set objectives were achieved. Nutrition programs are generally designed to reduce or eliminate malnutrition prevalence in a certain community. Ending malnutrition is an achievable goal according to Allan Larson of the Bread for the World Organization but only if governments in developed and developing countries make the right policy decisions. Ending the problem of

malnutrition requires political will (Larson, 2007). According to Sheeran (2007) the most important thing in fighting malnutrition is to break the cycle of hunger that passes from generation to generation. It was observed that malnourished mothers usually give birth to malnourished children. Unless the cycle is broken, more threat is seen against the children who often end up as victims.

Florencio (2004) noted in her study of the Philippine Nutrition Program that the nutrition problem in our country has not been arrested though rosy pictures were painted by statistics. This partly means that a lot has to be done in order to achieve the goals of the program. The lessons learned from the governance of past nutrition programs in the Philippines and the experiences in the implementation of present plan and program of action for nutrition at the local level should be taken into consideration in the implementation of future nutrition programs. We can learn from the past and lessons learned could be used for sound policymaking, but, the government and the public must give importance to the implementation of policies, plans and programs because these are equally important in achieving success in nutrition programs. Abboud (2006) also added that good governance and accountability create conditions that lift people out of poverty, raise education and health levels and nurture sound economic and sustainable development strategies.

A study on school nutrition managers in the United States of America (USA) conducted by Jerry B. Cater and Deborah Carr also pointed that competency, knowledge and skills of nutrition program managers also play a very important role in achieving the objectives of a program (Cater and Carr, 2007).

#### Stakeholders Participation in Nutrition Program Planning Process

Project success often requires a greater level of involvement by project stakeholders (Ambler, 2007). All project stakeholders should actively work with the project team to achieve set goals. Participation of all stakeholders is important because it greatly contribute to the chances of programs to be effective and sustainable. When stakeholders participate, the prospects for appropriate design and commitment to achieving objectives are likely to be maximized. Participation of stakeholders also contributes to program sustainability because once people participate or get involved, they acquire skills and trainings which they can use to carry out activities even when the program stops. As stakeholders were involved in the development process, they develop a sense of ownership over the development that took place and this will motivate them to voluntarily sustain and improve the development initiatives.

In addressing the issue of malnutrition, there is no substitute for assessment and analysis done with the full and active participation of the families most threatened by nutritional problems and most familiar with their effects and causes. This will not only make sense with regards to efficiency, effectiveness and long-term sustainability but also important in a human rights perspective (Flores, 2006).

The Second National Health Assembly on 1996 gave credence to the implementation of the Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 in bringing about the emergence of new health delivery systems which is based on peoples' empowerment and popular participation in health. With the devolution of social services including health and nutrition to the LGUs, communities can now have better hand in determining their own needs and priorities, mobilizing resources to address local concerns and initiate local participation in delivering vital services from all sectors in the community (National Health Assembly, 1996). The community is now accorded easier access to services and greater chances of being heard. It is now recognized that the function of promoting, protecting, preserving and restoring the health and nutritional status of the people should be shared with all stakeholders.

Decentralization encourages participation of stakeholders at the local levels, specially the marginalized sectors, thus allowing them to play

vital roles in processes that may include local development planning and implementation, setting up conflict resolution strategies and resource management (Cabilo, 2006). When people were involved in the process, they develop a sense of ownership of the development process.

Peoples' participation is one of the enabling needs that has to be met for poverty alleviation or improving the quality of life of the Filipino people. This is recognized by the state and participation is one area they want to know in the Minimum Basic Needs (MBN) approach to poverty alleviation (Goco, 1995).

Diao (2008) expressed in her Philippine Graphics column that citizens are an integral part of the governance process as governance cannot be the responsibility of public officials alone but sectors are key players in the governance of a community. Health and nutrition is everyone's concern and the most effective way for achieving goals is to build partnership among various stakeholders for no one could manage health and nutrition programs alone (Gako, 2006). Program implementers need the help of various stakeholders in all the processes because these various stakeholders are the ones who know their situations and needs best.

Hon. Emilio C. Macias III in his speech at the Second National Health Assembly on 1996 talked on the need for political will among local

chief executives to recognize that health and nutrition services are for everyone. Community participation especially from the organized sector should always be encouraged because it lessens the load on human as well as material resources (Macias,1996).

In a column appearing at the Indigenous Perspective Journal, Rovillos (2003) presented his recommendation that indigenous peoples must participate actively and substantially in all decision-making that affects them, including planning, management, implementation and evaluation. They believe that right to participate is a crucial and complex right of a person that is inextricably linked to fundamental democratic principles. Stakeholder participation is necessary in coming up with feasible, appropriate and attractive interventions. It is also one tool to empower target groups and increase their long-term problem capacities.

#### Planning for Nutrition Interventions

Nutrition programs are interventions to answer a need. The people are the end of every development endeavor hence the people themselves should help determine the processes and interventions that would truly be beneficial to them. Yeager (2006) in his column at the eJournal USA entitled "Disability and Ability", mentioned the rationale why we have to help the needy. He said that when we help a person attain his/her best



potential, we are helping everyone because society is the ultimate winner in every development undertaking.

It is also mentioned by Ketcham (2005) in another volume of the eJournal USA that for democracy to demonstrate its merits, it requires citizens who look beyond their self interests and demonstrate concern for the public good. We really need people who would do the right thing regardless of the odds so that development could really take place.

Oliveros (2007) in his module for Community Development Field Practicum related trust to the community and interventions to be introduced. According to him, since we believe that citizens can be trusted to shape their own future, the participatory development process that we will employ in defining the nature of interventions should use local decision-making and capabilities.

The DA-PRISP, EU (1998) in their workbook for project development officers also emphasized the need for participatory identification of problems so that interventions required in each sector could be identified. Scarcity of resources should be considered because any quantity of resources used is taken from that available resource. Any benefit enjoyed by a certain sector is a sacrifice on the other sectors.

The NNC is recommending that the results of Operation Timbang activities be used in planning for nutrition interventions (NNC, 2004a). By

using the said results, barangays and individuals who will be given priority attention will be identified.

A study by Luc Laviolette and Venkatesh Mannar on the lessons learned from success in nutrition programs in the Asia-Pacific region revealed that interventions should address the immediate, underlying and basic causes of under nutrition and these interventions should be implemented at sufficient scales. Immediate causes are causes that have something to do with inadequacy of dietary intake and disease. Underlying causes are those causes related to food insecurity, poor access to health services and inadequate caring practices while the basic cause of under nutrition is poverty (Laviolette and Mannar, 2008).

Intal (1987) of the University of the Philippines – Los Banos commented in her paper on social and psychological aspects of food consumption that in our effort to combat child malnutrition, prevention should be considered rather than just concentrating on the treatment. She recommends that mothers should be involved in learning how to prevent malnutrition from recurring.

Another study funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) conducted to review nutrition interventions and develop checklist for health services recommend that interventions should be integrated into maternal and child health. According to the study,

malnutrition is associated with approximately half of all childhood deaths in developing countries and health workers have many opportunities to provide nutritional services to women and children through routine health activities. The study enumerated interventions which aims to promote, protect and support the following: exclusive breastfeeding for approximately six months, adequate complementary feeding from approximately six to twenty-four months with continued breastfeeding, adequate nutritional care of sick and malnourished children, adequate vitamin A status, adequate iron status and adequate iodine status (Sanghvi et. al., 1999).

In planning, Beltran (2008) has pointed the need to adopt new nutrition conversation with consumers if we are to let them know the messages we want to impart. Culture has to be carefully considered even in nutrition interventions.

Sheeran (2007) also suggested that in planning, initiatives should be focused in breaking the cycle of hunger that passes from generation to generation. Hunger causes malnutrition; it has to be stopped if we are to stop malnutrition.

Annually, municipalities were visited by the Provincial Nutrition Council for evaluation of nutrition action plan implementation. Their latest feedback form dated April 12, 2007 contained the following: more

backyard garden to include vegetables and fruits; follow-up children identified who became overweight; MNC to plan measures of interventions to address the overweight children; and be vigilant in monitoring the below normal low weights preschool and school children (Benguet Provincial Nutrition Evaluation Team, 2007).



## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Malnutrition comes in many forms that it poses a serious threat not only to the community or country but to the world as a whole. It is for this reason that interventions were implemented to combat this reality and impede the consequences it brings about.

The Municipality of Bakun recognizes that malnutrition is better managed when it is tackled through a participative and a democratic process involving partnership between the LGU and the stakeholders.

It is based on the above premises that the study on the implementation of nutrition program was considered timely and proper to conduct. The study will closely look into the involvement of the key players relative to the planning process for the Nutrition Program. It will focus into the different factors such as stakeholders or key players, involvement, planning process, influencing factors and nutrition program.

Stakeholders or key players are the people involved in the planning process for the preparation and development of the nutrition program. Their level of participation particularly in the performance of their roles and responsibilities in the planning process will be analyzed.

The objective, methodology and strategies of the planning process will be considered. Influencing factors will be determined to identify the factors that could have contributed or limited the planning process. The

output of the planning process particularly the type of the nutrition program developed as a result of the process will be determined to see how it supports the development of the municipality.

The interplay of the three (3) factors, namely: stakeholders' participation, planning process and influencing factors bring about changes that produce a comprehensive, integrated and responsive nutrition program for the community. Thereby, a defined planning process for the formulation of municipal nutrition action plan that is complementary to the needs, procedures and systems of the municipality will be established. The interrelationship of factors identified in the development of the Bakun nutrition program is presented in Figure 1.

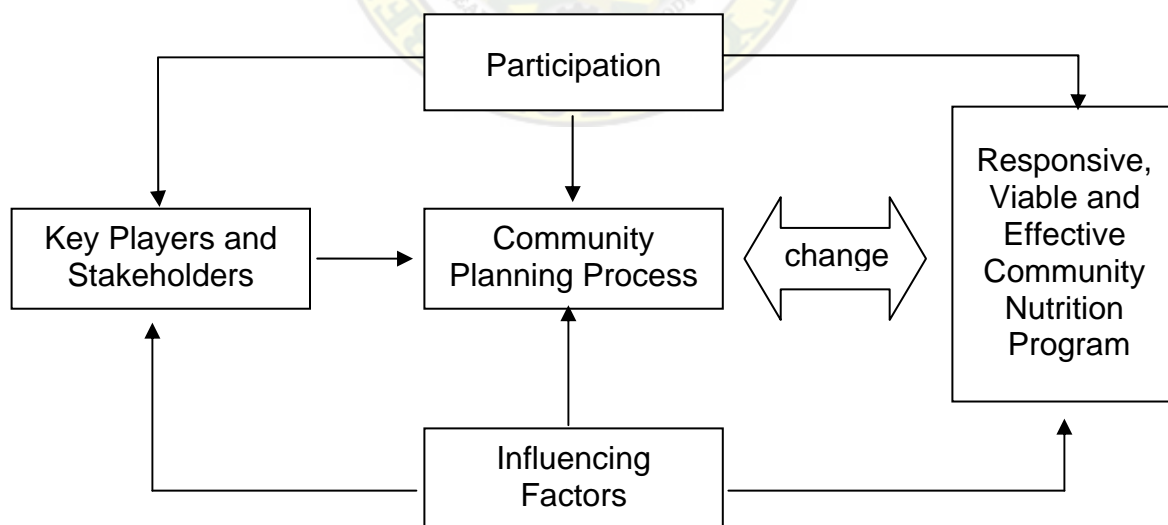


Figure1. The Interrelationship of factors identified in the development of the Bakun Nutrition Program

### Operational Definition

Barangay Nutrition Scholar is a barangay based volunteer worker responsible for conducting the annual weighing of preschoolers and submit weighing results to the MNAO.

Beneficiaries refer to any person, family or group that is recipient of the nutrition program.

Involvement refers to the participation of the Municipal Nutrition Council Members in the planning process for the municipal nutrition program. It has the following levels:

Limited involvement refers to the level wherein MNC members only attend meetings but do not participate in the MNAP preparation.

Full involvement refers to the level wherein MNC members are actively participating in MNAP preparation.

