

Assessment of the status of Assistance in Individual Crisis Situation (AICS) program in selected municipalities in the Fourth District of Laguna: Basis for action program design

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Abstract

This research aimed to assess the status of the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) Program in selected municipalities of the Fourth District of Laguna. Specifically, it examined the demographic profile of the respondents, the extent of service utilization, and the level of assessment of the AICS program's effectiveness in providing medical, educational, burial, transportation, food, cash, and psychosocial assistance. The study also examined the relationship between the availment of services and the respondents' assessment of program implementation. A descriptive-correlational research design was used, with data collected through surveys and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results were analyzed using Pearson correlation, t-tests, and ANOVA. Analysis revealed that most respondents belonged to economically disadvantaged sectors, with a high dependence on AICS services, particularly medical and financial assistance. The level of assessment of AICS services was generally satisfactory, but challenges were noted in timeliness, fairness, and efficiency. Statistical analysis indicated a positive relationship between the extent of service availment and the respondents' significant perceptions of program effectiveness. The study highlights the need for policy enhancements to improve service delivery, efficiency, and accessibility of the AICS program. Thus, it is recommended that processes be streamlined, funding allocated, and program awareness enhanced to better support individuals in crises.

Keywords: Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS), social welfare, crisis assistance, program assessment, service availment

1. Introduction

People become stronger and gain a deeper understanding of the true meaning of life when faced with various circumstances that challenge their way of living. It is part of human nature for individuals to encounter challenges and crises that transform them into better versions of themselves. However, these experiences, often crises in life, do not always serve to help people appreciate the positive aspects of life. Instead, individuals frequently feel as though they are being tested by life when placed in very difficult situations.

A crisis is a sudden and critical situation marked by a significant turning point, often with serious consequences. A quick and effective solution is urgently needed during a crisis. In the Philippines, it is but normal for government agencies to assist Filipinos experiencing a crisis in life. Government agencies see to it that they address such needs of the community in order to maintain the attainment of necessities that one must have to live. Thus, the government paved the way to creating a program to help and assist the community, Department of Social Welfare and Development's program called Assistance in Individuals in Crisis Situation or AICS. AICS is one of the government's initiatives to provide immediate and temporary assistance to individuals and families who are affected by different crisis (DSWD Program, 2022). DSWD Program also added that AICS aims to provide essential services and assistance to

people who are greatly affected by crisis. It is also intended for individuals who are in need of financial assistance due to catastrophic events and calamities such as floods, landslides, typhoons, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. This program provides limited financial assistance to qualified applicants.

The implementation of AICS in the province of Laguna paves the way to the attainment of the necessities and needs of Lagunenses. It provides a systematic method of application for assistance through a step-by-step application process up to the release of assistance to qualified applicants. However, due to the increasing number of people requesting assistance from the program, it somehow decreases the efficiency of service and promptness of staff since the ratio of applicants to staff is not in proportion.

With the abovementioned information, this study aims to assess the status of the Assistance in Individual in Crisis Situation. Furthermore, this study intends to find out the current status of the implementation of the different services being offered under the AICS program, which can help in identifying key points that can be used in dealing with the clients of the program, especially in making the services offered more efficient. Moreover, it also aims to assess the different implementing measures being done in the provision of the different services offered in the program. In addition, the researcher strongly believes that the findings and results of this study will contribute a lot to providing better and easier services being rendered to clients, not only in the DSWD-AICS office in the fourth district of Laguna, but also in a wider perspective.

1.1. Background of the Study

Providing services and assistance to individuals experiencing crisis situations has been one of the researcher's tasks and duties as a Municipal Social Welfare Officer in the office of Municipal Social Welfare and Development. As part of the researcher's work, clients from different walks of life have been accommodated in applying for assistance under the Assistance for Individuals in Crisis Situations.

With the outbreak of COVID-19, government agencies in the country have extended the assistance programs they have to reach and serve people living in the country who are greatly affected by the pandemic. As such, the number of individuals seeking assistance also increased. Considering the fact mentioned, it has been a desire for any agency to provide services to clients more easily and quickly. Relevant to the report by Mallari (2022), stating that thousands of beneficiaries are still queuing up in the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) region.

Since the subject of the study is aligned to the current job of the researcher, the study will be conducted in selected municipalities in the fourth district of the province of Laguna. The said vicinity of the study caters more than hundreds of clients every week.

In this study, the researcher assessed the implementation of the Individuals in Crisis Situation program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. Furthermore, the researcher focused on the different services offered by the program to clients and the implementing measures that they follow in providing the different services under the agency.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on some theories that present concepts of responses towards crisis situations, such as Social Protection Theory, Systems Theory, Social Welfare Theory, and Adaptational Theory, which provide the analytical lens to assess the delivery and effectiveness of the AICS program.

1.2.1. Social Protection Theory

Social Protection Theory underlines the state's role in safeguarding its citizens' welfare, especially those vulnerable to economic shocks, disasters, or life crises. According to Barrientos and Hulme (2008),

social protection includes all initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized.

In the Philippine context, the AICS program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is a form of social safety net that provides an immediate response to people in crisis. As per DSWD (2022), AICS covers medical, burial, educational, and transportation assistance to marginalized and disadvantaged individuals.

Further, Reyes et al. (2018) emphasized that such programs are vital tools for poverty alleviation and social inclusion, especially in local settings where people may have limited access to national-level services. The effectiveness of AICS, therefore, is closely linked to the principles of this theory — addressing urgent needs while promoting dignity and equity. Systems Theory

First introduced by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968) and later applied to organizational management and public administration, Systems Theory emphasizes the interdependence of all parts within a system. Concerning the AICS program, the theory helps examine how various components—policy formulation, administrative procedures, funding allocation, and client feedback—affect the overall functionality and effectiveness of service delivery.

As expanded by Denhardt and Denhardt (2015), the New Public Service model, which builds on Systems Theory, stresses citizen-centered governance, transparency, and collaborative networks. This is echoed in a study by Dela Cruz and Manalo (2018), which found that local social welfare offices often lack the integrated systems and coordination mechanisms needed for timely and effective AICS implementation.

Recent literature (e.g., Javier & Tan, 2023) notes that while digital platforms and streamlined processes have been introduced in some LGUs, disparities in implementation remain due to administrative capacity, staff training, and leadership support.

Systems Theory therefore offers a valuable lens for identifying bottlenecks, inefficiencies, and potential areas of improvement in AICS operations across municipalities.

For the AICS program, this means successful implementation requires synergy between the local government units, social welfare officers, financial resources, policy frameworks, and beneficiary engagement. Recent studies (e.g., Manasan, 2020; Alampay, 2021) emphasize that disjointed systems or poor inter-agency coordination often lead to inefficiencies, delays, or corruption, weakening the intended impacts of welfare programs.

1.2.2. Social Welfare Theory

The Social Welfare Theory posits that the state has a moral and institutional responsibility to ensure the well-being of its citizens, particularly those in vulnerable conditions (Midgley, 2001). In the context of the Philippines, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has operationalized this principle through programs like AICS, which serves as a form of emergency assistance to individuals facing medical, funeral, transportation, or other critical needs.

According to Espiritu (2012), social welfare in the Philippines has evolved from charity-based models to a more rights-based and developmental approach. This shift aligns with the goals of AICS, which treats crisis intervention not as a privilege but a right for those in need. More recent works, such as those by Santos & Ramos (2020), emphasize the need for efficient and equitable access to welfare services in local government units (LGUs), highlighting issues of bureaucratic red tape and uneven distribution of services.

Thus, the Social Welfare Theory underpins the normative expectations of AICS: that it should be accessible, responsive, and just and serve as a critical safety net in crisis situations.

1.2.3. Adaptational Theory

Adaptational theory, commonly associated with biology, posits that organisms evolve and change in response to their environment. When faced with environmental shifts, three potential changes may occur according to adaptation theory: habitat tracking, genetic change, or extinction. Adaptation theory is not limited to biology; interpersonal adaptation theory, for instance, focuses on how individuals enter interactions with expectations, requirements, and desires, which collectively establish their interaction position (King, 2018).

In addition, Smith (2017) added that an adaptation in nature is acquired through evolution and conveys some type of advantage that helps a species to pass its genetic material along to another generation. It typically takes one of three forms: structural, physiological or behavioral.

A structural adaptation is a change involving a physical aspect of an organism. The physical change is often related to a change in the organism's physical environment. For example, an ecosystem suddenly becoming forested might cause the animals living there to develop suction pads or climbing claws, which would convey a distinct advantage over species that did not change. Other examples of structural changes include developing wings for flight, fins for swimming or powerful legs for jumping.

Behavioral adaptation is a change affecting the way an organism naturally acts. This type of adaptation could be caused by a change in the surrounding environment or the actions of another species. In addition to changes in a predatory strategy, examples of behavioral adaptations include changes in social patterns, communication methods, feeding habits and reproductive strategy.

Physiological adaptations are similar to structural adaptations in the sense that they involve a physical change to the species. However, physiological adaptations aren't always seen in an organism's appearance. This type of adaptation may be driven by either a change to the environment or the behavior of another species.

Furthermore, Cherry (2023) defined adaptation as the ability to adjust to new information and experiences. Learning new information is essentially adapting to our constantly changing environment so we can function more effectively in the world. He also mentioned in his discussion that Piaget believed infants are born with a very basic mental structure that they can build on as they experience their environment. As they grow, they construct mental representations of the world known as schemata. Each individual schema is like a basic building block of intelligent thought and behavior – and a way of organizing knowledge. According to Piaget's theory, adaptation of schemata is one of the important processes guiding cognitive development from the moment you are born. The adaptation process itself can take place in two ways: assimilation and accommodation.

Crisis management involves strategically handling situations that threaten an organization's reputation, operations, or stakeholders. Several theories and models contribute to the effective understanding and management of crises. The Crisis Management Model, Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), and Adaptational Theory are three frameworks that can be interconnected for a comprehensive approach to crisis management.

The Crisis Management Model's pre-crisis stage aligns with the preparation phase of SCCT, emphasizing the importance of being proactive, having plans in place, and anticipating potential crises. SCCT guides communication strategies during the acute crisis stage, helping to determine appropriate response strategies based on the type of crisis, with a focus on maintaining or restoring the organization's reputation. The Adaptational Theory complements the chronic crisis and resolution stages of the Crisis Management Model, emphasizing the need for organizations to learn from crises, adapt their strategies, and make necessary changes to prevent future occurrences.

By integrating these theories and models, organizations can develop a more holistic approach to crisis management. They can focus on proactive preparation, effective communication during the crisis, and adaptive strategies for long-term resilience. The goal is to manage the current crisis and learn and improve for the future.

The following theories present an overview of the different situations in which a person needs assistance and the support that he/she can get, especially from different government agencies' programs. This concept was used to assess the current status of the implementation of the Assistance in Crisis Situations (AICS) Program.

1.3. Conceptual Framework

The study primarily focused on assessing the status of assistance provided to individuals in crises in selected municipalities in the fourth district of Laguna. It centers on implementing various services offered by the agency, including medical, educational, funeral, transportation, food, and cash assistance for other services. Additionally, it encompasses the agency's measures for delivering the different services they provide.

