

# POLICY BRIEF

AUGUST 2018

## The Issue

Official poverty statistics show that most of the country's poor could be found in the agriculture sector. In October 2015, agriculture had a 29.6% share in the total labor force of the country, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). However, the contribution of agriculture in the country's economy was only 11%, according to World Bank. In addition, fishermen and farmers had the highest poverty incidence among the country's basic sectors from 2003 to 2009. They are the least paid workers in the Philippine economy with an average daily wage and salary of ₱156.8 and ₱178.43, respectively in 2011.

With all these issues, the government has implemented programs to empower farmers and their families by providing appropriate trainings and funding support to improve their agricultural proficiency and productivity.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) through Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) implemented the Youth in Agriculture and Fisheries Program (YAFP) Scholarship to help address the problem of declining enrollment in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries among colleges and universities in the country. It was also aimed at generating employment for the agricultural sector.

## THE YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES PROGRAM (YAFP) SCHOLARSHIP OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTE : AN EVALUATION



ATI being the implementer of the program wants to know as to what extent program objectives had been met and whether the program was worth investing. The study will serve as the basis in proposing funds or otherwise to sustain the program.

Moreover, the results of the study will help the government in crafting any scholarship program for undergraduate courses in agriculture and allied fields.

## The Study

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of Youth in Agriculture and Fisheries Program (YAFP) Scholarship through the rate of employment among graduates and their pursuit of professional career and business in agriculture and fisheries.

Covered seven (7) regions of Luzon with 200 randomly selected respondents. The study employed descriptive research design to summarize data on respondent's and program profile, perceived, quality of program implementation and effectiveness in terms of outputs and outcomes.

Primary data were gathered through survey of the graduates and the key informants using questionnaires. Secondary or program data were obtained through office visits, mediated media and official reports' review.

## The Findings

Results of the scholarship evaluation study reveals the following conclusions:

**1** Quality of the YAFP scholarship and implementation were perceived by the scholars as excellent in terms of its accessibility, relevance of the guiding principles, appropriateness of scholarship mechanics, reasonableness of eligibility requirements, adequacy and timeliness of delivery of support/privileges, and fairness of terms of condition.

**2** The program was effective in (a) providing scholarship to deserving children of small-income farmers and fisherfolk, (b) encouraging them to take courses in agri-fishery and allied fields, and (c) contributing to the development of the agriculture and fishery sector by producing good graduates who would work in the agri-fishery field. However, it was not able to produce a significant number of agri-entrepreneurs.

**3** The scholars were able to benefit from the scholarship in terms of increasing their knowledge, attitudes, skills, aspiration and values in their respective field of specialization, being employed in work related to their field, and generating appropriate income to help their families and contributing to the improvement of their communities. However, few scholars were able to set-up their own agri-business and create employment for others.

## The Policy Recommendations

The recommendations for the scholarship program was drawn from the recommendations of both the scholars and key informants as well as the problems they had encountered in the implementation of the scholarship. If the scholarship would be re-implemented, the researchers suggest to consider the following recommendations in revising the scholarship mechanics and implementation strategies/activities:

**1** Consider adjusting limitations on age, family income, and parental roots to accommodate more deserving scholars.

**a** Increase age limit to 35 years old, as age should not prelude a person willing to study or pursue education.

**b** Number of household members studying and working, and other family expenditure should also be considered in determining parents' capability to send their children to school. Income of parents can be subjective based on the factors given.

**c** Small-income families which were not in the agriculture and fisheries sector might also have children willing to take agriculture and fisheries courses.

**2** Measure intellectual capacity and emotional maturity of applicants through qualifying examinations. This recommendation was suggested by key informants as they had encountered problems in filling-up scholarship slots every semester due to scholars who could not meet the grade requirement and had problems managing their support money. Although there was an interview of scholarship applicants, a more comprehensive and rational examination could help ensure that the qualified applicants could really meet the conditions of the scholarship. Thus, cases of disqualified scholars and problems of filling-up slots from time to time could be minimized.



**3** Conduct campaigns to encourage more students to enroll in agri-fishery courses. Results of the study suggested that only a few people knew about the scholarship – concentrated in local government units, state college and university officials, and 4H club members. Farmer and fisherfolks who were the target beneficiaries of the scholarship did not get first-hand information about it. Dissemination of information on the scholarship should reach rural areas where targets are. Using different campaign strategies could encourage youth to take agriculture and fishery courses even if it was not a condition of the scholarship.

**4** Help the scholars from enrollment to employment. This recommendation was to address problems with the payback service/obligation of the scholarship. Many scholars found it hard to fulfill their payback obligation because of the tough competition in the job market. Scholars suggested that ATI should assist in finding job opening where the scholars could enter or apply to assure that they would be able to fulfill their payback service. This also should help ensure that the scholarship would be able to achieve its objective to encourage youth to take professional careers in agriculture and fisheries.

**5** Keep track of the graduates through alumni groups. The main problem encountered in the conduct of the evaluation study was tracking down the current workplace and whereabouts of the scholars. Some of the scholars tend to shift from one work to another in just a span of time, making it hard to keep track of their work status. Having an alumni group for scholars would help build connections between them and the agency. Also, connecting through the social media platforms would be an easy way to track the scholars' status.

\*This document is a complete transliteration into a policy brief form of the evaluation study funded by the Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Training Institute and conducted by the Central Luzon State University headed by Dr. Eugenia G. Baltazar