Iron Deficiency Anemia (IDA) is condition where a person affected by this deficiency lacks hemoglobin in his red blood cells because of lack of iron. The condition is characterized by feeling of fatigue, anxiety, sleeplessness and reduced capacity. This deficiency increases the risk of infections and can lead to death especially among lactating and pregnant women and infants.

Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD) is a condition brought about by lack of iodine intake or the failure of the thyroid gland to obtain a sufficient

supply of iodine to maintain normal structure and function, IDD is characterized by swelling of the neck or goiter. This deficiency maybe prevented through the regular use of iodized salt.

Key Players are the respondents and at the same time members of the Municipal Nutrition Council who develop and implement the nutrition program. Members are composed of the following: Municipal Mayor, Municipal Vice Mayor, Sangguniang Bayan- Committee Chair on Health and Nutrition, Municipal Health Officer, Social Welfare Officer, Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator, Agricultural Technician, Municipal Nutrition Action Officer, In-Charge of Office - Municipal Treasury Office, Municipal Budget Officer, Human Resource Management Officer, and representatives from the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Department of Education.

Malnutrition refers to a condition of the body as a result of lack or excess of one or more of the important nutrients. Physically, the body affected by malnutrition is weak and prone to diseases.

Municipal Nutrition Action Officer a full time employee under the Municipal Mayor's Office who serves as the right hand of the Municipal Mayor on nutrition matters.

Municipal Nutrition Action Plan an annual plan prepared by the Municipal Nutrition Council that contained the nutrition interventions. It has



adopted the following seven impact programs from the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition: a) home, school and community food production; b) micronutrient supplementation; c) food fortification; d) livelihood assistance; e) food assistance; f) nutrition education; g) nutrition in essential maternal and child health services.

Municipal Nutrition Council a multi-sectoral council organized to prepare the Municipal Nutrition Action Plan.

Municipal Nutrition Program is the program of the municipality to address malnutrition issues. Specific activities to implement this program were contained in the Municipal Nutrition Action Plan.

Nutrition interventions are specific projects or activities done to improve nutritional status in the municipality.

Over nutrition is a condition where there is excess of some nutrients in the body and usually results to obesity. Persons under this condition are prone to diseases like hypertension, heart disease and diabetes.

Operation Timbang refers to the annual weighing of elementary and preschoolers. Weighing of elementary children is being done by the School Nurse while the weighing of preschoolers is being done by the Barangay Nutrition Scholars. This activity is being conducted in the first quarter of each year.

Planning Process refers to the process defined for the preparation and development of the Municipal Nutrition Action Plan.

Protein Energy Malnutrition (PEM) is a body condition as a result of lack of intake of energy or protein. Persons affected by this malnutrition are usually stunted physically and mentally retarded and are high risks to infections.

Stakeholder refers to any person, group or organization that has an interest in the nutrition program.

Stakeholder Participation is the process by which the stakeholder in the nutrition program became involved in the planning process for the Municipal Nutrition Action Plan.

State of Local Governance Report is a report prepared by Local Government Units which can serve as a management tool to aid local planners in program planning and local development.

Sustainability is the durability of positive results of the nutrition program.

Under nutrition is a form of malnutrition that can result from inadequate ingestion of nutrients, malabsorption, impaired metabolism, loss of nutrients due to diarrhea or increased nutritional requirements.

Undernourished child refers to a child who is affected by any of the forms of malnutrition. The child maybe under height, underweight, too thin

or too fat. He may also be lethargic, sluggish and frequently ill because of low resistance to infection.

Vitamin A Deficiency (VAD) is a condition that may result from low intake of food rich in vitamin A like animal food, green and yellow vegetables and yellow fruits. It may also be caused by poor absorption and utilization of the body due to low intake of fats in the diet. VAD can also be a result from severe infections. Common consequence of this condition is night blindness and poor growth while death can occur in extreme cases.

#### Hypotheses of the Study

The following are the hypotheses of the study:

1. There is no defined planning process for the nutrition program of Bakun, Benguet.
2. There is limited participation in the planning of the nutrition program of Bakun, Benguet.
3. There is no limit in the planning activities of the nutrition program of Bakun, Benguet.
4. The resources used in the planning process of nutrition program of Bakun, Benguet are minimal.

## METHODOLOGY

### Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the Municipality of Bakun, Benguet. The municipality lies on the northern part of Benguet, 336 kilometers away from Manila, 86 kilometers from Baguio City proper and 80 kilometers from the Benguet Provincial Capitol, La Trinidad, Benguet. It is bounded on the east by the municipalities of Buguias, Benguet and Mankayan, Benguet; on the west by Sugpon, Ilocos Sur and part of Alilem, Ilocos Sur; on the north by Cervantes, Ilocos Sur and a part of Mankayan, Benguet; and on the south by the municipality of Kibungan, Benguet.

The municipality is landlocked and mountainous. Its elevation ranges from 200 meters above sea level to 2,600 meters above sea level. It is characterized by generally rolling to very steep slopes. It is dotted with high mountains covered with primary and secondary forests.

The municipality is fiscally classified as a fourth class municipality. Agriculture remains to be the primary source of livelihood of most of its inhabitants. It is comprised of seven (7) barangays, namely: Ampusongan, Bagu, Dalipey, Gambang, Kayapa, Poblacion and Sinacbat.

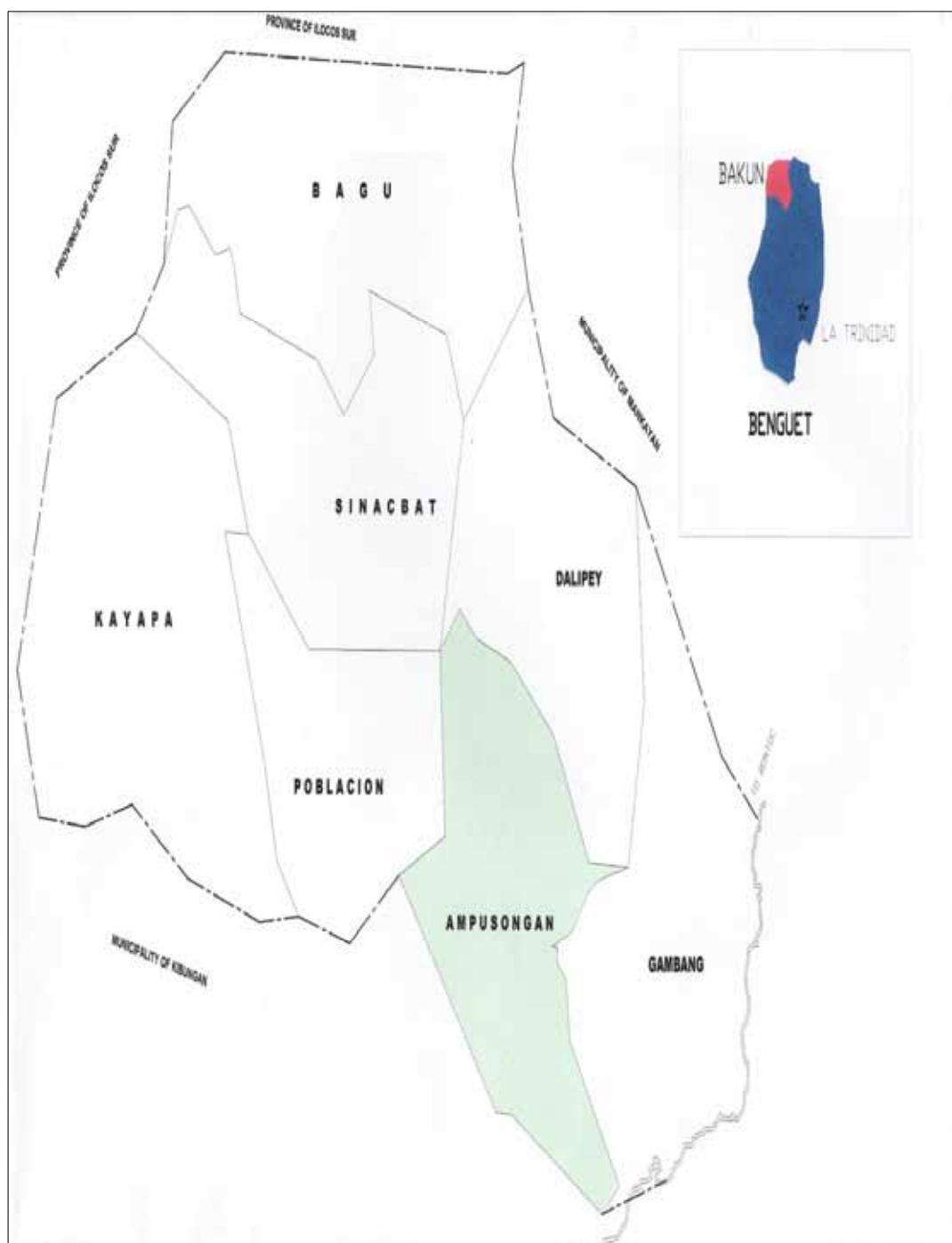


Figure 2. Map of the Municipality of Bakun

### Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the key players involved in the planning process of the nutrition program consisting of municipal officials, municipal employees and representatives from the national government agencies (NGAs). Specifically, these are members of the Municipal Nutrition Council who developed and implemented the nutrition program. The MNC members include the Municipal Mayor, Municipal Vice Mayor, Sangguniang Bayan- Committee Chair on Health and Nutrition, Municipal Health Officer, Social Welfare Officer, Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator, Agricultural Technologist, Municipal Nutrition Action Officer, In-Charge of Office - Municipal Treasury Office, Municipal Budget Officer, Human Resource Management Officer, and representatives from the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Department of Education.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents

Municipal Nutrition Council Members	Number	Percentage
Municipal officials	3	23%
Municipal employees	8	62%
Representatives from NGAs	2	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Data Gathering

The study used three research methods, namely: individual interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation in the collection of pertinent data.

The study was facilitated through a request letter to the Municipal Mayor seeking permission to conduct interviews and focused group discussion with the members of the Municipal Nutrition Council. It was approved on September 1, 2008 and this commenced the start of the research study.

### 1. Individual Interview

The individual interviews were conducted with the respondents during their free time. A schedule of interview was prepared as follows: September 1, 2008 - Municipal Vice Mayor, Municipal Budget Officer, Dep-Ed Representative, Human Resource Management Officer and Social Welfare Officer; September 2, 2008 – Sangguniang Bayan Committee Chair on Health and Nutrition, Municipal Nutrition Action Officer, Private Secretary of the Municipal Mayor/Designated Chairman of the Municipal Nutrition Council, Agricultural Technologist, Municipal Health Officer and DILG Representative; September 3, 2008 - Municipal Planning

and Development Coordinator and Officer-In-Charge at the Municipal Treasury Office. Vital questions were prepared to guide the flow of the interviews. Also, there were follow-up questions made to deepen and clarify some statements. These were done to provide more substance and clarity to the study.

## 2. Focused Group Discussion

There were eleven (11) members of the Municipal Nutrition Council who attended the meeting and FGD. The Municipal Vice Mayor and the representative of the Department of Education were absent due to prior commitments.

The meeting started with a prayer followed by a brief discussion on the other agenda. After the meeting, Mr. Paterno Gonzalo, the designated Presiding Officer, gave the floor to the researcher to discuss the purpose of her presence.

The researcher presented the rationale and the process of the activity. When a question is asked, the participants write keyword answers in their meta cards; the participants then paste the cards on the space provided; after all participants have pasted their cards, the participants grouped the idea cards in accordance to thought and



meaning; and lastly, the participants arrived and agreed at a consensus to the given question.

After the activity was conducted, the researcher thanked the participants for their time and cooperation. The Municipal Nutrition Action Officer (MNAO) informed the other participants that a scheduled planning workshop on the 2009 Municipal Nutrition Action Plan (MNAP) will be conducted. The said activity enables them to apply the planning process they have identified during the FGD.