To present the underlying concepts and data of the study, 'the research paradigm was utilized:

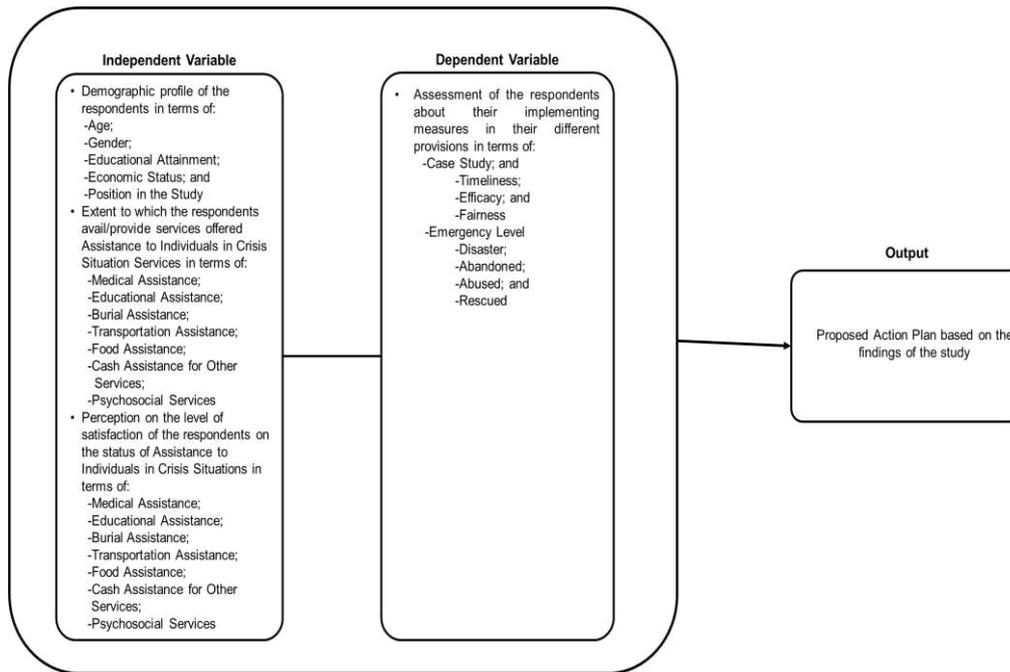


Fig. 1. Research Paradigm

Figure 1 presents the study's paradigm, illustrating the entire process undertaken to obtain the necessary information relevant to the study's aim.

Part I consists of the Independent Variable and Dependent Variable. The independent variable shows the different information that was assessed during this study. It includes basic information on the profile of the respondents, such as their name, age, gender, educational attainment, economic status, and position in the conduct of the study, as well as whether they are recipients or implementers of various AICS Programs. Furthermore, it also includes information on the extent to which the respondents availed themselves of the different assistance under the said program. Moreover, Part I presents the assessment made by the respondents regarding the status of Assistance in Individual in Crisis Situations in various programs, such as medical assistance, educational assistance, funeral assistance, transportation assistance, food assistance, other services needing cash assistance, and psychosocial services.

In addition, the Dependent Variable presents the assessment that respondents must make regarding the agency's implementing measures in providing their services through a case study that addresses timeliness, efficacy, and fairness, as well as an Emergency Level that includes disaster, abandonment, abuse, and rescue. Meanwhile, Part II shows the Output that the study conducted once the findings have been summarized. In this case, a Proposed Action Plan Design for the Assistance in Individuals in Crisis Situations Program is deemed needed as an Output.

1.4. Statement of the Problem

The study aims to assess the status of Assistance in Individual in Crisis Situation (AICS) Program in selected Municipalities in the Fourth District of Laguna. Hence, the researcher seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Age
 - 1.2 Gender
 - 1.3 Educational Attainment
 - 1.4 Socio-economic Status
 - 1.5 Client Category, and
 - 1.6. Position in the Study?
2. To what extent do the respondents avail themselves of the services offered by the AICS in terms of:
 - 2.1 Medical Assistance
 - 2.2 Educational Assistance
 - 2.3 Burial Assistance
 - 2.4. Transportation Assistance;
 - 2.5 Food Assistance
 - 2.6 Cash Assistance for Other Services, and
 - 2.7 Psychosocial Services?
3. What is the respondents' perception of the level of satisfaction of the respondents on the status of AICS in terms of:
 - 3.1 Medical Assistance
 - 3.2 Educational Assistance
 - 3.3 Burial Assistance
 - 3.4 Transportation Assistance
 - 3.5 Food Assistance
 - 3.6 Cash Assistance for Other Services, and
 - 3.7 Psychosocial Services?
4. What is the assessment of the respondents about the implementing measures in the different provisions of the AICS program in terms of:
 - 4.1. Program Implementation and
 - 4.2. Emergency Level?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the recipient-respondents' extent of availing different services offered by the agency and assessment of the services of the agency for Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the recipient-respondents' assessment of the services of the agency for Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations and the implementer-respondents' assessment of their implementing measures on the different provisions offered?
7. What Proposed Action Plan can be made based on the result of the study?

1.5. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were drawn based on the identified objectives of the study.

There is no significant relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents and the extent to which they avail themselves of the different services offered by the agency under the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) program.

Furthermore, the study also aims to assess whether there is no significant relationship between the extent to which respondents availed themselves of different AICS programs and their assessment of the services provided by the agency for Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation Programs (AICS).

The study also aims to assess whether there is no significant relationship between the recipient-respondents' assessment of AICS services and the implementer-respondents' assessment of the implementing measures.

Lastly, the study aims to evaluate whether there is a significant difference in the assessment of implementing measures concerning timeliness, efficacy, fairness, and emergency response across the various categories of beneficiaries.

1.6. Significance of the Study

Assessing the current status of the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) Program in selected municipalities within the Fourth District of Laguna. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement in the program's implementation, with the ultimate goal of designing an action program that enhances its responsiveness and effectiveness.

The results of this study are deemed advantageous to the following:

AICS Clients. Individuals and families in crisis stand to benefit from a more effective and accessible AICS program. Improved implementation will lead to more timely and adequate support, reducing the vulnerability and hardship of those in need.

AICS Focal Person/Worker. This study will serve as a useful resource for them to offer quick and effective service to the agency's clients since the structural flow of services is already available, which caters to the updated provisions of the agency.

Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The study's findings can be used as a stepping stone for the agency to become more efficient in providing different services. This can be beneficial on both the part of the agency and its clients because it will reduce the duration of transactions less than the usual time as well as securing faster and easier access to information.

Future Researchers. This will serve as a guide if they will wish to conduct further studies relevant to this topic. This study will serve as a valuable reference for future studies in social welfare, public administration, and program evaluation. It may inspire further research on crisis assistance programs within and beyond the province of Laguna.

Local Government Units (LGUs). It would help the Municipal officials and local social welfare offices may gain a clearer understanding of how the AICS program is performing within their jurisdiction. This will help them develop evidence-based strategies and policies to improve program delivery, resource allocation, and beneficiary outreach.

Municipal of Social Welfare and Development (MSWD)—Laguna Office. This study is anticipated to provide the agency with an overview of the various services it currently offers and the improvements that will arise once the study's output is utilized in the office. This can assist in revising guidelines, addressing implementation gaps, and ensuring more consistent service delivery across the province.

Scope and Limitations

This study focused on assessing the status of the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) Program in selected municipalities within the Fourth District of Laguna. It aims to evaluate the level of awareness, accessibility, efficiency, client satisfaction, and implementation challenges related to the program.

The findings will be used as a basis for developing an action program to enhance the delivery of assistance in times of crisis. Moreover, the target number of respondents was 160 AICS clients and agency officials from the mentioned district in the province of Laguna. Data will be gathered through interviews and a self-administered survey questionnaire or survey were used to collect the specific data from the respondents.

1.7. Review of Related Literatures

This chapter presents the related literature and studies that are relevant to the current study. The following were found to relate to the concept and the main study.

Related Literature

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) offers various services and assistance to the Filipino people. One of these services is the DSWD AICS Program, which stands for Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS).

The DSWD AICS Program is one of the Philippine government's initiatives to provide immediate and temporary assistance to individuals and families affected by crises.

With the crisis brought about by the pandemic, the DSWD AICS Program aims to provide essential services and assistance to those affected. The program is also intended for individuals who are in need of financial assistance due to catastrophic events and calamities, such as floods, landslides, typhoons, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. The DSWD AICS Program provides limited financial assistance to qualified applicants. (DSWD Program, 2022)

This program, which was initially implemented in 2014, provides various forms of assistance – medical, educational, funeral, food and non-food, transportation, and even psychosocial help – to disadvantaged and vulnerable Filipinos. These forms of support are crucial not only as we navigate through the long-term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic but also in response to the rising number of Filipino families who have gone through many hardships over the past years. In fact, data from the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed that, in 2021, 18.1 percent or close to 20 million Filipinos lived below the poverty threshold or whose income cannot be sufficient for their basic food and non-food needs. There is an urgent need for the government to not only think of long-term solutions but also interventions that would serve as immediate safety nets for families that are in dire situations. In our efforts to reduce poverty in the Philippines, it is crucial for us to provide mechanisms that will serve as a stopgap to prevent vulnerable families from sinking deeper. It is our belief that the AICS Program is among the government's most effective support systems. For instance, during the recent oil spill in Oriental Mindoro, the program was instrumental in providing emergency aid, not only to the residents of the province, but also to those residing in Palawan and Antique (Angara, 2023).

As the leader in social protection, the DSWD is mandated to provide the best possible service to the citizens. It is also responsible for addressing the various needs of the poor and vulnerable sectors of society. This includes implementing programs and projects aimed at improving the quality of life for the people, such as the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS), among others.

In 2014, The DSWD issued a memorandum circular to improve the implementation of the Assistance to Crisis Situations (AICS) program. Three other circulars followed this in 2016. These documents provide guidelines on how to implement the program. (DSWD Program, 2022).

As mentioned in Senate Bill 2328 (July, 2023) also known as Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Act, AICS Program shall refer to a social safety net or stop-gap measure to support the recovery of individuals and families suffering from unexpected life events or crises through the provision of psychosocial intervention and/or direct financial/material assistance that may enable them to meet their basic needs in the form of food, transportation, medical, educational and burial assistance. It is also known as the "Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation Program", and herein interchangeably referred to as "AICS" or "Program".

In 2019, the DSWD issued an amendment to the memorandum circular about the implementation of AICS. This document provides updated guidelines on how to implement the program. (DSWD Program, 2022)

AICS is one of the key services of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) that provides medical assistance, burial, transportation, education, food, or financial assistance for other support services or needs of a person or family (DBM Press Release, n.d.). In addition, it was mentioned in the official website of AICS (n.d.) that the objective of the Program is to help our poor countrymen who are in crisis to meet their needs.

AICS serves as a social safety net or stop-gap measure to support the recovery of individuals and families identified to be suffering from any adversity or crisis through the provision of financial assistance, psychosocial intervention, and referral services that will enable the clients to meet their basic needs in the form of food, transportation, medical, educational, material, funeral, and cash assistance for other support services, among others.

Furthermore, Labado (2022) explained on the official website of the AICS that the total beneficiaries for the year 2022. He stressed out that there had been a total of 5, 336, 381 beneficiaries of the program for the whole year of 2022. The greatest number of clients served were Family Head and Other Needy Adults (FHONA) with a total of 2,440,642 or 45.74% of the beneficiaries. This is followed by Women in Especially Difficult Circumstances (WEDC) totaling 1,215,908 or 22.79%. The lowest number of beneficiaries are the Persons Living with HIV-AIDS (PLHIV) totaling 1,219 clients served or 0.02%.

Moreover, the accomplishment of the program for the first semester of 2023 has also been presented by Labado (2023). It was pointed out that in the first semester of the year, a total of 1, 867, 563 beneficiaries were served by the program. Family Head and Other Needy Adults (FHONA) still became the most numbered clients with a total of 732, 006 or 39.20% of the total clients served followed by Women in Especially Difficult Circumstances (WEDC) totaling with 332, 913 clients or 17.83%. The category with the least number of beneficiaries is the Persons Living with HIV-AIDS (PLHIV) totaling 1, 004 beneficiaries or 0.05%.

The AICS Program allows Filipinos to access government services designed to help them recover. To apply for a certain program under the AICS, one must be able to compile and submit the necessary requirements depending on the assistance a person will be availing of (DSWD Assistance, 2023).

Several policies and laws provide the foundation for the implementation of crisis assistance programs in the Philippines:

Republic Act No. 4373 (Social Work Law) mandates the provision of professional social services to individuals in need. The AICS program follows this principle by ensuring trained social workers handle crisis interventions.