### 3. Participant Observation

The researcher started her critical observation on the planning process of the MNAP since the commencement of the study research. She observed how the different offices prepared their annual investment plans and how the MNAO came up with the draft of the MNAP. She complemented her observation with pertinent document analysis on annual reports, annual investment and development plans, minutes of meetings of the Municipal Nutrition Council, guide sheet for evaluation of municipal nutrition programs and evaluation feedback reports from the Provincial Nutrition Evaluation Team.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data were subjected to interpretation and analysis through triangulation vis-à-vis the objectives, research themes, hypotheses, and expected research outputs. The interpreted data were described and subjected to complete qualitative methodology. Data gathered were sorted according to the interview guide questions supplemented by follow-up questions based on the data provided by the respondents.

These were further categorized based on themes which were coded and sorted according to the objectives and hypotheses vis-à-vis research results.

In addition, these were described, interpreted and analyzed to address the factors presented in the conceptual framework of the research. In view of the overall process, the data gathered were translated into information which were organized and synthesized in the community planning process being studied particularly the nutrition program of the municipality of Bakun, Benguet.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Purpose of Nutrition Planning Process in the Overall Development Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives of the Municipality of Bakun

The development vision and mission of the Municipality of Bakun are clearly stated in its Executive Legislative Agenda (ELA). It states that *“The people of Bakun dreams of a Bakun community that is economically emancipated politically liberated, environmentally safe and socially and spiritually awake through common action, and provision of basic services and facilities.”* In order to attain such vision, the LGU's mission is to provide adequate and responsive services to enable their constituents to live in comfort, security and prosperity through optimum and sustainable utilization of resources, active peoples' participation and dedicated public service. The vision and mission were revisited and refined during the ELA formulation workshop conducted last January 16-18, 2008 at Puro Point, San Fernando City, La Union.

The goal of the annual investment and development plans prepared by LGU-Bakun is to improve the quality of life of the people through equitable access to basic services and facilities. The following are its ten objectives indicated in the annual development plan to: a) improve/provide infrastructure developments; b) conserve and protect remaining forest

stands; c) improve/increase revenue collection; d) to increase income of marginalized households through ecologically sound technologies and livelihood trainings; e) promote health and nutrition program; f) to further improve the delivery of social services to the households; g) promote eco-tourism industry in the municipality; h) provide agricultural services and technical assistance to farmers; i) contribute in the attainment of a drug-free municipality; and j) promote ecological solid waste management among all stakeholders.

The different objectives of the municipal development plan should emanate from the different sectors, namely: social, economic, development administration, and infrastructure development. These objectives should contribute in attaining the goal of the development plan which is to improve the quality of life of the people through equitable access to basic services and facilities. Projects and activities to be funded under the development plan should be based on these objectives.

The Municipal Nutrition Action Plan (MNAP) contains the local plan of action of the LGU for nutrition. During the plan formulation, the vision, mission, goals and objectives (VMGO) of the LGU should be considered in formulating its own vision, goal and objectives which will be the bases of identified programs, projects and activities. The MNAP, being a sub-plan of the municipal development plan has to be supportive of the municipal

development plan. The Municipal Nutrition Council (MNC) should advocate for the inclusion of the overall objective/s of the MNAP in the objectives of the municipal development plan. Funding to support the municipal nutrition program, should also be based on the overall objective/s of the MNAP.

Meanwhile, the participants during the focused group discussion believed that the MNAP's vision is the vision of the 2005-2010 Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN) in a local perspective. It is "a nutritionally improved municipality whose people are well nourished, healthy, intelligent, and socially and economically productive with high sense of human dignity".

It follows that the localized goal of the 2005–2010 PPAN is their MNAP's goal: "to improve the quality of life of Bakun people through better nutrition, improved health and increased productivity". Though no planning process was conducted for the formulation of the 2008 MNAP, its general objective is to reduce malnutrition rate in the municipality by 5% at the end of 2008. Specifically, to: a) conduct IEC to mothers/parents/caregivers of malnourished children; b) provide continuous service for the prevention, control and treatment of micronutrient deficiency among infants, preschool children, pregnant and lactating women and high risk and sick children; and c) conduct supplementary feeding to preschoolers with weights below

normal (low and very low). Children with weights below normal (low) are the moderately malnourished children, while the children with weights below normal (very low) are the severely malnourished children.

Planning for the nutrition program will provide an opportunity for the MNC to decide on the objective/s they believe could achieve the pre-set goal of the MNAP and the specific objectives/targets they believe could attain the objective/s. When the VMGO of the LGU were considered, attaining the goal and objective/s of the MNAP will contribute in attaining the goal and objectives of the municipal development plan. The MNC who prepares the MNAP should be aware of these objectives because these should be the bases of the lined programs, projects and activities in the plan.

During the focused group discussion conducted for this study, the Municipal Health Officer pointed out that, stakeholders in the nutrition program need to have a common goal in planning and it is one consideration in the planning process they want to follow.

However, the participants are not aware of the vision and goal of the MNAP. The Municipal Nutrition Action officer (MNAO) who prepares the MNAP is the only member who is fully aware of the objectives of the MNAP. The Municipal Budget Officer, the Local Government Operations Officer and MNC members who are from offices implementing nutrition-

related projects and activities are the ones who gave an idea on the main objective of the MNAP. In general, they answered that the main objective of the nutrition program has something to do with reducing malnutrition prevalence in the municipality. The other respondents lamented that they are not really aware of whatever goal or objectives set forth for the MNAP.

During the interview with the Municipal Budget Officer, Ms. Sonia L. Casimiro, she narrated:

*For me, the objective of the nutrition program of the municipality is to address the malnutrition problem in the municipality in the shortest possible time.*

The Budget Officer further explained that since it is a nutrition program, the main objective is to address the malnutrition problem in the municipality. She believed that this can be achieved by focusing whatever funds allotted to the nutrition program in projects or activities supportive to the objective of the nutrition program. She further explained that the purpose of setting an objective is to have a guide in the actions to be undertaken.

This was supported by the Municipal Health Officer Dr. Simon P. Macario who said that:

*I think the main objective of the nutrition program is to decrease the incidence of malnutrition in the municipality.*

Similar opinions were given by Ms. Louisa L. Carbonel, who is a registered nutritionist by profession but an Agricultural Technologist by

occupation, and the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer, Ms. Leticia C. Laleo. They both said that the main objective of the nutrition program is to address the malnutrition issue in the municipality.

Mr. Paterno C. Gonzalo, the private secretary of the Municipal Mayor who usually sit and preside over MNC meetings, explained that they are not fully aware of the vision, mission, goal or objective of the municipal nutrition program because these statements were not advocated to the MNC. The goal and objectives of the nutrition program were never mentioned during meetings. When the MNAPs were presented to them, they did never mind to glance at the objectives. Much so, no planning was conducted wherein goal and objectives would have been revisited. He admitted during the one-on-one interview their shortcoming as a member of the council:

*I'm not fully aware of the objectives of the nutrition program in the municipality. Maybe there are vision, mission, goals and objectives but I think we are not aware because they are not advocated to us. Sometimes, we in the council meet for compliance and not even aware of our functions.*

The statement of Mr. Gonzalo brought out the situation in the municipality when it comes to the functionality of councils and committees organized in the LGU. Councils were organized to comply with directives of the National Government.



No formal planning was ever conducted for the preparation of the MNAP. On the other hand the MNC members are not fully aware of its goal and objectives. They are not fully aware if the objectives set would be supportive of the goal of the nutrition program and if lined-up programs, projects and activities in the MNAP would attain the objectives.

All respondents in the one-on-one interview and participants in the focused group discussion had a common answer when asked if it is important to know the objectives of the nutrition program of the municipality. To them, it is important because the objectives will give direction in planning and these objectives will serve as guide and steps to undertake.

The Budgeting Operations Manual for Barangays (BOMB) pointed out that goals and objectives are the bases of appropriate and sustainable plan interventions – policies, strategies, programs and projects.

When asked if the objectives of the municipal nutrition were achieved, the respondents during the one-on-one interview who gave an answer as to the attainment of the objectives of the municipal nutrition program were the same who answered that per MNAO's report, some of the objectives were achieved because the malnutrition prevalence rate decreased. The Municipal Nutrition Action Officer, Ms. Hilaria B. Gabriel, explained:

*I think some objectives of the municipal nutrition program were achieved because the municipal wide prevalence rate was decreasing.*

Analysis of the 2007 MNAP and the 2007 accomplishment report of the MNAO revealed that the objectives were achieved based on the following: a) eliminated iodine deficiency disorders among school children and pregnant women; b) increased to 100% the number of households using iodized salt; and c) reduced incidence of above normal weight among preschool children.

The attainment of the above-stated objectives contributed to the decrease in prevalence rate of malnutrition in the municipality and is achieved because of the intensified information and education campaign conducted by the MNAO and the Municipal Health Office. The MNAO also believed that the provision of supplementary food helped achieve the decrease.

However, the other respondents commented that there is lack of monitoring and follow-up strategies in some supplemental feeding projects. Dry ration strategy was adopted wherein the supplementary food were given to the households. In this set-up, there is a possibility that the food were not consumed alone by the malnourished child. Ms. Laleo commented:

*On supplemental feeding, dry ration strategy was adopted. No strategy was devised to monitor if the food given were really consumed by the target children. There is still a need to devise follow-up strategies to see to it that the malnourished children will become and remain nourished. That is why purposive planning is necessary.*

Monitoring and evaluation is an important component of a development plan. In the plan preparation, schemes for monitoring and evaluation should be devised to see to it that after plan implementation, interventions could be monitored and evaluated to check if the objectives set were achieved. If the projects and activities were the ways identified to reach the goal and objectives, the result of the monitoring and evaluation will show if these goal and objectives were attained.

Ms. Carbonel mentioned the need for MNC members to understand the planning process and appreciate the reasons the MNC was organized and how it could contribute to the attainment of the goal of the Local Government Unit. She further explained:

*All members of the Municipal Nutrition Council should realize that the Council was organized for a purpose, so that it will contribute to the attainment of the Local Government Unit's goal. The nutrition program can better achieve this if there is nutrition program planning.*

Ms. Carbonel further elaborated that the nutrition program is a support program to the development of the municipality. It is not acting independently but is to contribute in attaining the overall development goal of the LGU. When planning is conducted for the nutrition program, projects

and activities would be properly identified so that preset objectives would be achieved.

Objectives of the municipal nutrition program of the municipality appearing in its annual Municipal Nutrition Action Plan (MNAP) were not clearly known by all the MNC members who were supposed to prepare these objectives. This was shown by the result of the one-on-one interview where six (6) respondents said that they are not aware of the goal or objective of the MNAP. However, they consider these objectives as guide in the planning process of the nutrition program thus knowing them are important.

The MNAP is prepared without carefully considering the objectives it has to achieve. Funding was also allotted without considering the MNAP. Per analysis of the accomplishment report of the MNAO, the overall objective of the 2007 MNAP which is to reduce malnutrition rate in the municipality by 5% at the end of 2007 was not achieved. Malnutrition rate decreased by only 0.58% instead of the 5% target. There is a need for the MNC to conduct a planning activity for the nutrition program so that they will appreciate the relevance of the objectives in identifying interventions and set realistic targets that consider the availability of resources.

Based on observation, MNAP preparation was not synchronized with the preparation of the development plan and budget of the municipality. As a result, the objectives of the MNAP were not advocated to the Municipal Development Council as basis of allocating funds to support the nutrition program.

The vision and mission of an organization are in place to serve as guide in all its development undertakings. In the Budgeting Operations Manual for Barangays (2006), it was pointed out that the vision of a Local Government Unit inspires its people, provides direction and guides all development efforts in the locality. The manual also stated that goals, objectives and targets are set at the sectoral level and are the bases of appropriate and sustainable interventions.

#### Planning Process in the Preparation of the Bakun Nutrition Program

Annually, the MNC of Bakun prepares the Municipal Nutrition Action Plan (MNAP) which contained the specific activities vis-à-vis targets and expected outputs to implement the municipal nutrition program.

### *The Planning Process*

Organizational situation and conditions were carefully analyzed together with the identification of problems in relation to the nutrition program of the municipality. This was substantiated by detailed questions like “Where are we now?” while the vision, mission, goals and objectives will answer the question “Where do we want to go?”. A clear understanding of the vision, mission, goal and objectives (VMGO) of the municipality and the nutrition program will help make the planning process for the nutrition program successful. The VMGO of the nutrition program are the bases of policies and strategies, programs, projects, activities and targets beneficiaries.

In addition, the overall objective of the nutrition program is to direct attainment of the goal of the municipal development plan because it translate the nutrition condition of the municipality into a workable program and activities.

Based on the research process, the interviews showed that the respondents had different perception on the nutrition planning process. Seven (7) respondents pointed out that it should start with a meeting of the MNC followed by workshops in an organized and systematic process including operational guidelines. On the other hand, six (6) lamented that

they are not aware of any process nor attended a nutrition planning workshop.

Specific results were described further on the nutrition planning process by Ms. Norma G. Alidao, the Human Resource Management Officer of Bakun:

*I think a planning process is composed of series of meetings where we will meet and suggest interventions that will be inputted under the seven impact programs of the nutrition program.*

Ms. Casimiro also accounted that planning process for the nutrition program should follow a process:

*The process being taught during seminars should also be followed. There must be a proper situational analysis, so that we can know the real situation. Projects or activities must be based on the objectives and targets set.*

Dr. Macario also pointed the importance of proper situational analysis in planning. He said during the one-on-one interview and focus group discussion that:

*Planning process starts with situational analysis. Situational analysis should be proper because the interventions are to be based on the analysis of the situation. Planning process for the nutrition program should follow the standard process where goals and objectives have to be set after knowing the situation and projects and activities have to be identified and prioritized.*

Ms. Gabriel gave her opinion of the planning process if they are to sit as a team and plan:



*My idea of a planning process is limited. When we will sit as a team and plan, I will present the seven impact programs under the nutrition program to the team. Then I will gather the related plans of the different offices/agencies. I'm used to the usual practice that we gather the prepared plans of other offices implementing nutrition related projects and find where they fit in the format or guide given to us. I am aware that we can come up with new ideas or innovations and this can even mean additional point for us. I think we need technical experts to assist us if we are to really plan.*

The description and requirements for a nutrition planning process by the respondents showed that there is a need for a organized and systematic process including factors for proper implementation. Results of the one-on-one interview and focused group discussion revealed that the MNC did never sit together for the purpose of planning for the MNAP. Recognized as weakness of the MNC, the participants during the focus group discussion concurred to come up with a structured planning process especially in the formulation of the succeeding MNAPs, to wit: a) call for a meeting; b) problem identification; c) set a common goal/objective; d) identification of programs/projects/activities; e) prioritization of programs/projects/ activities; f) consultation with stakeholders; g) final review of the MNC plan; h) validation and endorsement of the plan by the community; and i) submission for the approval of the MNAP by the Municipal Council for adoption and implementation by all key players and stakeholders.



Based on the one-on-one interviews, all respondents stated that the draft of the MNAP was prepared by the MNAO and presented during meetings for comment or suggestions of the members. Ms. Gabriel herself narrates that:

*I gather the plans of the different offices implementing nutrition related activities (Municipal Health Office, Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office, Municipal Agriculture Office and Department of Education – Bakun District) and consolidate these plans, finding where they fit in the guide sheet given to us for nutrition program evaluation. I call for a meeting and present the draft MNAP to them for comments or suggestions.*

The Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator Engr. Cornelio G. Colyong corroborated the statement of Ms. Gabriel in his statement:

*The plan is already prepared by the MNAO when presented to the Municipal Nutrition Council meeting. When presented, it is usually adopted unless the body has some suggestions. However, the draft plan is usually approved as presented. The instance I can remember, we do give suggestions when nutrition month celebration is at hand and we have to plan the specific activities. We only give suggestions during the implementation stage, when we are about to implement an activity.*

Mr. Gonzalo gave a similar comment and gave instances when the MNC gave suggestions.

*The Municipal Nutrition Council usually adopts the draft MNAP presented by the MNAO. We are not so aware of the programs/projects/activities presented so we just entrust the preparation to the MNAO. There are some instances when we give suggestions but not during the*

*presentation of the MNAP.. Usually, it is during presentation of nutrition month activities. We suggest on the specific activities. When there are negative comments from the Provincial Nutrition Evaluation Committee, that's one instance that we give suggestions. But when it comes to a planning process where the Municipal Nutrition Council sits together for the purpose of planning, we are still to experience it.*

This was supported by the analysis on the minutes of MNC meetings. As noted, MNC regular meeting last June shows that the MNC gave suggestions on important activities especially in the conduct of the nutrition month celebration on the month of July.

Furthermore, Ms. Laleo stated her opinion on the need for concerned agencies and offices to plan together; she narrated that:

*Concerned agencies and offices should be involved in plan preparation. They should plan together to avoid overlapping of projects, activities or beneficiaries. Instead, there should be coordination of efforts and this can only happen when we plan as a team and not like the current practice that we do it on our own then the MNAO collects them then consolidate them.*

Ms. Carbonel gave a similar comment stating:

*The Municipal Nutrition Council members should plan together to focus on target programs, to really plan the target activities for next year.*

The MNC did never sit together to formally plan for the MNAP. However, they know that planning is important and have ideas on how it should be done. Integrating the data and ideas of the respondents, it is envisioned to support the ideal planning nutrition program process. This

includes identification of Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threat (SWOT) analysis; integration and consolidation of responses according to problem concern, needs, resources, and people's responsibilities and involvement; validation, integration and prioritization; and collaboration and complementation in a very participatory manner.

#### *Plan Formulation and Development*

It was viewed by the researcher that the nutrition plan should be properly formulated to address and adhere to the overall municipal development plan. Based on this, issues and concerns related to the formulation and development of the nutrition program in the municipality were identified.

During the research process, question was directed on the current practice of plan preparation and all respondents answered negatively. Reactions and responses showed that it was due to the fact that respondents prepared the plan of their respective offices individually. There was no integration and consolidation for a comprehensive program. This is further reflected in the responses of some MNC members that they are not aware of the lined-up activities under the MNAP or not even aware of the objectives of the nutrition program.

It was only during the conduct of this study that the respondents felt the need to really sit down together and align their respective plans with

the other stakeholders and other offices, whose responsibility is to support the mandate on nutrition and attain the development goals of the municipality. Respondents also mentioned the importance of conducting a planning session as a team and the need to introduce innovations so that the MNAP will be participatory in nature and well-coordinated. Through the participatory approach, the projects and activities will be synchronized towards the development goal of the municipality. Furthermore, the respondents saw the need to involve other members of the MNC in the planning process of the nutrition program.

The MNAO explained that the MNC should still plan so that they can introduce new interventions or innovations in the plan. She further explained:

*Though the guide is given, we are not prohibited to add. New interventions or innovations are plus factor to us during evaluation and I know that these new interventions can only come out when more people participate, when we sit down as a team and plan*

The participants during the focused group discussion enumerated four resources they believed were necessary to conduct an effective planning process: a) manpower which includes the technical skills and commitment of planning participants, and involvement of stakeholders;

b) materials which include the equipment and office supplies necessary to facilitate planning activity; c) appropriate funds to defray expenses on meals and snacks, honorariums/ incentives and reimbursements of actual expenses; and d) proper timing to conduct planning process and formulate the nutrition plan and program.

The Colorado State University Extension (2007) pointed out that planning seldom follow steps as closely as you follow a recipe. But there are certain activities that when accomplished will help ensure a successful planning effort. To them, first and foremost is to really understand the issues and problems you want to address; next is to form a team that will represent the stakeholders; and lastly is for the planning team to start developing the plan following steps they designed that will help them consider all important considerations. They made it clear that the important thing in planning is for the team to really consider the importance of thoroughly analyzing the situation and to base their planning on sound data.

McNamara (1997) stated that there are phases of planning that should be customized by planners to meet their nature and needs and the organization they are planning for. These processes or phases of planning are : a) stating the mission; b) conducting environmental scan; c) analyzing the situation; d) establishing goals; e) establishing strategies

to reach goals; f) establishing objectives; g) associating responsibilities and timelines with each objective; h) writing and communicating the plan document; and i) acknowledging completion and celebrating success.

The respondents are not contented with the present set-up of MNAP preparation. They want to sit together to plan as a team. There is no standard step prescribed for nutrition program planning. There are suggested steps but these can be customized to fit the nature and needs of the organization the plan is being prepared for. The MNC could design a planning process they are comfortable that leads to the attainment of the desired output. The very important thing is to base the planning on sound data, data generated through a careful analysis of the situation.

#### *Purpose of Nutrition Program Planning*

The respondents are all convinced that planning is important in the preparation of the nutrition program. They have given related answers when asked about the purpose of planning for the nutrition program. Dr. Macario stated during his interview that planning is important because it is at this stage that you can set your direction:

*It is important to plan because during the planning stage, you set your goal, your roadmap in attaining this goal, your indicators to check if you are achieving your goal and you can see how the program is running.*

Ms. Estrella C. Guzman, School Nurse and Dep-Ed Representative in the MNC, said:

*I believe that planning is important in designing the projects and activities of a program. We have to plan so that suggestions and comments will be entertained and the plan has a chance to be improved. However, because I am not fully aware of how planning is to be conducted, I am in favor that there will be a format or a guide.*

Hon. Baldas Ognaden, gave his opinion on why we need to plan for the nutrition program:

*We have to plan for the nutrition program so that we could help the malnourished who cannot help themselves.*

Ms. Laleo also mentioned that planning is necessary for the nutrition program so that proper prioritization of projects and activities would be done. She explained that:

*All the barangays would say that they need the service/s, but what are the priority areas. The resources for the program are limited so these resources must be focused on projects or activities that are really needed so that we could achieve outcome for the program. It is in this point that we really need to plan to prioritize the lined activities we want to implement. In planning we really need data as basis in whatever decision we make.*

Furthermore, Ms. Alidao, she pointed out that one of the purposes of planning is for human resource development:

*The Municipal Nutrition Council should start to do the planning process in the preparation of the MNAP. This is not only to solicit participation among the members in the preparation of the plan but for the members to be developed. They will become aware of their functions as members of the*



*Municipal Council and develop or enhance their planning skills.*

Ms. Laleo stated that the offices preparing their plan maybe contended with how they come up with their planned projects and activities, but there can still be improvement when more people are involved. This is particularly true in the designing of strategies. To her, cost of project implementation can be lessened if concerned offices/agencies plan together. She further explained by giving an example:

*Cost effective strategies could be designed in the conduct of outreach services to the different barangays. We know that the barangays in the municipality are far and we need to use vehicles to reach them. If activities of the concerned offices are coordinated, they could go there as a group instead of each office scheduling their trip. As a result, vehicles to be used could be lessened and target beneficiaries would only be disturbed at one time.*

Feedback report dated April 12, 2007 of the Provincial Nutrition Evaluation Team contained a recommendation for the MNC to plan measures of interventions to address the overweight children. Compared with previous feed back report dated May 4, 2006, the need for planning as recommended is to target the nutritionally depressed barangays of the municipality and to review the nutritional causal model to come up with appropriate interventions.



This was supported by the Colorado State University Extension (2007) when planning is done to come up with good programs that are properly developed and designed to help people learn and solve the problems they are encountering. Programs that are properly planned result in a more effective and result-focused effort to meet high priority needs.

#### *Time Frame for Nutrition Program Planning*

Proper program planning is an essential element in the process. Based on the result, the participants came up with a schedule whereby planning the nutrition program should be done. The group agreed that planning process for next year's MNAP should be conducted during the second quarter of the current year in time before the budgeting period and must be followed the year after. This means that the MNAP for 2009 should have been prepared last second quarter.

The respondents want to change the schedule of MNAP preparation because they are aware that annual investment planning is conducted on the start of the third quarter of each year. They all agree that the MNAP should be ready before the investment planning so that the lined-up projects and activities under the MNAP will be included in the investment plan of the municipality.