Republic Act No. 7160 (Local Government Code of 1991) assigns local government units (LGUs) the responsibility to provide social welfare services, including financial assistance to individuals in crisis situations. The decentralized implementation of the AICS program enables local agencies to respond quickly to emergencies.

Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), through Memorandum Circulars, issues guidelines on how AICS should be implemented, including eligibility requirements, types of assistance, and funding allocation. These guidelines ensure equitable distribution and accountability in delivering crisis assistance.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the Philippines offers various programs to support vulnerable individuals, one of which is the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS). This program provides financial aid to people facing urgent medical needs. The AICS aims to help indigent and marginalized populations access healthcare services they might otherwise be unable to afford. This assistance can cover expenses for hospitalization, medications, and other medical interventions necessary for the individual's recovery (DSWD, n.d.)

According to World Bank Group (2017), through AICS, the DSWD has streamlined the process for individuals who need immediate support but lack financial resources. The program prioritizes people in crisis, ensuring that financial assistance reaches those who need it most. This program is part of the government's larger strategy to reduce the burden on vulnerable families and ensure that no one is denied medical care due to lack of funds. It also aligns with other social welfare programs like Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) in targeting poverty reduction.

Section 6.1.a of S.B. 2328 (2023) otherwise known as the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Act explained that medical assistance under the mentioned act shall cover hospitalization expenses, cost of medicines, and other medical treatment or procedures such as implants, common laboratory tests and diagnostic imaging procedures for any illness or ailment, including postpartum complications, and also provision of assistive devices. A client may be given assistance based on a hospital bill only once. Additionally, an in-patient beneficiary may request other assistance in the event that the needed medicine/s or treatment of the patient is not available at the hospital of confinement. The assistance shall not cover other health care expenses such as immunization, birthing, and purchase of vitamins and other supplements unrelated to medical treatment or aftercare.

In connection with that, Caballero (2023) stated that for medical assistance, the documents needed include a photocopy of the prescription, the original medical certificate, a valid ID, and a hospital bill.

The Philippines' Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) program serves as a social safety net, offering support for recovery from crises, including medical assistance. Programs like AICS encompass various forms of medical assistance, including transportation, burial, and educational support, emphasizing the comprehensive nature of healthcare needs during crises.

In connection to this, to qualify for medical assistance under AICS, individuals must demonstrate their urgent medical needs and their inability to pay for required services. This ensures that funds are directed where they are most needed. Additionally, the program is not limited to Filipinos with physical ailments but extends to those facing HIV/AIDS, offering medical support to indigent individuals living with HIV (*Republic Act No. 11166*, n.d.).

With that, Perandos-Astudillo and Roño (2023) explained that the program not only helps alleviate financial stress but also aids in improving the overall health system's inclusivity. It serves as a safety net for those who fall through the cracks of regular healthcare insurance systems. By offering direct financial assistance, AICS addresses both immediate medical emergencies and chronic health conditions, making it a crucial part of the social safety net in the Philippines.

The DSWD's support under AICS has been critical, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, when healthcare costs skyrocketed, and many people struggled to cover even the basic expenses for treatment. In this context, the government's intervention through AICS helped ensure that vulnerable individuals could still access life-saving medical services without the added burden of exorbitant costs. The program's adaptability is one of its strengths, allowing it to respond effectively to emerging health crises (DSWD, n.d.). In conclusion, the Medical Assistance component of the DSWD's AICS program plays a vital role in ensuring equitable access to healthcare in the Philippines. It addresses both the immediate needs of individuals facing medical crises and the broader goal of reducing healthcare inequality. Although there are areas for improvement, the program remains a cornerstone of the government's social welfare framework, ensuring that no Filipino is left behind in medical need (DSWD, n.d.).

The Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the Philippines is designed to provide financial aid to students who come from low-income families. This program offers direct support to cover education-related expenses, which can significantly alleviate the financial burden of schooling for many Filipino families. The assistance varies depending on the educational level, with financial support ranging from PHP 1,000 to PHP 4,000 (World Bank Group, 2017).

Perandos-Astudillo and Roño (2023) discussed that the program specifically targets students needing help for elementary, high school, or college education. It plays a crucial role in the government's broader

effort to reduce barriers to education, helping to ensure that even the poorest students can continue their studies without interruption due to financial constraints. The support aims to improve access to education, especially for impoverished people, a group often most affected by rising educational costs.

To be eligible for the program, applicants must demonstrate their financial need. The DSWD uses a rigorous selection process to identify those who require the most help. This ensures that the funds are directed to those in most need, prioritizing students from marginalized communities. In this way, the program is integral in helping to bridge the education gap between the wealthy and the economically disadvantaged (World Bank Group, 2017)

Section 6.1.d of S.B. 2328 (2023) otherwise known as the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Act discussed educational assistance as a form of assistance given to a student-in-crisis, to help defray school expenses and/or cost of sending students/children to school such as school fees, school supplies, school projects, allowances, and other related expenses. Beneficiaries may include those who are breadwinners, whether or not they are the heads of their families, or working students or orphaned/abandoned and/or now living with relatives, children of solo parents or with unemployed parents or Overseas Filipinos (OFs) or persons with disability-in-crisis, or children of rebel returnees or persons deprived of liberty, children with Human Immunodeficiency Virus, or those living with parents with HIV, those who are victims of abuse or displacement, or are otherwise in crisis due to human-induced or natural calamities.

The assistance shall not cover graduate (Masteral) and post-graduate (Doctoral) studies including professional degrees such as Doctor of Medicine and Bachelor of Laws/Juris Doctor, and those expenses for the review for the licensure/bar examinations.

Department of Social Welfare and Development (n.d.) mentioned that in addition to financial aid, the program also helps reduce dropout rates by providing a safety net for families who would otherwise struggle to cover tuition fees, school supplies, and other educational expenses. This ensures that financial challenges do not prevent children from completing their education and contributes to the government's goal of improving educational outcomes nationwide. Caballero (2023) stressed in her article that in order to avail or apply for the assistance, one must be able to present the original documents, such as a certified true copy of a validated school ID, and the original certificate of enrolment/registration for the current school year. Moreover, the agency also stated that the educational assistance program is particularly beneficial for students who are already enrolled but face unforeseen financial difficulties. These may include health emergencies, natural disasters, or other factors that disrupt their ability to pay for school. By providing timely financial assistance, the DSWD helps ensure that students are not forced to leave school due to circumstances beyond their control.

The program is closely linked to other social welfare initiatives in the country, such as the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps). Families enrolled in the 4Ps program often receive additional support for their children's education, creating a comprehensive support system that helps both the immediate and long-term needs of the family. This integrated approach ensures that educational assistance is part of a wider effort to reduce poverty and improve the overall well-being of disadvantaged communities (DSWD, n.d.)

DSWD Educational Assistance Program is a vital component of the Philippine government's efforts to make education accessible to all. By providing financial aid to students in need, the program helps ensure that the barriers to education are reduced for those who need it most. Although there are ongoing challenges in fully meeting the needs of every student, this initiative remains an essential tool in the fight against poverty and inequality in education (Perandos-Astudillo and Roño, 2023).

The Burial Assistance Program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in the Philippines is an essential social safety net for bereaved families facing financial hardship. This program aims to alleviate the financial burden of funeral expenses, which can be overwhelming, particularly for indigent families. The DSWD provides a form of emergency support under its Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS), helping cover burial costs for those who are financially incapable of shouldering these expenses (DSWD, n.d.)

Section 6.1.b of S.B. 2328 (2023) otherwise known as the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Act stated that this assistance shall cover funeral and other related expenses including, but not limited to, expenses in bringing the remains of the deceased to his or her residence or hometown, interment, cremation, and/or burial site in accordance with existing customary practices of the family especially among Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and Moros.

Burial and related expenses due to a disaster, calamity, and/or critical events or similar circumstances resulting in one or multiple casualties within the family may allow the surviving family member/immediate relative of the deceased to request outright cash assistance subject to the assessment of the DSWD Social Worker, without the need of a SCSR.

Applicants for burial assistance must submit the necessary documentation, including a Social Case Study Report or Certificate of Indigency issued by the DSWD, to verify their financial need. The process ensures that only those facing genuine economic hardship are eligible for the aid. The inclusion of these documents helps to ensure that the support is targeted at the most vulnerable groups, especially those who are already struggling with the loss of a loved one ((Office of the Vice President of the Republic of the Philippines, n.d.). Caballero (2023) noted that clients asking for burial assistance must bring the original documents such as registered death certificate, burial contract, and valid ID.

Chua (2022) explained that the program offers financial aid ranging from Php 3,000 to Php 10,000, depending on the family's location and the specific guidelines set by the local government units (LGUs). This aid helps to ensure that the deceased are provided with a proper burial, a basic human dignity that may otherwise be out of reach for families living in poverty. The assistance can be utilized for various funeral-related costs, including transportation, caskets, and basic funeral services.

Through the DSWD's burial assistance, families can focus on mourning their loss rather than worrying about the financial aspects of funeral arrangements. This is especially important in the context of Filipino society, where funeral expenses can be a significant financial strain. By providing this assistance, the government helps ensure that the grieving family can receive the support they need during a challenging and emotional time (Digital Media Service, 2024).

The DSWD Burial Assistance Program is a crucial element of the social welfare system in the Philippines, providing essential support for families in their time of need. By offering financial help for burial expenses, the program helps families focus on what truly matters during their mourning process and reflects the government's broader goal of providing relief to those in crisis.

The Transportation Assistance Program under the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is an essential part of the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS). This program aims to provide financial help to individuals or families who need assistance with transportation costs. It is particularly useful for those who need to travel, either within or outside of the country, due to medical, personal, or other urgent reasons. Through this initiative, the government helps alleviate transportation barriers for vulnerable Filipinos (Pevidal, 2020). According to her, this assistance is commonly referred to as the "Balik-Probinsya" program, offering support for people who need to return to their home provinces. Whether for medical emergencies, family reunification, or personal matters, the program ensures that individuals who face financial hardship can still afford transportation costs. The DSWD aims to lessen the burden on low-income families and individuals during critical times.

Financial aid under the program is typically based on actual ticket quotations. This means that the assistance is given according to the specific transportation costs, such as bus, plane, or ferry tickets. This ensures that recipients receive a fair amount reflecting their travel needs. Each individual can avail themselves of transportation assistance once a year, promoting sustainability and fair allocation of resources (DSWD, n.d.). Eligibility for the program requires individuals to meet specific criteria, including proving their need through documentation. Commonly required documents include a Social Case Study Report or a Certificate of Indigency, issued by local government units (LGUs). These documents ensure that the aid goes to those in genuine need, such as those experiencing poverty, medical emergencies, or other crises.

Section 6.1.c of S.B. 2328 (2023) otherwise known as the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Act provided explanation that this assistance is for the purchase or payment of transport (air/sea/land) tickets and/or expenses for travels of beneficiary/client, within the Philippines, for purposes not limited to, return to home provinces permanently, or seek medical intervention/s in another place, or attendance to emergency concerns such as death or care of sick loved ones, rescue of abused relatives, or events or disaster/calamity that require immediate presence of the beneficiary/client.

Outright cash may be considered for those travelling using multiple modes of transportation. Provided that, if the DSWD procures the ticket for the beneficiary/client, the expenses for food and other necessary expenses for the travel shall be given to the client in cash. The Social Worker shall state in the CIS or in a separate justification attached to the CE their assessment to justify the provision of the outright cash. In connection to this, Caballero (2023) stated in her published article that in order to avail of transportation assistance, claimants must present a valid ID and other supporting documents, such as the social worker's justification, medical certificate, death certificate, and court order or subpoena. Victims of pickpockets, illegal recruitment, etc., should submit a police blotter or certification.

Pevidal (2020) elaborated that the program is part of the broader AICS initiative, which aims to support various needs of disadvantaged individuals, such as medical, educational, and burial assistance. This comprehensive approach ensures that people facing different types of crises have access to the support they need to recover or resolve their issues. The DSWD's transportation assistance is just one of the many ways the agency ensures the welfare of Filipinos.