Previously, preparations of MNAPs were usually on the last quarter of the preceding year or during the first quarter of the current year of the Plan. It is for the reason that the time targeted was the deadline of submission of the MNAPs at the Provincial Nutrition Office which is on or before the end of February of the year of the Plan. Ms. Casimiro reiterated that planning for next year's MNAP should be done on the second quarter of the current year:

*The MNAP should be ready before the budgeting period, so it must be prepared by second quarter because budgeting period starts on the third quarter. This is because the budget proposal of the MNAO should be based on the approved MNAP which is integrated in the Annual Investment Plan of the municipality.*

Ms. Guzman also expressed that the time frame in preparing the MNAP should be:

*Though I'm not aware of the months the MNAO presents the MNAP draft, I think MNAP should be prepared once the Municipal Nutrition Council was briefed on the feedback report of the Provincial Nutrition Evaluation Team. The MNAO should follow-up the feedback report because they are usually issued late but the recommendations should be inputted in the MNAP to be prepared.*

Dr. Macario also stated that the MNC can already plan once the annual report is already prepared.

*The annual report provides the data needed for the planning particularly in assessing the nutritional situation so the Municipal Nutrition Council can already plan once the annual report is prepared.*

On the contrary, Ms. Carbonel observed that MNAP preparation is usually late because:

*The MNAP is a consolidation of all the plans related to nutrition of offices. It is not planned separately so it doesn't consider the budgeting period because the activities are already included in the budget proposals of the offices that really planned it.*

The Updated Budgeting Operations Manual for Local Government Units (2005) clearly stated that budgeting for succeeding year starts on July of the current year. The MNAP should be ready before the start of the budgeting period. However, it must be prepared before the preparation of the Annual Investment Plan of the Local Government Unit because the MNAP has to be part of the Annual Investment Plan.

On the other hand, the members of the MNC agreed to plan for the MNAP of the succeeding year on the second quarter of the preceding year such that it will be incorporated in the Annual Investment Plan of the Municipality at the same time in compliance with the Updated Budgeting Operations Manual for Local Government Units as noted during the FGD.

#### *Prioritization of Nutrition Program, Projects and Activities*

Since no formal planning was ever observed for the municipal nutrition program, the respondents were not sure of the criteria used in the prioritization of the projects and activities under the MNAP. Based on

practice of the MNAO, there were no criteria used. Instead, she explained the preparation of past MNAPs:

*The “should be projects” are already given in the evaluation guide sheet given by the nutrition monitoring team. So what I did was to get the nutrition related plans of respective offices and consolidate them finding where they fit in the guide sheet. No criteria were used.*

However, the respondents all agreed that there must be a basis in determining the priority projects or activities especially so if the funding is not enough for all the proposed projects and activities. This transpired during the one-on-one interview where some respondents gave opinions on the criteria to be used in prioritizing the projects and activities for the MNAP. Ms Casimiro pointed out that:

*Urgency must be considered. We based on the result of Operation Timbang reported by the MNAO. We should also see if proposed projects and activities are really necessary in achieving the objectives of the nutrition program.*

Operation Timbang is the annual weighing activity of preschoolers done by Barangay Nutrition Scholars (BNS) to identify and locate malnourished children in their area of assignment. The BNS assigned in the different barangays will submit their reports which are later on consolidated by the MNAO to come up with the municipal report.

Ms. Guzman mentioned that people in need must be given priority in planning for nutrition interventions:

*We already have the reports of the Barangay Nutrition Scholars (BNS) and the findings or feedback reports from evaluation team. These reports and findings will point to us the people who need nutritional interventions.*

Ms. Alidao stated a criterion she thought was necessary:

*Nutrition program projects and activities should all be based on need. It has to be based on the problem to be solved. That is why we need representatives from the stakeholders in the community because they are the ones who really know the situation. Sometimes, some reports are biased thus validation of reports is also necessary.*

Dr. Macario also gave some considerations in prioritizing nutrition projects and activities:

*I consider the following as considerations: social acceptability, accessibility of resources, cost-effectiveness and degree of need. The planning team should still look for other factors to consider. Based on a situational analysis, you can see the problem. For me, good situational analysis is very important.*

Meanwhile, Ms. Carbonel compared nutrition interventions to a medicine when she brought the idea of “first-aid first”:

*Based on situational analysis, you will know the problems. Now, interventions should be based on gravity of the problems. Because we cannot address them all at the same time, those who need it now or the soonest should be given priority. Let's apply the first-aid first scheme.*

Respondents all agreed that there must be criteria used in identifying projects and activities to be included in the MNAP. Though they have not tried prioritizing projects and activities under the MNAP, they have the following ideas about the criteria to be used: program activity -

based on the result of Operation Timbang; users/beneficiaries - based on the users/beneficiaries as identified in the feedback reports of evaluators; need-based as identified by the program or activity users/beneficiaries; and classification according to social acceptability, accessibility of resources needed, cost-effectiveness, and degree of need.

After setting the overall objective of the nutrition program, strategies, projects and activities can be identified to attain this objective. However, scarcity of resources should be considered. In as much as the MNC wants to introduce some interventions, the limited resources of the LGU would not allow it. As such, the need to prioritize the nutrition projects or activities must be done based on the identified or set of criteria.

The following criteria were identified and agreed during the focused group discussion in prioritizing nutrition projects and activities, 1.) urgency of the problem and needs of the people and community; 2.) availability of resources during project implementation; and 3.) perceived impact or outcome including scope and coverage during implementation.

Nutrition projects are interventions to answer certain needs while the people in need are the expected beneficiaries. Laviolette and Mannar (2008) suggested that nutrition interventions should address the immediate, underlying and basic causes of malnutrition and these interventions should be implemented at sufficient scales.

Intal (1987) also suggested a related approach in our effort to combat child malnutrition. She opined that prevention should be considered rather than just concentrating on the treatment. She recommended that mothers should be involved in learning how to prevent malnutrition from recurring.

We need to prioritize projects and activities for the efficient and effective utilization of scarce resources and to benefit the most number of people. Nutrition program resources are limited so we better decide wisely. Florencio (2004) mentioned that the reality of the presence of malnutrition cases in a locality partly means that a lot is still to be done and we have to do them better.

Participatory identification of nutrition intervention is also important so that there is a greater chance of identifying interventions that are really needed. Oliveros (2007) also mentioned that we should use local decision-making and capabilities in defining the nature of interventions.

Funding provided by the LGU to support the municipal nutrition program is limited. That is why projects and activities to be included in the MNAP should be properly identified if they are to achieve the overall objective of the plan. Appropriate criteria should be used in project identification.



### *Composition of Peoples Involved in Nutrition Program Planning*

The MNAO is the only person involved in the preparation of the MNAP since no formal planning process was ever conducted for the preparation of previous MNAPs. Members from the different offices with nutrition-related activities like the Municipal Agriculture Office, Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office, Municipal Health Office, and Dep-Ed Bakun District prepared their plans independently. The MNAO collects and consolidates these plans as integral part of the MNAP. However, because of this practice, it was noted that it was evident that the members of the MNC of Bakun, Benguet as key players in the planning process of the nutrition program are not directly involved for a unified municipal nutrition program.

In addition, as key players, the Municipal Nutrition Council should include among others representatives of stakeholders to ensure a participatory planning process. Based on the identified composition of the MNC, the participants further enumerated added membership such as representatives from the barangay officials, the community/beneficiaries, nutrition program implementers, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Peoples Organizations (POs) operating in the municipality and even the local media.



The result of the study further revealed that the MNC needs additional members to represent the other groups considered to have a stake in the nutrition program. The MNC should not be composed of government employees only but should include stakeholders like representatives from the private sector: Non Government Organization operating in the area, Women's Organization and BNS. The respondents also believed that the Association of Barangay Councils President should be included as one of the members for ease on coordination on nutrition efforts in the different barangays.

Ms. Casimiro pointed the need for additional members:

*There must be representatives from families affected with malnutrition problem so that they can say their real situation and can voice their concerns. This is if they want to improve their situation. With regards to the other stakeholders particularly the NGOs and POs, those who care should be included as representatives in the Municipal Nutrition Council.*

Ms. Alidao also mentioned the need to include representatives of associations or federations in the barangays:

*The associations or federations in the barangays like the women's association or federation should have a representative in the Municipal Nutrition Council because they are the ones in the grassroots and they know the real situation in their barangays.*

Ms. Laleo also wanted the Barangay Councils and Sangguniang Kabataan Federation to be represented in the MNC:

*The Association of Barangay Council (ABC) President and the Sangguniang Kabataan (SKF) President should become members of the Municipal Nutrition Councils because they could help in advocating the nutrition program in their barangays. The ABC President could be instrumental in making the barangay Nutrition Councils functional. The SKF President could also mobilize the youth in advocating health and nutrition concerns so that they will not be concentrating in sports activities.*

The Municipal Local Government Operations Officer, Ms. Anabelle Laron mentioned that nutrition is everybody's concern. Stakeholders should include the implementers and beneficiaries:

*There should be a representative of the Barangay Nutrition Scholars to the MNC. The Liga ng mga Barangay President of the Municipality, who is the representative of the Punong Barangays, should also be included in the MNC because they are the implementers at the grassroots. Representative from the women sector and indigenous group should also be included as members of the council.*

Ms. Gabriel is aware that there is a need to involve stakeholders in the planning process of the nutrition program because they can help solve the malnutrition problem in the municipality. However, she did not pursue this because of the difficulty of calling during meetings stakeholders' representatives that are non-LGU employees. She further explained the ideal composition of the Municipal Nutrition Council:

*In one reading material given to us on ideal composition of the Municipal Nutrition Council, six to ten members is okay as long as the following sectors were represented: agriculture, social welfare, health, development planning, education and NGO. I am planning to include a representative from the Department of Agrarian Reform*

*because they have nutrition related projects. I also tried to convince the manager of the Bakun Indigenous Tribes Organization to join the Municipal Nutrition Council but he refused.*

Participation of stakeholders also contributes to nutrition program sustainability because skilled people in the community participate and eventually carry out activities even after project completion. Also, stakeholders' involvement develops a sense of ownership over the program which motivates them and sustains operations and interventions introduced.

Gako (1996) emphasized that health and nutrition is every one's concern and the most effective way so that set goals will be achieved is to partner with various stakeholders of the health and nutrition program. This is so much so because no one could manage health and nutrition programs alone.

People's participation is one of the enabling needs that has to be met for poverty alleviation or improving the quality of life of the Filipino people according to Goco (1995). People's participation is recognized by the state as one of the minimum basic needs of the Filipino people that have to be met if their lives are to improve.

### Key Players' Involvement in the Nutrition Program Planning Process

Planning process needs to be experienced by the key players of the nutrition program, especially if their level of involvement is limited. Their involvement is limited because they only approve during meetings the MNAP prepared by the MNAO without even bothering to carefully consider the contents. They were never involved in formally planning for the MNAP. As revealed during the one-on-one interviews, they are not fully aware of the objectives set in the plan.

The key players who are the participants during the focused group discussion admitted that they only approve what is already prepared by the MNAO. Hon. Baldas Ognaden, the SB Committee Chairman on Health explained this during the one-on-one interview:

*I did never join any planning process for the nutrition program because I trust the MNAO and the other members like the Municipal Health Officer that they know what is best. I have no knowledge of whatever planning process so I entrust the planning to them and I just take charge of the funding for whatever nutrition program activities or projects they will propose. We in the council are supportive of the health and nutrition sector. What is important is that no group or individuals will complain.*

Furthermore, they have not followed the proper planning process especially on the MNAP preparation. Admittedly, they act on what is being confronted at the present and convening the planning team takes

some time including the conduct of meeting for the final review of the MNAP. Identification of problem and goal setting was done by the MNAO, identification of projects and activities was done by the offices concerned and prioritization of projects and activities was normally left to the MNAO.

Moreover, there were no consultations with stakeholders conducted to prepare the plans of the individual offices. In so doing, the MNAO consolidates the individual plans to come up with the MNAP.

The MNAP is simply a consolidation of plans of offices implementing nutrition related projects and activities. The MNC has missed the opportunity to review, discuss, and decide collectively on actions to address the malnutrition problems in the municipality. On the other hand, these must be done especially in the formulation of the MNAP which at present were not done.

Dr. Macario stated his observation that it is easier to plan for the municipal nutrition program:

*A format is already given, even the “should be” projects and activities. What we do is just to choose those projects and activities we can fund and implement. We cannot really start with our own.*

This was also observed by Ms. Laron on the MNAP with a pro-forma plan:

*The MNAP is a “de-kahon” kind of plan. All you have to do is to input entries therein. Since no consultation and planning process conducted prior to its preparation, no*

*intervention from the MNC is included. And all the rest is up to the MNAO's discretion and decision.*

This was supported by Ms. Gabriel who gave a similar comment:

*The projects and activities that should be included in the MNAP is already given in the guide sheet for evaluation. We cannot have our own format because the guide sheet is the format they require us to submit and the basis for evaluation. That's why most of the projects and activities in the MNAP are "lip-service" and Municipal Health Office activities.*

On the contrary, Mr. Gonzalo expressed his dissatisfaction with the current practice in the organization of councils, boards and committees.

He explained that:

*When we prepare at the Mayor's Office the administrative orders reorganizing or organizing committees, boards and councils, we usually do them for compliance sake. We do not review the compositions and just change the officials or employees replaced. Like the other councils, the Municipal Nutrition Council is not functional because some if not majority of the members are not even aware of their functions. They just attend meetings if it happens to fall on a day they are around or not busy.*

Committees, councils and boards were organized for specific purposes. The functions of the persons composing these special bodies were clearly specified in the administrative orders organizing them. However, these purposes were often defeated because of the non-functionality of these special bodies. Organized for compliance sake, the jobs to be done were often left undone.

Ms. Casimiro gave a similar observation during the one-on-one interview:

*I know that being a member of the Municipal Nutrition Council, I have a role to play and responsibilities. But based on my observation, members of the different councils are almost the same individuals which are the heads of the different offices and the municipal officials. So how can we function well, sometimes we cannot even attend the meetings because the schedules are usually on the days we are often busy with our office works. The MNAO then has to exert effort to keep the Municipal Nutrition Council moving.*

With a full-time MNAO, other members of the MNC expect an improvement in the performance of the nutrition program. But they also tend to rely on the MNAO without doing their share. Ms Gabriel commented on the difficulty to convene the MNC:

*There were instances when I tried to convene a meeting for a planning workshop. But when I observed that the other members are busy, I just gather and consolidate their plans, finding where the projects and activities fit in the guide sheet. I am aware that it's my responsibility to initiate the core group of the Municipal Nutrition Council to do the planning for the MNAP formulation.*

The MNAO admitted that they did never plan as a team because she did not push for it. She explained that because she observed that the other members were busy and she had the time to collect the nutrition related plans, she did not follow-up scheduled planning workshops. Instead, she prepared the draft and presented it during meetings of the



MNC for comments and or suggestions. However, draft plans were usually approved without any corrections and suggestions.

On the contrary, the MNAO still needs to boost her confidence and develop a strong leadership skill so that she could initiate the planning process for the nutrition program. In relation to this, she needs to be knowledgeable on the planning process, and be able to coordinate a participatory planning process in order to come up with a participatory formulated MNAP. Furthermore, she needs to advocate the nutrition program within the MNC itself so that the members will appreciate the importance of their roles. Though she is diligent in her job, she needs to convince other members of the MNC in order to work as a team and achieve the goal of the municipal nutrition program particularly the malnutrition prevalence in the municipality which is still high.

On a different aspect, the MNC has placed the lead responsibility to the MNAO. They relied on the MNAO's capacity as the nutrition action officer. However, they failed to review their functions as one of the key players in the formulation of the MNAP.

Key players in the planning process of the nutrition program should be aware that they are responsible to advocate the plan and it must be properly implemented, regularly monitored and evaluated.



The American Planning Association (2008) described planning as a process where civic leaders and citizens play a meaningful role. It's in the planning process that they could design strategies to enrich people's lives. The planning process of the nutrition program is the opportune time for members of the Municipal Nutrition Council to put into action their desire to help the needy. They are the key players and can greatly contribute in attaining the objectives of the nutrition program.

Yeager (2006) explained why we have to help the needy. He said that when we help those in need improve their lives, we are actually helping everyone because society is the ultimate winner in every development undertaking. No effort done to help others would be wasted but will even give a feeling of satisfaction because you are able to do your job.

The United States Department of Agriculture (2008) cited planning and accountability as very important in effective program management. Plan formulation should undergo a sound planning process which considers the actual scenarios and involved stakeholders.

Ketcham (2005) also mentioned the need for dedicated public servants so that democracy could demonstrate its merits. For development to really take place, democracy needs citizens who look beyond their self interests and demonstrate concern for the common

good. Democracy needs citizens who would choose to do what is right regardless of the cost.

### Influencing Factors in Nutrition Program Planning

The process conducted in the preparation of MNAP was affected by several factors. The need of a formal planning was pursued because of some factors respondents believe as attitudinal issues. Ms. Casimiro explained:

*We did never plan because we, as members of the MNC lack commitment to our functions and even responsibility. We greatly rely on the MNAO.*

Ms. Laleo stated a similar view:

*Lack of dedication and commitment were the factors that have nurtured the bad practice in MNAP preparation. MNC members do not set quality time for council meetings. During meetings, some members appear to be in a hurry and are not so mindful of the matters being discussed.*

Ms. Carbonel mentioned lack of cooperation and involvement of MNC members:

*We in the MNC are often passive. We lack cooperation and full involvement in performing our functions as MNC members. We rely a lot on the MNAO.*

During the one-on-one interview, respondents gave suggestions to enable the MNC to plan. Ms. Casimiro suggested commitment on the part of the MNC members:

*Commitment from all members of the Municipal Nutrition Council is very important so that the council will become functional. But the question of who will lead will again come out. I think the municipal officials should lead because they can influence others members. The Municipal Nutrition Council should be exposed to the real situation so that they will see the problem and realize the reason why we are in that council.*

Commitment and dedication were also mentioned by Ms.

Laleo:

*The Municipal Nutrition Council should have time to sit down and plan as a team. All members should be dedicated and committed to their functions as member of the council. Funding should not be a problem because we can plan by making good of what is available. It is actually a behavioral issue.*

Ms. Alidao also elaborated the setting of a quality time for nutrition program planning so that all members could attend:

*Schedules set for planning or simply for regular meetings are sometimes in conflict with our schedules. The Municipal Nutrition Council should agree on a date to conduct a planning workshop. Funding for meals and snacks may be a consideration but it entails a minimal amount.*

Though commitment is important, technical expertise in planning particularly nutrition is pointed out by Ms. Gabriel:

*In order to conduct a planning workshop for the nutrition program, we need an expert in planning and nutrition to help facilitate the planning activity. We need funding for meals and snacks and more importantly commitment from the Municipal Nutrition Council members.*

Mr. Gonzalo complemented that the need for planning and nutrition experts to assist during the planning process for the nutrition program is vital:

*The MNAO should coordinate with the Municipal Planning and Development Office for the conduct of the planning activity for the nutrition program. Some of the Municipal Nutrition Council members are not so involved in planning activities thus we need technical guidance from planning and nutrition experts.*

Ms. Carbonel mentioned the need for MNC members to be oriented on their functions in order to observe full cooperation. Also, members need to understand this important function especially in the planning process.

*Team work is needed so that we can come up with an MNAP. We can only do this if we are aware of our functions as members of the Municipal Nutrition Council.*

Municipal Officials who are members of the MNC should be involved and be active because they play great roles in the success of the nutrition program. Their presence and attendance is a motivating factor to the other members of the council. Community support from other stakeholders will be easily solicited when officials are actively participating.

Macias (1996) made clear the need for political will among Local Chief Executives. He pointed out that Local Chief Executives should recognize that nutrition services are for everyone. Communities suffering

from malnutrition should make nutrition and agriculture as priority agenda. (Larson, 2007).

Dr. Macario mentioned the need for correct data during the planning process:

*Time, involvement and concentration on the part of the Municipal Nutrition Council members are necessary so that planning could be successful. But correct data must be at hand and funding must be provided for the meals and snacks during the planning.*

All respondents mentioned the need for the MNAO to be more active in initiating the planning process for the nutrition program. Mr. Gonzalo stated that she must be the focal person but the other members must do their functions.

*The MNAO should do more “push” for scheduled planning workshops to materialize. At least, she is a full-time MNAO so she has more time to follow-up with the other members.*

As the main person of the local chief executive on nutrition matters, so much trust was given to the MNAO by the other members of the MNC including the responsibility delegated to her even if other members know that she cannot handle the task because of limited experiences. Ms. Carbonel mentioned this when she said that:

*The MNAO needs support because she is like a soldier sent without much training and arms. She still needs to boost her confidence so that she can effectively do her functions.*

Cater and Carr (2007) pointed out the importance of competency, knowledge and skills of nutrition program managers in achieving the objectives of nutrition program. This is necessary because program management is a technical job.

Based on the factors identified, the following could be drawn to enhance the planning process:

a) The MNC should improve their involvement in the planning process of the nutrition program. The performance of the MNC is dependent on their roles and responsibilities. In addition, their functions should be enhanced in view of the overall role and mandate of the National Nutrition Council (NNC). They play key roles in policy advocacy and formulation for the nutrition program. In doing so, the nutrition program advocacy requires active participation which will be observed from all stakeholders.

b) Leadership skill of the MNC chairperson should also be strengthened. Proper leadership results to teamwork, motivation and accomplishment of desirable outputs. This must be supported by confidence, technical expertise and even conceptual ability to set the tone of the planning process and even other program development and implementation activities.

c) There is also a need for proper communication between and among members to effectively perform roles and responsibilities. The entrusted functions should also be observed for better performance in planning or other program activities. In like manner, administrative orders and directives related in the organization of the MNC should specify clearly the functions of the individuals as members of the council including the suggested additional members.

d) The Municipal Planning and Development Office (MPDO) should be able to assist the MNC in facilitating and coordinating the conduct of planning activities of the LGU. The MPDO should be aware of their roles and responsibilities with regards to planning not only on nutrition programs but the entire development program of the municipality.

On the other hand, the key to effective and efficient planning is the result of the formulation of the MNAP. This could serve also as influencing factor in planning because it guides the MNC to perform accordingly. At this point, the process for effective nutrition program formulation should include among others: a) call for a meeting; b) problem identification; c) set a common goal; d) identification of programs/ projects/ activities; e) prioritization of programs/projects/activities; f) consultation with stakeholders; g) final review of the MNC plan; and h) submission of the approved MNAP to the Municipal Council for adoption.



Furthermore, the study revealed the characteristics required from the MNC members in the MNAP formulation: a) commitment and dedication; b) cooperative; c) active participant and relevant involvement; d) time-oriented as member of the MNC; and e) team player.

Aside from the present composition of the MNC, the respondents believed that the following stakeholders' representatives should be included: a) representative of beneficiaries; b) representative of women's association; c) Association of Barangay Council President; d) Sangguniang Kabataan Federation President; and e) representatives of NGOs and POs operating in the area.

Based on the above items, the involvement of key players in the planning process determines the success or failure of desirable, attainable and relevant plans and programs. As a result the output of planning for the nutrition program must be responsive, viable, effective, and efficient in support to the overall objective of the municipal nutrition program.

The conduct of a successful planning process with the involvement of representatives of other stakeholders in the MNC composition will lead to better stakeholders' participation which is vital to sustainable programs. Furthermore, the stakeholders are more knowledgeable on their conditions, situations and needs and eventually are better decision makers on interventions confronting them. Specifically, sense of



ownership of the nutrition program, which is vital for its sustainability, can be developed as stakeholders are involved in the planning process.

The result of the study revealed that the MNC did never sit together and formally plan and MNAPs were just consolidation of plans of offices implementing nutrition related projects and activities. There was no formal or limited planning process done to define the preparation of the MNAP of the municipality. Hence, the first hypothesis is accepted. To improve this situation, the MNC should define and adopt a planning process which they believe is appropriate and be implemented properly for the succeeding formulation of MNAPs.