The Food Assistance Program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) plays a crucial role in addressing hunger and food insecurity in the Philippines, especially for marginalized groups. One of the main initiatives under this program is the Food Stamp Program (FSP), which was introduced as part of the government's effort to combat involuntary hunger. The program targets low-income families who struggle to access nutritious meals due to financial constraints, providing them with a monetary-based solution to purchase food and alleviate hunger (Digital Media Service, 2024).

Section 6.1.e of S.B. 2328 (2023) otherwise known as the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Act pointed out that food assistance is the provision of assistance to individuals or families to meet the need for food and other most basic needs for sustenance. This assistance may be distributed through outright cash.

In connection to that, the Food Assistance Program supports sustainable food security by promoting community-based solutions. This includes efforts to turn surplus food from donors into nutritional assistance for impoverished communities. Through collaborations with local governments, food banks, and various organizations, the DSWD can reach more needy households, ensuring that surplus food does not go to waste but is instead directed to those in crisis (DSWD, n.d.)

The provision of food and non-food items to the beneficiary who needs the immediate material support which can be covered by the items listed below, subject to the availability of the material assistance and the funding required, and provided that any acquisition of goods and services shall be subject to existing procurement laws, rules, and regulations. This assistance may be given simultaneously or successively with financial assistance based on the assessment of the handling DSWD Social Worker depending on the posing needs of the beneficiary.

Family Food Packs may be in the form of hot/ ready-to-eat/ pre-cooked/ pre-packed meals, or food voucher, whenever available. It may be given to individuals and families in need or in vulnerable situations such as those who are unemployed, without family support, persons with disabilities-in-crisis, homeless or street dwellers, or victims of fire incidents, severe drought (El Nino), La Nina, flood, or other similar incidents that cause hunger. The contents of the family food packs may be the same as that regularly provided during disaster operations. However, the Program Management Bureau (PMB) may provide food packs containing ready-to-eat/ pre-cooked/ pre-packed meals, or those especially packaged for groups in vulnerable situations, not limited to, older persons, pregnant women, lactating mothers or other persons with special

needs, the standard composition of said food packs may be recommended by the Nutritionist-Dietitian of the PMB, duly approved by the Undersecretary for Operations. DSWD's Food Assistance Program is an essential part of the Philippines' efforts to reduce hunger, improve nutrition, and promote long-term food security. Whether through direct monetary support or sustainable food solutions, these initiatives ensure that no Filipino goes hungry due to financial hardship. By complementing this program with other welfare measures, the DSWD helps to build a more secure and healthy society for all (Presidential Communications Office, 2023)

The cash assistance program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is a key component of the Philippine government's efforts to alleviate poverty and improve the living conditions of vulnerable households. One of the primary initiatives under this program is the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps). This conditional cash transfer (CCT) scheme targets low-income families, providing financial support to ensure that their basic needs are met, particularly in terms of education, healthcare, and nutrition (DSWD, n.d.).

Section 6.1.e of S.B. 2328 (2023) otherwise known as the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Act emphasized that is an assistance in the form of outright cash provided to individuals and families in crisis or in extremely difficult circumstances in which the need is not covered under any of the other services of the AICS program. These individuals and families must establish that they are in a state of active crisis or vulnerability to crisis or are recovering therefrom as validated by the assessment of the LSWDO Social Worker or DSWD Social Worker. Furthermore, it also explained that under the Cash Assistance, financial assistance may be provided in the following modes: (1) Outright cash - For assistance in the amount of Php 10,000.00 and below, the entitled beneficiary/client may claim it from the designated disbursing officer within the day, subject to the availability of funds. Depending on the assessment, the Social Worker may propose the provision of outright cash to the clients who are determined to be better assisted therewith because of their circumstances; and (2) GL - Assistance above Php 10,000.00, especially medical and funeral assistance, shall be released through a GL, unless other modes are necessary, as may be justified by the DSWD Social Worker, in accordance with the rules and regulations.

2. Methodology

This chapter presents the research design, the respondents of the study, the population and sampling technique, the research instrument, the data gathering procedure, and the statistical treatment of data used in the study.

2.1. Research Design

The study employed a descriptive research design to evaluate the current status of the AICS program in selected municipalities within the Fourth District of Laguna. This method is suitable as it seeks to gather data on existing conditions, practices, perceptions, and experiences of both beneficiaries and implementers of the program. The data collected formed the basis for developing an action program to improve service delivery.

The researcher used a descriptive correlational survey of research, which is the suited method for testing the study's hypothesis and assessing the status of the implementation of the different programs under the Assistance in Individuals in Crisis Situation.

2.2. Respondents of the Study

The population of the study was composed of one hundred sixty (160) respondents, comprised of one hundred twenty (120) clients and forty (40) implementers of the Assistance in Individual Crisis Situation

Program of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development. The respondents will be divided according to their place of residence and their position in the study, as well as clients or implementers of the AICS in selected municipalities in the fourth district of Laguna. The table below shows the total number of respondents:

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents

Municipalities	SAMPLE		
	C	I	Total
Municipality 1	40	15	55
Municipality 2	40	12	52
Municipality 3	40	13	53
TOTAL			160

Legend: C – Clients; I - Implementers

The target population of this study included two key groups: (1) clients or beneficiaries who have received assistance from the AICS Program, and (2) implementers, specifically personnel from the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) who are directly involved in the administration of the program.

The study was conducted in three selected municipalities within the Fourth District of Laguna, chosen based on the active implementation of the AICS program and accessibility for data gathering. These municipalities represent a mix of urbanizing and rural communities, providing a balanced perspective on the program's effectiveness across different local contexts.

2.3. Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was used to select the municipalities, while a stratified random sampling method was applied to select respondents within each municipality. This ensured the inclusion of a diverse set of beneficiaries regarding age, gender, and type of crisis assistance received. Due to their limited number, all available AICS implementers in the local social welfare offices were invited to participate through total enumeration. The total sample size is 160 respondents, composed of 120 AICS clients and 40 implementers from the selected municipalities. This sample size was deemed sufficient to gather reliable insights on the status and effectiveness of the AICS program implementation.

According to Bisht (2024), purposive sampling is a non-randomized sampling technique that selects sampling units based on specific criteria. Purposive research sampling is a non-probability approach in which the researcher chooses a sample (person, cases, or events) based on their assessment that it would fit the study's objectives.

A purposive sampling involves selecting participants. Using purposeful sampling strategies ensures that the perspectives of the students recruited provide the information needed to enhance final conclusions (Creswell, 2014).

2.4. Research Procedure

The researcher sought the permission of the Mayor and the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office, a formal letters were sent to the concerned Local Government Units (LGUs) and Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices (MSWDOs) to request approval and conduct the study citing its purpose and confidentiality for data collection within their jurisdictions. Granted the approval, the

researcher explained the purpose of the study to the respondents who are the beneficiaries of the AICS program. Confidentiality was guaranteed to them in gathering the data throughout the study.

The researcher, developed a structured questionnaire based on the objectives of the study. The research instruments were reviewed by experts in social work to ensure content validity. Revisions were made based on the feedback to improved clarity, relevance, and alignment with research objectives. It consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions tailored to gather data on the awareness, accessibility, efficiency, satisfaction, and challenges related to the AICS program. Separate interview guides were also prepared for program implementers to capture qualitative insights

Afterwards, the researcher coordinated with the heads of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) in the selected municipalities regarding the study's conduct. The researcher plotted a schedule with the MSWDO for when the survey questionnaire would be distributed in their municipality. The researcher administered the survey personally so that clarifications and questions on the questionnaire's content could be addressed if they arose.

Lastly, upon completing the survey, the data gathered was statistically evaluated to generate results to be interpreted and lead to arriving at a conclusion and making recommendations. All information gathered was kept confidential and used only for this research study.

2.5. Research Instrument

The researcher-made questionnaire was used to gather large quantities of data from a diversity of respondents. It has several benefits over other forms of data collection, including the ability to be simply and quickly analyzed once completed and the fact that it is usually inexpensive.

In the study, the respondents completed a survey questionnaire. Part I of the said research tool provides an information profile of the respondents in terms of (1) age, (2) gender, (3) educational attainment, (4) economic status, and (5) position in the conduct of the study.

Part II requires responses about the respondents' level of awareness of the Assistance in Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Program and their extent of availing of AICS services in terms of medical assistance, educational assistance, burial assistance, transportation assistance, food assistance, cash assistance for other services, and psychosocial services. Part III focuses on respondents' assessment of satisfaction with implementing measures in the different provisions of the AICS program in terms of the case study and emergency level. The variable Case Study involves factors that need to be addressed, such as timeliness, efficacy, and fairness. In addition, the Emergency Level includes situations or categories of clients, such as disaster, abandoned, abused, and rescued.

The researcher-made questionnaire was based on laws and guidelines following the implementation of the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation Program for Individual Clients Transacting within the DSWD Offices as discussed in the official online kiosk of DSWD. Once accomplished, the questionnaire was submitted to experts or professionals related to the field for content validation and evaluation. Further, the content validity rating of all items must range from 1.70 to 2.00. This means that all items in the questionnaire are relevant and cover the scope of the research being conducted on the status of the AICS in selected municipalities in the fourth district of Laguna.

2.6. Statistical Treatment of Data

The gathered data from the various instruments were presented for statistical analysis and interpretation. Frequency and Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation were used to analyze the respondents' profiles, which include age, gender, educational attainment, socioeconomic status, client category, and position in the study. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to measure the extent to

which individuals availed of/provided services offered by Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations and the respondents' assessment of program effectiveness.

The Chi-Square Test was used to assess the relationship between the categorical variables, such as demographic factors and availment of AICS services, while the T-test was used to analyze differences in assessment scores between recipient respondents and implementer respondents regarding the effectiveness of AICS programs. A one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether there are significant differences in the level of assessment of AICS services among different demographic groups.

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter includes tables that present this study's findings and their interpretations. The data were analyzed and interpreted, allowing conclusions and recommendations to be drawn from the study's results.

3.1. Profile of the Respondents

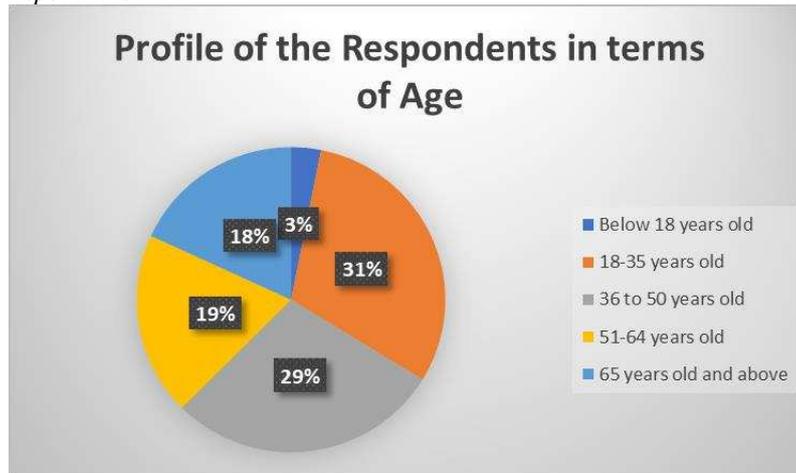


Fig. 2. Profile of the Respondents in terms of Age

It can be seen in Figure 2 that the majority of the respondents belong to the age bracket of 18-35 years, with 31% or 49 total respondents. This is followed by the 36-50 age group, with 46 respondents. The age bracket of 51-64 years comes in third with 19% or 31 respondents. Next is the 65 years and older group, comprising 18% or 29 respondents. The age group with the least respondents is those below 18 years, accounting for 3% of the total number of respondents, equivalent to 5.

This study's most common age range is between 18 and 35 and 36 and 50, which could suggest a focus on a particular age group for the research.

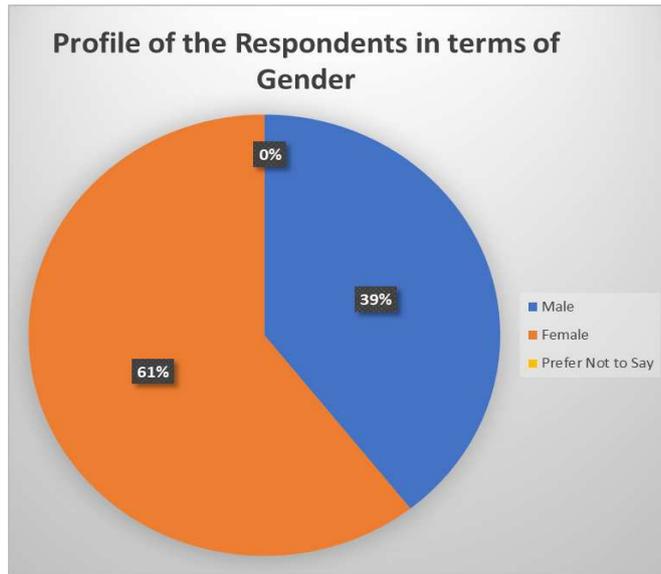


Fig. 3. Profile of the Respondents in terms of Gender

The pie graph above shows the classification of the respondents in relation to their gender. The gender with the highest allocation, 61% or 97 respondents, was Female, followed by Male, 39% or 63 respondents. Meanwhile, during the study's conduct, no recorded respondents belonged to the LGBTQIA or those who prefer not to say their gender.

The gender distribution indicates a skew toward more female participants, which could impact generalizability if the data is meant to represent a more balanced or different population.

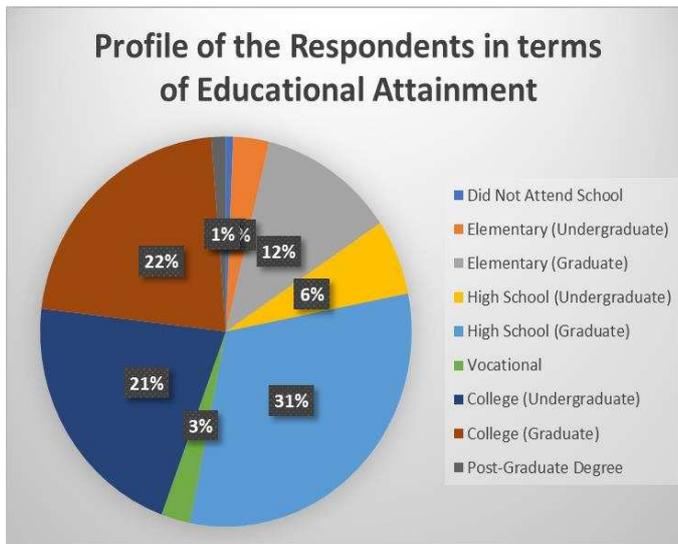


Fig. 4. Profile of the Respondents in terms of Educational Attainment

As shown in the data above. It can be inferred that the highest educational attainment of the respondents was High School (Graduate) with 31% of the total number of respondents or equivalent to 50 respondents. It was followed by College (Graduate) and College (Undergraduate) with 22% and 21% respectively equivalent to 35 and 34 respondents. Six percent (6%) of the respondents were High School (Undergraduate) with 10 respondents and 3% or 4 respondents were able to finish vocational courses. The remaining 2% of the respondents were from those who have post-graduate degree and those who did not attend school.

The sample seems to have a relatively high level of education, as more than half of the sample falls within higher education categories. This suggests that the respondents are likely well-educated, which could indicate that the survey was targeted at a more educated population or group.

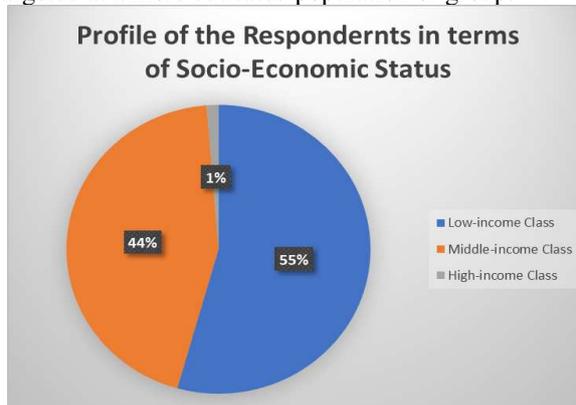


Fig. 5. Profile of the Respondents in terms of their Socio-Economic Status

It can be seen from the table that majority of the respondents belong to Low-income households with 55% of the total respondents or equivalent to 87% of the total respondents followed by Middle-income households with 44% of the total respondents equivalent to 71 respondents. The remaining 1% belonged to the High-income households or equivalent to 2 respondents. Low-income households are those with monthly income of PHP 10,000 to PHP 22,000 while Middle-income households pertain to those families with a monthly income of PHP 23,000 to PHP 76, 000. On the other hand, High-income families are those with PHP 76, 500 and above monthly income. Majority of respondents belong to the lower and middle socioeconomic status. This suggests a relatively broad demographic representation from different socioeconomic backgrounds. The lack of respondents in the higher SES category may indicate an underrepresentation of wealthier groups.

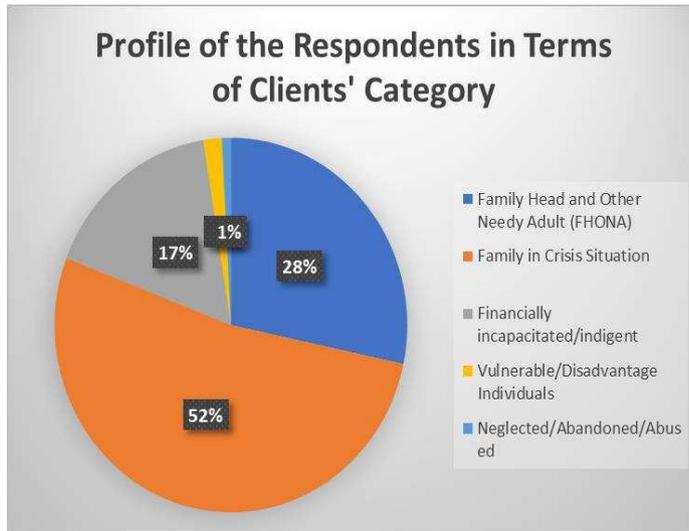


Fig.6. Profile of the Respondents in terms of Clients' Category

This part of the profile of the respondents was exclusively intended for those clients of the agency where the study was conducted, which was composed of 120 respondents or 75% of the total population. As presented in the figure, 52% of respondents belonged to Family in Crisis Situation or 63 respondents, followed by Family Head and Other Needy Adult (FHONA) with 28% or 34 respondents. It was followed by those Financially Incapacitated/Indigent with 17% or 20 out of the total number of respondents. The groups with lowest distribution were Vulnerable/Disadvantaged individuals and Neglected/Abandoned/Abused with 2% and 1% respectively or 2 and 1 respondents.

This suggests that most respondents fall into the first two client categories. These categories could reflect different groups in terms of clients or services offered, with categories such as Family Head and Other Needy Adult and Family in Crisis Situation being the most relevant or most common.

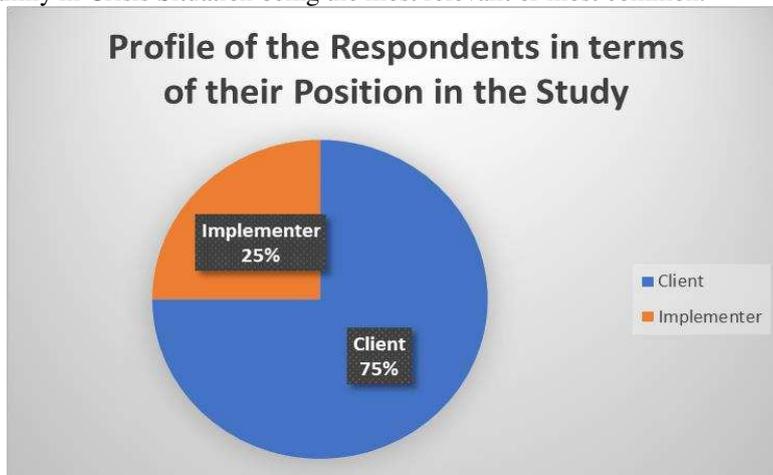


Fig.7. Profile of the Respondents in terms of their Position in the Study

The figure showed that 75% of the total respondents of the study or 120 individuals were clients of the AICS program, while the remaining 25% or 40 individuals were implementers of the different programs under the AICS program.

The overwhelming majority of respondents are in the Client category. This suggests that the Client category is likely the dominant position or status within the context of the study.

The study found a significant relationship between the demographic profile of respondents and their availment of AICS services. Specifically, age, monthly income, and household size were shown to influence the type and frequency of assistance availed, particularly in medical and food-related services. These findings suggest the need for more targeted and inclusive implementation strategies tailored to the specific needs of different demographic groups. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents and the the extent of availing different services of the agencies offered under the AICS program is rejected. This implies that the demographic profile of the respondents has an important effect on the extent of availing different services of the agencies offered under the AICS program.

Table 2. Participants' Extent of Availing Different Programs offered by Assistance to Individual in Conflict Situations

Program/Assistance	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Medical Assistance	4.39	0.52	<i>Frequent</i>
Educational Assistance	2.46	0.8	<i>Occasionally</i>
Burial Assistance	1.52	1.24	<i>Rarely</i>
Transportation Assistance	2.45	0.77	<i>Occasionally</i>
Food Assistance	4.26	0.54	<i>Frequent</i>
Cash Assistance and Other Services	3.12	0.78	<i>Occasionally</i>
Psychosocial Services	2.52	0.79	<i>Occasionally</i>

Legend: 4.51-5.00 - Very Frequently; 3.51-4.50 - Frequent; 2.51-3.50 - Occasionally; 1.51-2.50 - Rarely; 1.00-1.50 - Never

As shown in the table above, it can be seen that the extent to which the respondents avail themselves of programs and services being provided by the AICS Program. As seen in the table, the Medical Assistance Program and Food Assistance Program gained the highest mean with numerical rating of 4.39 and 4.26 respectively with verbal interpretation as “Frequent”. These were followed by Educational Assistance, Transportation Assistance, Cash Allowance and Other Services, and Psychosocial Services with mean scores of 2.46, 2.45, 3.12, and 2.52 respectively. These were verbally interpreted as “Occasionally”. Burial Assistance obtained the lowest mean of 1.52 which is interpreted verbally as “Rarely”

Table 3. Assessment of the Perceptions of the Respondents' level of satisfaction with the Service delivery of Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations in terms of Medical Assistance

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
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1. The overall effectiveness of the assistance provided to individuals in crises by the program is evident.	3.96	0.22	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
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2. The services greatly impacted the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of those who received assistance.	3.96	0.22	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
3. The services provided in the program are all accessible to clients.	3.96	0.22	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
4. The program addressed gaps in the different services offered by the agency.	3.96	0.22	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
5. The assistance provided to individuals in crisis situation was delivered properly.	3.96	0.22	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
OVERALL	3.96	0.22	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>

Legend: 3.00.-4.00 Highly Satisfied, 2.99-2.00 Satisfied, 1.99-1.00 Moderately Satisfied, 0.99-1.00 Not Satisfied

Table 3 summarizes the respondents' assessments of the status of medical Assistance for Individuals in Crisis Situations.

The overall mean is 3.96, interpreted as "highly satisfied." All of the variables obtained a mean of 3.96, interpreted as "highly satisfied," which means that the respondents were given proper attention during their application for assistance, which made them highly satisfied with the service that they availed themselves of.

This indicates that the respondents are well aware of the process on how to avail the program as well as the extent of services given in terms of medical assistance. Aside from that, this also suggests that the respondents have identified the focal personnel whom they can contact or approach in applying for assistance making the process easier and smooth.