The study revealed the limited participation of the key players in MNAP preparation because the MNAO is the only person involved in its preparation. The other members simply approve the prepared MNAP during meetings. Therefore, the second hypothesis is accepted. Although this was observed, the MNC should be fully involved in the planning process for the MNAP formulation so that they could come up with plans and programs which contain unified actions and activities to address the malnutrition problem in the municipality.

Since there is no formal or limited defined planning process, there is no limit for planning activities. The third hypothesis is further accepted.

Results of the study revealed that the resources used in the MNAP preparation were minimal. The capability of the MNAO served only as the resource involved in the MNAP preparation while the other MNC members only approved it. The members of the MNC lack the requirements and capability in planning. Nonetheless, the lack of leadership skill on the part of the MNAO did not limit the formulation of the MNAP but led to the orchestration to initiate a planning process. The fourth hypothesis is finally accepted.



## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### Summary

This research was conducted to determine the planning process for the formulation of a municipal nutrition program and the level of involvement of the Municipal Nutrition Council members as key players in the planning process. The one-on-one interviews, focused group discussion and participant observation were the research methods used to gather pertinent data for the study. Data collected were further integrated, interpreted, and analyzed based on the objectives, themes and framework of the study.

The salient findings of the study are the following:

1. The vision of the Municipality of Bakun states that “The people of Bakun dreams of a Bakun community that is economically emancipated politically liberated, environmentally safe and socially and spiritually awake through common action, and provision of basic services and facilities.” In order to attain such vision, the LGU’s mission is to provide adequate and responsive services to enable their constituents to live in comfort, security and prosperity through optimum and sustainable utilization of resources, active peoples' participation and dedicated public service.

The goal of the investment and development plans prepared annually by LGU-Bakun is to improve the quality of life of the people through equitable access to basic services and facilities. The following are its ten objectives: a) to improve/provide infrastructure developments, b) to conserve and protect remaining forest stands, c) to improve/increase revenue collection, d) to increase income of marginalized households through ecologically sound technologies and livelihood trainings e) to promote health and nutrition program, f) to further improve the delivery of social services to the households, g) to promote eco-tourism industry in the municipality h) to provide agricultural services and technical assistance to farmers, i) to contribute in the attainment of a drug-free municipality, and j) to promote ecological solid waste management among all stakeholders.

The respondents believed that the localized vision of the 2005-2010 Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN) is the vision of the MNAP: “a nutritionally improved municipality whose people are well nourished, healthy, intelligent, and socially and economically productive with high sense of human dignity”. It follows that the localized goal of the 2005-2010 PPAN is the goal of the Municipal Nutrition Action Plan (MNAP): “to improve the quality of life of Bakun people through better nutrition, improved health and increased productivity”. The general objective of the

2008 MNAP was to reduce malnutrition rate in the municipality by 5% at the end of 2008. It specifically aimed to a) conduct IEC to mothers/parents/caregivers of malnourished children; b) provide continuous service for the prevention, control and treatment of micronutrient deficiency among infants, preschool children, pregnant and lactating women and high risk and sick children; and c) to conduct supplementary feeding to preschoolers with weights below normal (low and very low).

The respondents revealed that no formal planning was conducted for the preparation of the MNAP. The MNAPs were prepared without considering the development vision, mission, goals and objectives of the LGU and the objectives of the MNAP were not advocated for inclusion in the municipal development plan. Funding support for the nutrition program of the municipality was allotted without due process of prioritization, validation and approval by stakeholders even though there was the consolidated MNAP. On the other hand, the MNAP is usually prepared late for proper endorsement, review and approval.

The respondents are not aware of the vision and goal of the MNAP. The Municipal Budget Officer, the Local Government Operations Officer and the MNC members who are implementing nutrition-related projects and activities are usually the only members knowledgeable about the main

objective of the MNAP. The MNAO is the only MNC member who is fully aware of the objectives of the MNAP since she is the one consolidating the municipal nutrition plan.

At this point, the respondents were not sure if the objectives set for the MNAP were achieved. This led to some respondents to believe that no proper monitoring strategies were in place to check if target outcomes of interventions were accomplished.

On the other hand, knowing the objectives of the municipal nutrition program is important because these serve as guide in the design and preparation of interventions. They also believed that understanding the nutrition planning process, the purpose of the MNC together with their roles and responsibilities could contribute to the attainment of the overall vision, mission, goals and objectives of the LGU.

2. It was believed that there were no formal planning processes conducted for the preparation of past and current MNAPs. The MNAO prepared a consolidated draft of the MNAP by consolidating the different plans of offices implementing nutrition related activities, using the guide sheet given by the Nutrition Evaluation Team. The drafts were presented during MNC meeting and were usually approved without suggestions. There were instances that the MNC gave suggestions but not on the

MNAP but on the lined-up activities particularly on the celebration of nutrition month.

The respondents enumerated the following processes believed as appropriate for the nutrition program, namely: a) call for a meeting, b) problem identification, c) set a common goal, d) identification of programs/projects/activities, e) prioritization of programs/projects/activities, f) consultation and validation with stakeholders, g) final review of the MNC plan, and h) submission of the approved MNAP to the Municipal Council for adoption.

The following are the resources the respondents believed they need in order to effectively and efficiently plan: a) manpower which includes the technical skills and commitment of planning participants, and involvement of stakeholders; b) materials which include the equipment and office supplies necessary to facilitate planning discussions; c) funding to defray expenses incurred during the planning process; and d) proper timing and schedule to formulate the plan.

The respondents believed that formal planning is important for the municipal nutrition program because it provides direction in the overall implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the nutrition program. Furthermore, they were convinced that planning provides an opportunity

for proper prioritization of activities and proper designing of strategies necessary during implementation.

Moreover, they believed that the schedule of plan preparation was very late and needs to reconcile with the annual investment planning and also budgeting activities. This is usually observed on the last quarter of the preceding year or during the first quarter of the year of the MNAPlan. The deadline of submission of the MNAPs at the Provincial Nutrition Office is on or before the end of February of the year of the MNAPlan. It was suggested that the preparation of MNAP for succeeding year must be done during the second quarter of the current year in time before the budgeting period and for the plan to be incorporated in the Annual Investment Plan of the Municipality.

In relation to project prioritization, the respondents believed that there were no definite criteria used in the prioritization of projects and activities in the MNAPs because these were consolidated plans of offices implementing nutrition related projects and activities. It is therefore suggested that the following criteria be used in prioritizing projects and activities in the MNAP: 1.) urgency of the problem and needs of the people and community; 2.) availability of resources during project implementation; and 3.) perceived impact or outcome including scope and coverage during implementation.



On the other hand, it was noted that there was no formal planning process ever conducted. It was only the MNAO who was directly involved in the preparation of the MNAP and the other MNC members simply approves it.

In terms of MNC composition, the respondents were not contented with the present composition and membership. They believed that stakeholders should be adequately represented in the MNC because stakeholders' participation greatly contributes in program effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. In this aspect, it was suggested that the following will be included as members of the MNC particularly barangay officials, the community/beneficiaries, nutrition program implementers, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Peoples Organizations (POs) operating in the municipality to include the media group.

3. Involvement of MNC and key players in the formal planning was limited. The MNC members simply approved the consolidated and prepared draft by the MNAO. As practiced, it is the MNAO that solely prepare the nutrition plan and so much trust was entrusted as to her responsibility on the expected output.

On the other hand, there were no innovations introduced in the preparation of the plan because of the usual practice of utilizing the pro-

forma nutrition plan provided by the provincial nutrition evaluation team based on the guide sheet to come up with the MNAP.

In view of this, the respondents were not amenable to the present set-up of municipal councils, boards, and committees who serve in the post because of similar composition. They believed that this practice contributed to the passive attitudes of majority of the members. Besides, they have their regular functions to perform and meetings were usually conducted on days they were often busy.

The respondents identified the following characteristics they must or perceived to possess as members of the MNC in order to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively, namely: committed and dedicated; cooperative; active participant, time-oriented and output-oriented; and team player.

4. The influencing factors in the planning process particularly in the preparation of the MNAP are all dependent on the respondents' responsibilities and the composition of the MNC. It was identified that the lack of commitment on the part of the MNC members limits the effective planning process including lack of quality time, lack of cooperation, and limited involvement.

In order to plan effectively and efficiently, the respondents identified the following factors: a) commitment and dedication of MNC members; b) cooperation of MNC members; c) involvement of MNC members; d) regular schedule of planning activity; e) teamwork among MNC members; f) validity and appropriateness of data; and g) leadership which is supported by proper motivation and guidance to lead the planning process.

The respondents also mentioned the need for active and fully involved Municipal Officials especially if they are MNC members. This will not only contribute to the success of the planning process but to the success of the nutrition program as a whole.

Other factors that could enhance the planning process are the strengthening of the performance of the MNC of their roles in the nutrition program; strengthening the leadership of the MNC; communicating the roles and responsibilities of the MNC in planning; and performance of the Municipal Planning and Development Office of their roles and responsibilities in planning.

## Conclusions

Based on the results and findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. There is no formal and defined planning process in the preparation of the nutrition program of Bakun, Benguet. It was during the course of this study that the respondents realized the need to come up with a planning process to be followed in MNAP preparation.

2. There is limited participation of key players in the planning of the nutrition program of Bakun, Benguet. Stakeholders were not adequately represented in the MNC, the key players in the planning of the municipal nutrition program. More so, the only MNC member involved in the MNAP preparation was the MNAO because no planning was ever conducted purposively to prepare the MNAP. It was merely consolidation of nutrition-related projects of different agencies which was packaged, presented and submitted for approval and adoption and implementation.

3. Since there is no defined planning process for the preparation of the MNAP, there is no limit set for the planning activities to be followed in nutrition program planning.

4. The resources used in the planning process of the nutrition program of Bakun, Benguet are minimal. It is minimal in terms of the

human resource involved and the time set for planning. The MNAO was the only person involved in the preparation of the MNAP because the other MNC members only approved what was prepared by the MNAO. The MNC was not able to conduct a planning activity purposively to prepare the MNAP because the MNAO did not encourage or motivate for the planning activity and schedules for nutrition program planning were usually set on days MNC members were often busy. Moreover, the MNAO needs to boost her capabilities to perform all the duties and responsibilities delegated to her.

### Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are presented for adoption:

1. The following participatory planning procedure advocated by the National Nutrition Council for MNAP formulation is modified to be adopted and implemented:

- a. Organize a Municipal Nutrition Action Team (MNAT), composed of senior representatives of the different offices with nutrition related programs which will serve as technical working group separate from the

Municipal Nutrition Council that sets directions and policies on nutrition development initiatives.

b. Identify roles and responsibilities to nutrition planning and other community development initiatives such as education, action, capability building and institutionalization activities that encourage positive changes for growth and development of the community.

c. Plan the plan for the MNAP:

c.1. Conduct Strength Weaknesses Opportunities and Threat (SWOT) analysis.

c.2. Conduct of visioning exercise to set the formulation of vision, mission, goals and objectives.

c.3. Conduct of action planning and prioritization of strategies and programs that will be validated by stakeholders and key players for acceptance and approval prior to implementation.

c.4. Plan implementation in a more participatory manner.

c.5. Encourage participatory monitoring and evaluation.

2. MNAP preparation should be synchronized with the preparation of the municipal annual investment plan, development plan and budget

preparation because all funded programs, projects and activities could emanate from the investment plan of the municipality.

3. The Chairperson of the MNC should lead the Council. He should encourage the council to work collectively to formulate, implement, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the Municipal Nutrition Action Plan.

4. Other stakeholders should be represented in the Municipal Nutrition Council to include among others the following:

a. Association of Barangay Council (ABC) representative for easier coordination of nutrition interventions at the barangays.

b. Women's Federation representative because of the vulnerability issue when it comes to grassroots development and health and nutrition condition of the barangays or their communities.

c. Bakun Indigenous Tribes Organization (BITO) for better complementation of nutrition efforts because of localized partnership and governance efforts.

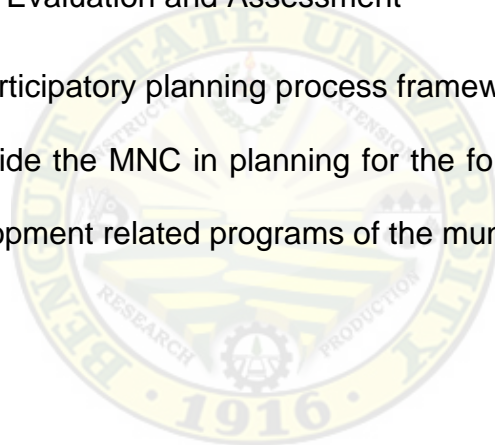
d. Non Government Organization (NGO) operating in the municipality with nutrition related programs for better complementation and collaboration.

5. There should be a continuing capacity building activities to enhance the effective and efficient management of the nutrition program.

The following capacity building activities are recommended:

- a. Community Planning Process
- b. Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
- c. Project Proposal Preparation
- d. Project Evaluation and Assessment

6. The participatory planning process framework presented below is advocated to guide the MNC in planning for the formulation of the MNAP and other development related programs of the municipality:





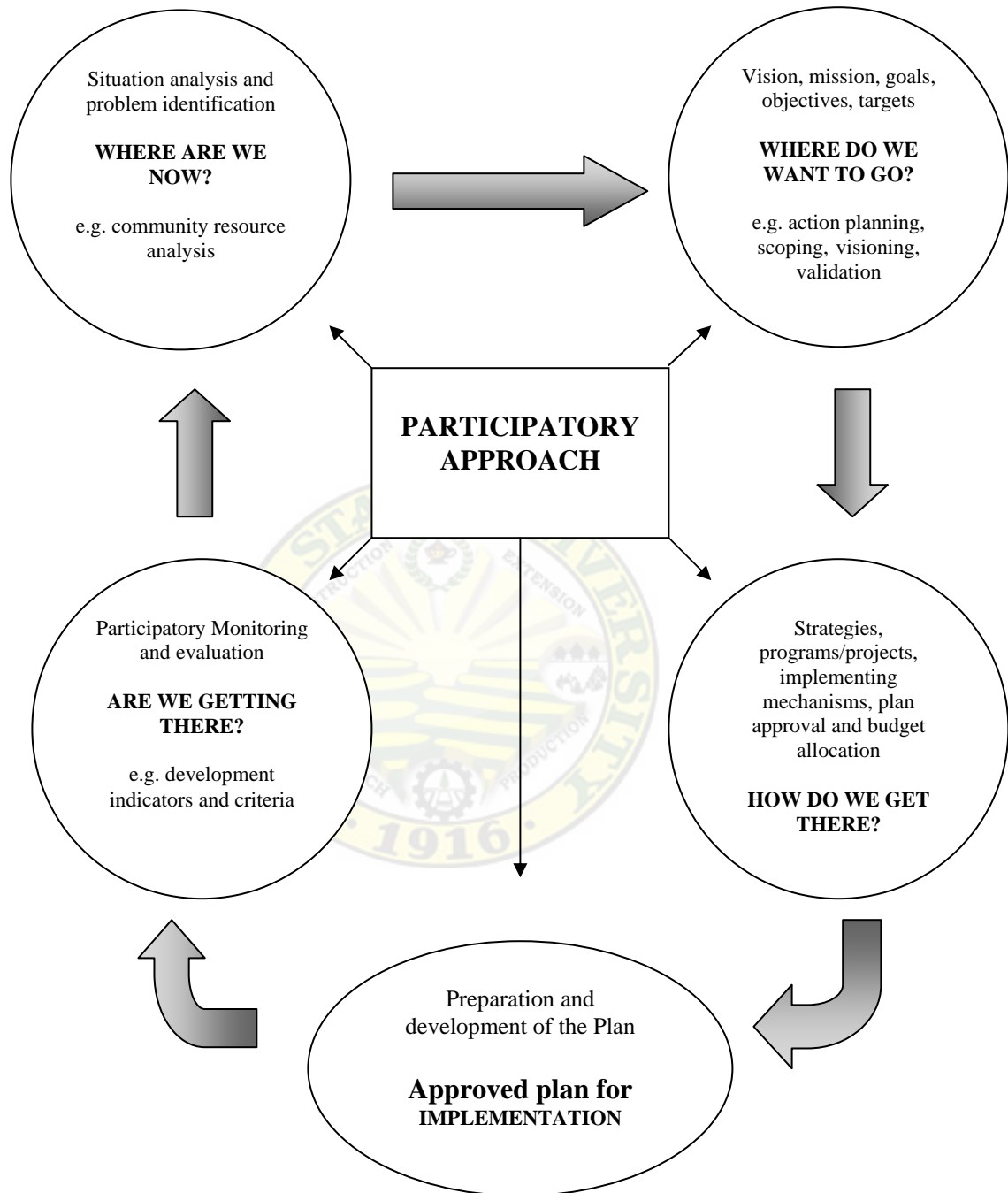


Figure 3: Participatory planning process framework for the formulation of the MNAP (Talawa and Aquino, 2008)

Based on the figure above all activities should be participatory in nature with the active involvement of key players and stakeholders during the planning process of specific development aspect. Specifically, in assessing “where we are”, the conduct of situational analysis and problem identification be done especially where the people are; analysis of the community, its resources and management should be done through collaborative, critical and complementing participatory approach.

With regards to future directions and plans, determining “where we want to go” must include visioning, scoping, and action planning activities for relevant plans. This should be supported by proper and participatory people and community activity on the validation of strategies and acceptance and approval of programs.

Overall the end result of participatory planning will lead people and communities to have a dynamic, relevant, appropriate, systematic and organized nutrition program including the design, preparation and implementing of strategies, programs, and projects.

In addition, the people and the community involved in the nutrition program should be actively involved and participate in monitoring and evaluation for better and appropriate feedback and or improvement and preparations of innovations and interventions in community nutrition

especially for women and children, youths, elderly and pregnant and lactating mothers.

Finally, the research concludes that people and their communities are the important resource in any activity. At the start of any activity, encourage participatory planning as a very important component in the development of community development plans and programs because it provides strategic direction in attaining set goals and objectives. Participatory planning process formulates, systematizes and organizes unified courses of action with proper strategies and mechanisms that consciously determine achievement of the vision, mission, goals, and objectives set over a period of time given the effective and efficient utilization of limited resources.

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Republic of the Philippines  
**BENGUET STATE UNIVERSITY**  
La Trinidad, Benguet

August 29, 2008

**HON. MARCELO B. CONTADA**  
Municipal Mayor  
Bakun, Benguet

Dear Sir:

Greetings!

The undersigned is conducting a research entitled "Keyplayers' Involvement in the Planning Process of the Nutrition Program of Bakun, Benguet" in partial fulfillment of the requirements of her studies in masteral degree in Community Development, Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet. The result of the study will serve as a guide to assess the planning process for the nutrition program of Bakun, Benguet.

In this regard, may I respectfully request your Office that I be allowed to conduct one-on-one interview and one setting focused group discussion with the members of the Municipal Nutrition Council of the municipality.

I look forward for your favorable action on this matter.

Very truly yours,

**ELIZABETH M. TALAWA**  
Researcher

Republic of the Philippines  
**BENGUET STATE UNIVERSITY**  
La Trinidad, Benguet

August 29, 2008

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Dear Respondent:

Greetings!

The undersigned is currently employed with the Municipal Government of Bakun, and is conducting a research entitled "Keyplayers' Involvement in the Planning Process of the Nutrition Program of Bakun, Benguet" in partial fulfillment of the requirements of her studies in masteral degree in Community Development, Benguet State University, La Trinidad, Benguet. The result of the study will serve as a guide to assess the planning process for the nutrition program of Bakun, Benguet.

Being one of the keyplayers in the planning process of the nutrition program, your views and observations as to your involvement are being solicited. I will be coordinating with the Municipal Mayor's Office as to the scheduling of a one-on-one interview with you and a focused group discussion with all the members of the Municipal Nutrition Council.

Thank you very much and I anticipate your attention and cooperation.

Very truly yours,

**ELIZABETH M. TALAWA**  
Researcher

## Appendix A

## PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

NAME OF RESPONDENTS	AGE	POSITION/DESIGNATION IN THE MUNICIPAL NUTRITION COUNCIL
Mr. Paterno C. Gonzalo	43	Private Secretary II/ Acting Chairperson
Hon. Victor T. Bag-ayan	66	Municipal Vice Mayor/Co- Chairperson
Hon. Baldas L. Ognaden	58	Municipal Councilor/Member
Engr. Cornelio G. Colyong	48	Municipal Planning & Development Coordinator/Member
Ms. Sonia L. Casimiro	49	Municipal Budget Officer/Member
Dr. Simon P. Macario, Jr.	38	Municipal Health Officer/Member
Ms. Gloria B. Donglal	57	Local Revenue Collection Officer I – In-Charge of Office/Member
Ms. Anabelle B. Laron	33	Local Government Operations Officer II/Member
Ms. Leticia C. Laleo	53	Social Welfare Officer III/Member
Ms. Norma G. Alidao	40	Human Resource Management Officer II/Member
Ms. Estrella C. Guzman	42	School Nurse/Member
Ms. Louisa L. Carbonel	50	Agricultural Technologist/Member
Ms. Hilaria B. Gabriel	44	Clerk II-MNAO Designate/Member

## Appendix B

## INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

## A. Basic Questions

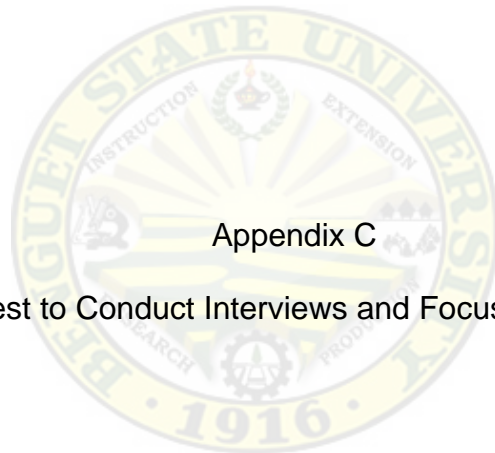
1. How is the planning process for the nutrition program conducted in the municipality?
2. Who are involved in the municipal nutrition program planning process?
3. When is the municipal nutrition program planning process conducted?
4. How do you prioritize nutrition programs, projects and activities?
5. What are the resources needed in planning for the nutrition program?
6. Are the objectives of the nutrition program achieved?

## B. Follow-up Questions

1. What is your perception of the planning process for the municipal nutrition program?
2. What is the purpose of planning for the municipal nutrition program?
3. Do you think the present composition of the MNC is sufficient?
4. Who are supposed to be included in the present composition of the Municipal Nutrition Council if it is not sufficient?
5. Are stakeholders well represented in the Municipal Nutrition Council?
6. Who are the stakeholders in the municipal nutrition program?
7. Is the time frame for Municipal Nutrition Action Plan (MNAP) preparation synchronized with the municipal development plan and budget preparation?
8. Why do you need to change the schedule of MNAP preparation?
9. Are there criteria used in prioritizing nutrition programs, projects and activities?
10. Are you aware of the objectives of the municipal nutrition program?

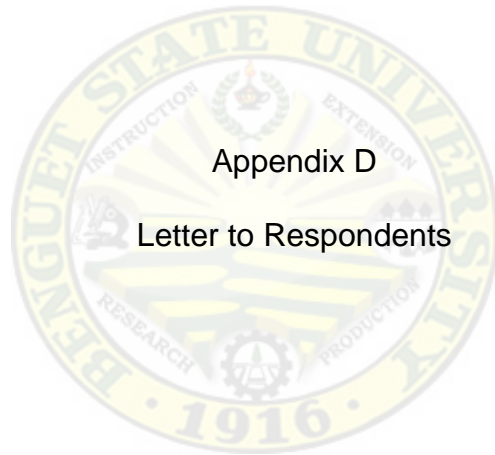
11. What is the importance of knowing the objectives of the municipal nutrition program in planning for the MNAP?
12. What are the factors that hindered the conduct of planning for the MNAP?
13. What are the factors you believe should be considered so that you can pursue a planning activity for the MNAP?





Appendix C

Letter of Request to Conduct Interviews and Focused Group Discussion



Appendix D

Letter to Respondents