Table 4. Assessment on the Perceptions of the Respondents level of satisfaction on the Service delivery of Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations in terms of Educational Assistance

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. The overall effectiveness of the assistance provided to individual in crisis situations by the program is evident.	3.88	0.38	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
2. The services greatly impacted the mental, emotional, physical well-being of those who received assistance.	3.00	0.19	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
3. The services provided in the program are all accessible to clients.	3.88	0.41	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
4. The program addressed gaps in the different services offered by the agency.	3.88	0.38	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>

5. The assistance provided to individuals in crisis situation was delivered properly. 3.90 0.36 *Highly Satisfied*

<i>OVERALL</i>	<i>3.71</i>	<i>0.31</i>	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
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Legend: Legend: 3.00-4.00 Highly Satisfied, 2.99-2.00 Satisfied, 1.99-1.00 Moderately Satisfied, 0.99-1.00 Not Satisfied

The table above shows the respondents' level of satisfaction with the service delivery of AICS in terms of Educational Assistance.

The overall mean presented in the table is 3.71, interpreted as “Highly Satisfied”. The variable “The assistance provided to individuals in crisis situation was delivered properly” obtained the highest mean of 3.90 which is interpreted as Highly Satisfied. In contrast, the variable “The services greatly impacted the mental, emotional, physical well-being of those who received assistance” gained the least mean of 3.00 which is still interpreted as Highly Satisfied.

Table 5. Assessment on the Perceptions of the Respondents level of satisfaction on the Service delivery of Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations in terms of Burial Assistance

BURIAL ASSISTANCE	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. The overall effectiveness of the assistance provided to individual in crisis situations by the program is evident.	3.04	0.21	<i>Satisfied</i>
2. The services greatly impacted the mental, emotional, physical well-being of those who received assistance.	3.03	0.19	<i>Satisfied</i>
3. The services provided in the program are all accessible to clients.	3.04	0.22	<i>Satisfied</i>
4. The program addressed gaps in the different services offered by the agency.	3.02	0.18	<i>Satisfied</i>
5. The assistance provided to individuals in crisis situation was delivered properly.	3.02	0.18	<i>Satisfied</i>
<i>OVERALL</i>	<i>3.03</i>	<i>0.18</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>

Table 5 assesses respondents' perceptions regarding their level of satisfaction with the service delivery of assistance to individuals in crises, explicitly focusing on burial assistance.

The table presents the overall mean of 3.03, interpreted as "Satisfied". The variable "The overall effectiveness of the assistance provided to individuals in crises by the program is evident" and "The services provided in the program are all accessible to clients" get the highest mean in the table, with 3.04 interpreted as Satisfied. Meanwhile, the variables "The program addressed gaps in the different services offered by the agency" and "The assistance provided to individuals in a crisis situation was delivered properly" garnered the least mean of 3.02, interpreted as Highly Satisfied.

Table 6. Assessment on the Perceptions of the Respondents level of satisfaction on the Service delivery of Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations in terms of Transportation Assistance

TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. The overall effectiveness of the assistance provided to individual in crisis situations by the program is evident.	3.95	0.25	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
2. The services greatly impacted the mental, emotional, physical well-being of those who received assistance.	3.78	0.43	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
3. The services provided in the program are all accessible to clients.	2.99	0.08	<i>Satisfied</i>
4. The program addressed gaps in the different services offered by the agency.	3.95	0.25	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
5. The assistance provided to individuals in crisis situation was delivered properly.	3.95	0.25	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
OVERALL	3.72	0.21	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>

Legend: 3.00-4.00 *Highly Satisfied*, 2.99-2.00 *Satisfied*, 1.99-1.00 *Moderately Satisfied*, 0.99-1.00 *Not Satisfied*

Table 6 above presents the assessment of the perception of the respondents' level of satisfaction with the status of the AICS in terms of Transportation Assistance. The assessment of the transportation assistance status of AICS shows a resoundingly positive response from the respondents, with a numerical rating of 3.72, or "Highly Satisfied." The variables "The overall effectiveness of the assistance provided to individual in crises by the program is evident", "The program addressed gaps in the different services offered by the agency", and "The assistance provided to individuals in crisis situation was delivered properly" obtained the

highest mean of 3.95 verbally interpreted as “Highly Satisfied”. Meanwhile, the variable “The services provided in the program are all accessible to clients” gained a mean of 2.99 interpreted as “Satisfied”.

Table 7. Assessment on the Perceptions of the Respondents level of satisfaction on the Service delivery of Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations in terms of Food Assistance

FOOD ASSISTANCE	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. The overall effectiveness of the assistance provided to individual in crisis situations by the program is evident.	2.99	0.08	<i>Satisfied</i>
2. The services greatly impacted the mental, emotional, physical well-being of those who received assistance.	2.99	0.08	<i>Satisfied</i>
3. The services provided in the program are all accessible to clients.	3.98	0.19	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
4. The program addressed gaps in the different services offered by the agency.	2.99	0.08	<i>Satisfied</i>
5. The assistance provided to individuals in crisis situation was delivered properly.	3.00	0.00	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
OVERALL	3.19	0.08	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>

Legend: 3.00-4.00 Highly Satisfied, 2.99-2.00 Satisfied, 1.99-1.00 Moderately Satisfied, 0.99-1.00 Not Satisfied

The table above shows the assessment on the perception of the respondents level of satisfaction on the status of AICS in terms of Food Assistance. The overall mean of 3.19 is interpreted as “Highly Satisfied”. The variable “The services provided in the program are all accessible to clients” received the highest mean of 3.98 interpreted as Highly Satisfied. On the other hand, the variables that gained the least mean, which is 2.99 interpreted as Satisfied, are “The overall effectiveness of the assistance provided to individual in crisis situations by the program is evident”, “The services greatly impacted the mental, emotional, physical well-being of those who received assistance”, and “The program addressed gaps in the different services offered by the agency.”

Table 8. Assessment on the Perceptions of the Respondents level of satisfaction on the Service delivery of Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations in terms of Cash Assistance and Other Services

CASH ASSISTANCE AND OTHER SERVICES	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. The overall effectiveness of the assistance provided to individual in crisis situations by the program is evident.	3.98	0.19	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
2. The services greatly impacted the mental, emotional, physical well-being of those who received assistance.	3.98	0.14	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
3. The services provided in the program are all accessible to clients.	3.00	0.00	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
4. The program addressed gaps in the different services offered by the agency.	3.00	0.00	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
5. The assistance provided to individuals in crisis situation was delivered properly.	3.00	0.00	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>
OVERALL	3.39	0.06	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>

Legend: 3.00-4.00 *Highly Satisfied*, 2.99-2.00 *Satisfied*, 1.99-1.00 *Moderately Satisfied*, 0.99-1.00 *Not Satisfied*

As shown in the table above presents the assessment on the perception of the respondent's level of satisfaction on the status of AICS in terms of Cash Assistance and Other Services. The overall mean is 3.39 interpreted as *Highly Satisfied*. The overall effectiveness of the assistance provided to individual in crisis situations by the program is evident" and "The services greatly impacted the mental, emotional, physical well-being of those who received assistance" gained the highest mean of 3.98 interpreted as *Highly Satisfied*. Meanwhile, the variables "The services provided in the program are all accessible to clients", "The program addressed gaps in the different services offered by the agency", and "The assistance provided to individuals in crisis situation was delivered properly" obtained the least mean of 3.00 which was interpreted as *Highly Satisfied*.

Table 9. Assessment on the Perceptions of the Respondents level of satisfaction on the Service delivery of Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations in terms of Psychosocial Services

PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. The overall effectiveness of the assistance provided to individual in crisis situations by the program is evident.	3.78	0.42	<i>Highly Satisfied</i>

2. The services greatly impacted the mental, emotional, physical well-being of those who received assistance.	3.01	0.08	Highly Satisfied
3. The services provided in the program are all accessible to clients.	3.01	0.08	Highly Satisfied
4. The program addressed gaps in the different services offered by the agency.	3.01	0.08	Highly Satisfied
5. The assistance provided to individuals in crisis situation was delivered properly.	3.01	0.11	Highly Satisfied

OVERALL	3.16	0.10	Highly Satisfied
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Legend: 3.00-4.00 Highly Satisfied, 2.99-2.00 Satisfied, 1.99-1.00 Moderately Satisfied, 0.99-1.00 Not Satisfied

Table 9 shows the assessment on the perception of the respondent’s level of satisfaction on the status of AICS in terms of Psychosocial Services. The table shows that the overall mean is 3.16 interpreted verbally as Highly Satisfied. The variable “The overall effectiveness of the assistance provided to individual in crisis situations by the program is evident” gained a mean of 3.78 interpreted as Highly Satisfied. Meanwhile, the remaining variables obtained the same mean of 3.01 which is still interpreted as Highly Satisfied.

3.2. Program Implementation

Table 10. Assessment of the Respondents about the Implementation Measures in the Different Provisions of the AICS Program in terms of Timeliness

TIMELINESS	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. The program is prompt in responding to the need of conducting case study.	2.93	0.7 7	sometimes
2. The program has gathered all relevant information in the time that the case happened.	2.67	0.4 7	sometimes
3. The program can file and accomplish the case study on time and provide updates or new concerns on the case being studied.	2.67	0.4 7	sometimes

4. The program gives essential summarized information needed in the progress of the study being conducted. 2.67 7 0.4 *sometimes*

5. The program always makes sure that it is available whenever there is a need to conduct case study. 2.59 9 0.4 *sometimes*

OVERALL	2.71	9	0.4	<i>Sometimes /Moderately good</i>
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Legend: 4.00-5.00 always timely, 3.99-3 often timely 2.99-2.00 sometimes timely , 1.99-1.00 rarely, 0.99-1.00 never

Table 10 discusses the respondents' assessment about the implementing measures in the different provisions of the AICS program in terms of timeliness. The table reveals that in terms of Timeliness, the respondents assessed the implementation of the programs under AICS is 2.71 on the scale of 1 to 5 which may be indicating that respondents generally perceive the program timeliness as moderately good. The standard deviation of 0.49 suggest that there is some variations in opinions, with some respondents likely viewing the program as timely while others may have experienced delays in service delivery. The variable “The program is prompt in responding to the need of conducting case study” garnered the highest mean of 2.93 interpreted as Evident. Meanwhile, the lowest mean of 2.59 interpreted as Evident as well was attained by the variable “The program always makes sure that it is available whenever there is a need to conduct case study.”

Table 11. Assessment of the Respondents about the Implementation Measures in the Different Provisions of the AICS Program in terms of Effectiveness of Implementation

EFFECTIVENESS OF IMPLEMENTATION	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. The program produces measurable outcomes related to the situation being studied upon, such as identification of issues, sides of the issue, and proper recommendations.	2.89	2	0.3 <i>Moderately effective</i>
2. The program is being delivered by implementer who is affectionate and just, making him come up with appropriate judgment and recommendations.	2.68	7	0.4 <i>Moderately effective</i>
3. The program is committed and passionate in accomplishing the assigned tasks leading to the attainment of positive result.	2.89	2	0.3 <i>Moderately effective</i>
4. The program implementer contributes to having harmonious atmosphere making it easier to make clients express their thoughts freely and openly.	2.89	2	0.3 <i>Moderately effective</i>

5. The program implementer shows empathy and being keen observant to fully understand what transpires in the conduct of the case study. 2.89 0.3 2 *Moderately effective*

<i>OVERALL</i>	2.85	0.3	1	<i>Moderately effective</i>
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Legend: 4.00-5.00 very effective, 3.99-3 effective 2.99-2.00 moderately effective , 1.99-1.00 ineffective, 0.99-1.00 very ineffective

Table 11 presents the assessment of the respondents about the implementing measures in the different provisions of the AICS program in terms of Effectiveness of Implementation. According to the table, the respondents gave the program’s effectiveness under AICS is rated moderately effective with an average of 2.85 score for the effectiveness of implementation of program. The low standard deviation of 0.31 indicates that the most respondents share similar views about the program’s effectiveness, which suggests that moderate effectiveness but highlighting areas for improvement in administrative processes.

Table 12. Assessment of the Respondents about the Implementation Measures in the Different Provisions of the AICS Program in terms of Fairness and Consistency

FAIRNESS AND CONSISTENCY	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. The program understands and appreciates clients' feelings and perspectives, fostering an environment of trust and respect	2.89	0.32	<i>Neutral</i>
2. The program respects and acknowledges the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and beliefs of its clients, ensuring that services are equitable and relevant.	2.89	0.32	<i>Neutral</i>
3. The program implementer practices attentive and reflective listening, ensuring that clients feel heard and understood, which is vital for fair treatment.	2.89	0.32	<i>Neutral</i>
4. The program implementer acts honestly and transparently in their dealings with clients, maintaining ethical standards that reinforce trust and fairness.	2.89	0.32	<i>Neutral</i>
5. The program implementer advocates for their clients' rights and needs, ensuring that all individuals receive equitable treatment and access to resources.	2.89	0.32	<i>Neutral</i>
<i>OVERALL</i>	2.89	0.32	<i>Nuetral/Fairly implemented</i>

Legend: : 4.00-5.00 strongly agree, 3.99-3 agree 2.99-2.00 neutral , 1.99-1.00 disagree, 0.99-1.00 strongly disagree

As shown in Table 12, the respondents' assessment about the implementing measures in the different provisions of the AICS program in terms of fairness and consistency. It reveals that respondents highly rate the fairness and consistency of the AICS program implementation, with a mean of 2.89. The relatively low standard deviation of 0.32 suggests that most respondents agree that the program was implemented pretty well and that it maintains consistency in assisting.

Table 13. Assessment of the Respondents about the Implementation Measures in the Different Provisions of the AICS Program in terms of Disaster

DISASTER	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. provides immediate emotional and psychological support to individuals affected by the disaster, helping them cope with trauma and loss.	3.00	0.74	<i>Strongly implemented</i>
2. assists in coordinating resources such as shelter, food, and medical services for displaced individuals and families, ensuring access to essential services.	3.06	0.65	<i>Strongly implemented</i>
3. educates communities about disaster preparedness and response strategies, fostering resilience and awareness among vulnerable populations.	2.96	0.72	<i>Moderately implemented</i>
4. advocates for the needs and rights of affected individuals, ensuring that their voices are heard in the recovery process.	3.04	0.64	<i>Strongly implemented</i>
5. work alongside other professionals and organizations to create a coordinated response to the disaster, enhancing the overall effectiveness of recovery efforts.	3.08	0.64	<i>Strongly implemented</i>
OVERALL	3.03	0.65	<i>Effective</i>

Legend: 4.00-5.00 very strongly implemented , 3.99-3 strongly 2.99-2.00 moderately , 1.99-1.00 rarely , 0.99-1.00 not implemented

Table 13 shows the respondents' assessment about implementing measures in the different provisions of the AICS program in terms of Disaster Response. This aspect of AICS programs obtained an overall mean of 3.03 interpreted as strongly implemented. The disaster response is perceived as above average. The Standard

deviation of 0.65 indicates moderate variability in respondents' perception, meaning while many find the disaster response effective, others perceived it as needing improvement.

Table 14. Assessment of the Respondents about the Implementation Measures in the Different Provisions of the AICS Program in terms of Abandonment

ABANDONED	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. conducts a thorough assessment to understand the immediate and long-term needs of the abandoned individuals, including their physical, emotional, and social requirements.	3.39	0.65	<i>Strongly Implemented</i>
2. provides immediate support to ensure safety and stability, which may involve connecting clients with emergency services, shelters, or crisis counseling.	2.74	0.44	<i>Moderately implemented</i>
3. identifies and connects individuals with appropriate resources, such as shelters, food services, and healthcare options, to ensure they receive necessary support.	2.75	0.46	<i>Moderately implemented</i>
4. advocates on behalf of the abandoned individuals to ensure their rights are protected and that they have access to essential services.	2.75	0.46	<i>Moderately implemented</i>
5. assists in developing a long-term plan for recovery and reintegration into the community, which may include counseling, job training, or education programs.	2.74	0.48	<i>Moderately implemented</i>
OVERALL	2.88	0.46	<i>Evident</i>

Legend: 4.00-5.00 very strongly implemented , 3.99-3 strongly 2.99-2.00 moderately , 1.99-1.00 rarely , 0.99-1.00 not implemented

Table 14 presents the respondents' assessment of the implementation measures in various provisions of the AICS program regarding abandonment.

The response to abandonment is rated moderately positively at 2.88. The standard deviation of 0.46 suggests moderate agreement among respondents, indicating that while most respondents feel the program addresses abandonment well, there is some variability in their experiences as program implementers.

Table 15. Assessment of the Respondent about the Implementation Measures in the Different Provisions of the AICS Program in terms of Abused

ABUSED	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. conducts a thorough assessment to evaluate the immediate safety of the individual, ensuring that they are in a safe environment away from the abuser.	3.36	0.76	<i>Strongly implemented</i>
2. offers emotional support and connect clients with necessary resources, such as shelters, legal assistance, and counseling services, to help them navigate their situation.	2.92	0.77	<i>Moderately implemented</i>
3. advocates for the rights and needs of abuse survivors, helping them understand their legal options and navigate systems like law enforcement and social services.	2.92	0.77	<i>Moderately implemented</i>
4. documents evidence of abuse and may be required to report it to relevant authorities, ensuring that appropriate action is taken.	2.91	0.76	<i>Moderately implemented</i>
5. facilitates therapeutic support to help clients process their experiences and begin the healing process.	3.26	0.85	<i>Strongly implemented</i>
OVERALL	3.07	0.74	<i>Strongly implemented</i>

Legend: 4.00-5.00 very strongly implemented , 3.99-3 strongly 2.99-2.00 moderately , 1.99-1.00 rarely , 0.99-1.00 not implemented

Table 15 shows the respondents' assessments of the implementing measures in the different provisions of the AICS programs regarding managing abused clients.

The mean of 3.07 suggests that respondents feel the program's response to different types of abuse is slightly better than the average. However, the higher standard deviation of 0.74 indicates a wider range of opinions on the issue, with some respondents likely seeing significant success in the program's response while others see areas for improvement.

Table 16. Assessment of the Respondents about the Implementation Measures in the Different Provisions of the AICS Program in terms of Rescued clients

RESCUED	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. conducts a thorough assessment of the individual's physical and emotional state to determine immediate needs and any necessary medical attention	3.11	0.66	<i>Strongly implemented</i>
2. provides immediate emotional support to help individuals process their experiences, offering a safe space to express their feelings and concerns.	2.91	0.76	<i>Moderately implemented</i>

3. assists in connecting rescued individuals to essential resources such as housing, healthcare, and counseling services to facilitate their recovery and reintegration.	2.91	0.76	<i>Moderately implemented</i>
4. advocates for the rights of rescued individuals, helping them understand their options and navigate any legal or social service systems they may need to engage with.	2.96	0.74	<i>Moderately implemented</i>
5. provides ongoing follow-up support to ensure that the individuals continue to receive necessary services and support as they rebuild their lives.	2.97	0.78	<i>Moderately implemented</i>
OVERALL	2.97	0.72	Implemented

Legend: 4.00-5.00 very strongly implemented , 3.99-3 strongly 2.99-2.00 moderately , 1.99-1.00 rarely, 0.99-1.00 not implemented

Table 16 presents respondents' assessments of the measures implemented across various provisions of the AICS program concerning rescued clients.

This assessment obtained an overall mean of 2.97, rated as above average. The standard deviation of 0.72 reveals a degree of variation in how respondents perceive the effectiveness of these program responses, suggesting that while many see the rescue efforts as effective, a significant number believe that more could be done.

This result indicates that the respondents acknowledge the existence and effectiveness of measures that address the needs of individuals who have been rescued from emergency situations. It also implies that while the AICS program's efforts in rescuing individuals from emergencies are noticeable, the respondents may feel that the impact of these efforts is somewhat moderate rather than exceptional.

Table 17. Test of Significant Relationship Between the Respondents' Extent of Availing Services and Assessment of the Services offered in AIC

Extent of Availing the Services	Test	Assessment on the Services of the Agency for AICS						
		Medical Assistance	Educational Assistance	Burial Assistance	Transportation Assistance	Food Assistance	CAOS	Psychosocial Service
Medical Assistance	Pearson Correlation	.211*	0.058	-0.141	0.044	-0.043	0.075	0.141
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.02	0.527	0.124	0.634	0.643	0.416	0.125
Educational Assistance	Pearson Correlation	-0.093	0.08	-0.108	0.094	0.005	-0.079	-0.169
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.312	0.383	0.238	0.309	0.96	0.393	0.065
Burial Assistance	Pearson Correlation	-0.104	-.485**	.638**	-.308**	0.009	-0.043	-0.106
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.257	0	0	0.001	0.923	0.638	0.247
Transportation Assistance	Pearson Correlation	-.272**	0.111	-0.111	0.019	-0.066	-.260**	-.384**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003	0.227	0.227	0.84	0.473	0.004	0
Food Assistance	Pearson Correlation	.216*	0.154	-0.09	0.108	0.092	0.158	0.123
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.018	0.094	0.328	0.24	0.317	0.085	0.181
Cash Assistance and Other Services	Pearson Correlation	0.072	0.072	-0.028	0.071	0.041	0.081	0.076
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.434	0.433	0.759	0.438	0.653	0.377	0.41
Psychosocial Services	Pearson Correlation	0.046	.229*	-.249**	0.074	0.104	0.16	.304**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.617	0.012	0.006	0.419	0.258	0.08	0.001

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 17 reveals that the Pearson correlation analysis determines the strength and direction of the relationship between the extent of availing various services offered by the AICS program and the assessment of these services. The results provide insights into whether a significant relationship exists between the respondent’s use of the services and their evaluation of those services. For medical assistance or MA Pearson correlation 0.211, Sig. (2-tailed): 0.020 (Significant at the 0.05 level) There is a weak positive relationship between the extent of availing medical assistance and the assessment of medical assistance services (MA). The correlation is statistically significant, as the p-value (0.020) is less than 0.05. This suggests that the respondents who utilize medical assistance services tend to have a slightly more favorable view of the services. The strength of the relationship is weak, but the significance indicates that the result is unlikely to be due to chance.

The data further reveal that educational assistance at 0.058, Sig. (2-tailed) 0.527 (not significant), the relationship between the extent of availing educational assistance and the assessment of educational services

is very weak and not statistically significant (p -value $0.527 > 0.05$). This suggests that the use of educational assistance does not appear to have a meaningful relationship with the respondents' access to the service.

Burial assistance or BA at -0.104 (medical assistance)/ -0.485 (negative, significant relationship with medical assistance) Sig. 2-tailed positive relationship. The Pearson correlation analysis reveals that there is a very weak negative correlation between the extent of availing burial assistance and the assessment of burial assistance services, but this relationship is not statistically significant (p -value= $0.257 > 0.05$). This suggests that the use of burial assistance does not have a meaningful impact on how respondents evaluate the service, and any observed relationship is likely due to random variation.

As shown in the table above, transportation assistance (trans_ass) with a Pearson correlation of TA is -0.272 (significant)/ -0.260 . significance (p -value) of 0.003 (significant) / 0.004 (significant). There is a very weak negative correlation between the extent to which respondents avail themselves of transportation assistance and their assessment of transportation assistance services, and this relationship is statistically significant with the p -value = 0.003 and $0.004 < 0.05$. Respondents who use transportation assistance tend to rate the service lower. This negative correlation suggests that those who require transportation assistance may have less favorable assessments of the service.

The table above shows food assistance (FOOD_ASS) with (FA): 0.216 significance (p -value): 0.018 (significant), which means that there is a weak positive relationship between the extent of availing food assistance and the assessment of food assistance services, and the result is statistically significant (p -value = $0.018 < 0.05$). This indicates that respondents who avail themselves of food assistance tend to provide more positive assessments of the service.

While results in Cash Assistance for Other Services (CAOS) with (CAOS) are 0.072 with the significance (p -value) of 0.434 (not significant), it interprets that the relationship between the extent of availing cash assistance for other services and the assessment of these services is very weak (0.072), and it is not statistically significant (p -value = $0.434 > 0.05$). This suggests that the amount of cash assistance availed does not have a meaningful relationship with how respondents assess this particular service.

Lastly, the Psychosocial Services (PSYCH_SERV) with (PS) at 0.229 with Educational Assistance (significant), -0.249 with Burial Assistance (significant), and 0.304 with Cash Assistance for Other Services (significant) with Significance (p -value): of 0.012 educational assistance (significant), 0.006 burial assistance (significant), and 0.001 cash assistance for other services (significant).

Interpretation reveals that there are several significant relationships involving psychosocial services:

- A moderate positive correlation between the extent of availing psychosocial services and the assessment of educational assistance (0.229 , p -value = 0.012). Respondents who use psychosocial services tend to provide more positive assessments of educational assistance.
- A moderate negative correlation with burial assistance (-0.249 , p -value = 0.006), suggesting that those availing of psychosocial services tend to assess burial assistance less favorably.
- A strong positive correlation with cash assistance for other services (0.304 , p -value = 0.001), indicating that the use of psychosocial services is strongly related to a more positive assessment of cash assistance.

Table 17 shows the relationship between the recipient-respondents extent of availing different services offered by the AICS program and the assessment on the services of the agency for assistance to individuals in crisis situations. Findings showed that there are statistically significant relationships to each other. The result showed that there is a positive relationship in the medical assistance and medical assistance services and food assistance and food assistance services. While there is a negative relationship between the Transportation Assistance and Transportation Assistance Services. Psychosocial services have significant positive correlations with educational assistance and cash assistance for other services and a negative correlation with burial assistance. Findings showed that there is a significant relationship between the recipient-respondents extent of availing different services offered by the agency and the assessment on the services of the agency for Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation Programs, rejecting the null hypothesis

that there is no significant relationship between the extent of availing different AICS programs and the respondents' assessment on the services provided by the agency for Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation Programs (AICS).

This aligns with the idea presented by Angara (2023), which stated that this program, initially implemented in 2014, provides various forms of assistance—medical, educational, funeral, food and non-food, transportation, and even psychosocial help—to disadvantaged and vulnerable Filipinos. These forms of support are crucial not only as we navigate the long-term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic but also in response to the increasing number of Filipino families who have endured numerous hardships over the past years. In fact, data from the Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed that, in 2021, 18.1 percent, or nearly 20 million Filipinos, lived below the poverty threshold, with incomes insufficient for their basic food and non-food needs.

Table 18. Test of Significant Relationship Between the Client-Respondents' Assessment of the Services offered in AICS and the Implementer-Respondents' Assessment of Implementing Measures on the Different Provisions Offered.

Table 18 presents the results of the Pearson correlation test to determine the significant relationship between the client-respondents' assessments of the services offered under the AICS program and the implementer-respondents' assessments of the implementation measures of the same services.

The findings reveal that Medical Assistance has a significant positive relationship with several implementing measures. Specifically, it correlates significantly with program implementation ($r = .187$, $p = .018$), emergency response to disasters ($r = .225$, $p = .004$), and the responsiveness of AICS to abandoned ($r = .224$, $p = .004$), abused ($r = .180$, $p = .023$), and rescued individuals ($r = .176$, $p = .026$). These findings suggest that the more effective and responsive the program is in these areas, the higher the client satisfaction with the medical assistance received.

For Educational Assistance, significant positive relationships were observed with the timeliness ($r = .318$, $p = .000$) and effectiveness ($r = .343$, $p = .000$) of implementation. This implies that clients perceive educational aid more positively when the services are delivered promptly and effectively. A weak but significant relationship was also found with the emergency response to abused individuals ($r = .156$, $p = .049$).

Burial Assistance significantly correlates with disaster responsiveness

($r = .243$, $p = .002$), and the responsiveness to abandoned ($r = .195$, $p = .013$) and rescued individuals ($r = .223$, $p = .005$). These results indicate that the availability and delivery of burial aid are closely linked to how well the program responds during times of disaster or crisis.

Food Assistance is positively and significantly related to the timeliness ($r = .202$, $p = .010$) and effectiveness ($r = .204$, $p = .010$) of implementation. This suggests that timely and well-implemented food aid is perceived more favorably by the beneficiaries.

On the other hand, Psychosocial Services showed a significant negative correlation with timeliness ($r = -.237$, $p = .003$) and effectiveness ($r = -.195$, $p = .013$), which may indicate dissatisfaction or gaps in the implementation of mental health and emotional support services during crises. Interestingly, a positive but weak relationship was found with emergency services for abused individuals ($r = .157$, $p = .048$).

Meanwhile, Transportation Assistance and Cash Assistance and Other Services showed no statistically significant relationships with any of the implementation measures. This could suggest either a general neutrality or inconsistency in both the delivery and perception of these services.

The analysis reveals that different types of assistance are related to various emergency levels and implemented in distinct ways. Medical Assistance is significantly related to the emergency levels of Disaster and Abandoned, while it shows only a minimal relationship with Timeliness, Abused, and Rescued. Educational Assistance is notably linked to the Effectivity of Implementation and Fairness and Consistency but has a minimal relationship with the Abandoned emergency level. Burial Assistance demonstrates significant relationships with the emergency levels of Disaster and Rescued, though it shows a minimal

connection with the Abused at the emergency level. Food Assistance is significantly related to the implementing measures of Effectivity of Implementation and Fairness and Consistency.

Assessment on AICS Programs	Test	Assessment on the Implementing Measures in Different AICS Programs						
		Program Implementation			Emergency Level			
		Timeliness	Effectivity of Implementation	Fairness and Consistency	Disaster	Abandoned	Abused	Rescued
Medical Assistance	Pearson Correlation	.187*	0.152	0.119	.225**	.224**	.180*	.176*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.018	0.055	0.134	0.004	0.004	0.023	0.026
Educational Assistance	Pearson Correlation	0.09	.318**	.343**	-0.083	.156*	0.019	-0.016
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.259	0	0	0.298	0.049	0.815	0.842
Burial Assistance	Pearson Correlation	0.147	-0.014	-0.054	.243**	0.071	.195*	.223**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.064	0.857	0.499	0.002	0.371	0.013	0.005
Transportation Assistance	Pearson Correlation	-0.036	0.083	0.115	0.075	0.056	0.109	0.076
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.649	0.298	0.147	0.346	0.482	0.169	0.342
Food Assistance	Pearson Correlation	0.123	.202*	.204**	0.146	0.13	0.107	0.103
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.121	0.01	0.01	0.066	0.102	0.179	0.196
Cash Assistance and Other Services	Pearson Correlation	0.116	0.144	0.135	0.155	0.131	0.109	0.114
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.144	0.07	0.088	0.051	0.1	0.171	0.152
Psychosocial Services	Pearson Correlation	-.237**	-.195*	-0.14	0.047	-0.051	.157*	0.123
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003	0.013	0.078	0.554	0.52	0.048	0.122

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Psychosocial Services exhibit a significant relationship with Timeliness and a minimal relationship with both effectiveness of Implementation and Fairness and Consistency. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship found between the assessments of Transportation Assistance, Cash Assistance, and Other Services with any of the implementing measures for the various provisions of the AICS program is rejected.

The Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) Program in the Philippines provides immediate support to individuals and families facing unforeseen hardships. This program acts as a social

safety net, addressing various crises, such as natural disasters, medical emergencies, or sudden loss of income. By offering direct assistance, AICS helps clients regain stability and promotes recovery during challenging times (DSWD Program, 2022).

In conclusion, the data highlights key areas of strength in the AICS program, particularly in medical, burial, educational, and food assistance, which are positively influenced by good implementation practices. However, areas such as psychosocial support and transportation assistance may require targeted improvements to enhance overall program effectiveness and client satisfaction.

3.3. The Proposed Action Plan

Based on the study's findings, the following proposed action plan can be developed to improve the services and implement better measures for the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) Program. This action plan is intended for use in implementing the various programs and services offered by the agency under the AICS Program, focusing on enhancing service delivery, optimizing implementation strategies, and addressing key areas identified for improvement to provide better quality service to its clientele.

Key issues identified	Objectives	Proposed Actions	Responsible Entity	Timeframe	Expected Outcome
Delays in service delivery	1.Improve system efficiency and service delivery	1.1. Streamline the application process through digital platforms or simplified procedures 1.2. Establish fast-track lanes for urgent cases 1.3. Increase workforce efficiency through regular training	LGU, MSWD, AICS Implementers	3-6 months	Faster processing and reduced wait time for beneficiaries
Lack of a standardized procedure Data Management/ Lack of centralized and accessible data storage and information system. Manual record-keeping	2. Standardize service flow for clients	2.1. Develop a simplified and standardized process for application and service access 2.2. Create a centralized data management system or use platforms like Google Drive	LGU, MSWDO and IT experts	1-3 years	Data based management system created and Consistent service delivery and reliable data tracking system.

Key issues identified	Objectives	Proposed Actions	Responsible Entity	Timeframe	Expected Outcome
Beneficiaries are often unaware of available psychosocial support. Limited available trained personnel and mental health interventions in the community.	Increase accessibility and awareness of mental health support	3.1. Conduct social media and community awareness campaigns 3.2. Deploy trained social workers in key areas 3.3. Offer tele-counseling options 3. 4. Staff training on MHPSS and MHGap and psychosocial first aid trainings.	MSWD, LGUs, Social Workers	6 months - 1 year	Improved awareness and increased use of psychosocial support services.
Insufficient monitoring and grievance mechanisms.	Ensure fair and transparent distribution of resources	4.1. Develop standardized eligibility criteria 4.2. Conduct quarterly fund audits 4.3. Strengthen grievance mechanisms	MSWD, LGU Audit Team, Ombudsman	Ongoing	Improved public trust and equal access to assistance
Funding constraints limit the scope and timeliness of the assistance. Weak linkages and limited MOA with private partners and agencies.	5. Increase resource allocation for AICS Program and partnerships	5.1 Increase budget allocation for medical and burial assistance 5.2. Partnership with (funeral homes for subsidized services, hospitals, centers, clinics,	LGUs, MSWD, Private sectors and stakeholders	6-12 months	More beneficiaries receiving timely AICS assistance and partnership is established.

Key issues identified	Objectives	Proposed Actions	Responsible Entity	Timeframe	Expected Outcome
		laboratories and Pharmacies) 5.3. Link with other support programs (livelihood, mental health, etc.)			
Limited Economic Empowerment for beneficiaries No structured approach in achieving long term financial independence.	6. Provide livelihood opportunities for clients	6.1. Assist clients in setting up small-scale businesses 6.2. Build partnerships for livelihood support 6.3. Identify and offer trainings, scholarships, and seminars	MSWDO, LGU, Resource Speakers, TESDA, Private agencies.	6 months to 1 year	Clients received support in establishing income sources
Capacity gaps among service providers. No incentive mechanism to encourage excellent service delivery.	7. Enhance capacity and performance of service providers	7.1. Conduct regular training and workshops 7.2. Use competency-based assessment tools 7.3. Provide performance-based incentives	MSWDO, HR Department	Quarterly	More competent staff and better service delivery

Key issues identified	Objectives	Proposed Actions	Responsible Entity	Timeframe	Expected Outcome
Geographic Barriers to access. No mobile units or satellite offices to address location based challenges. Remote and far flung areas have minimal access to AICS services.	Improve accessibility for beneficiaries in remote locations	1. Deploy mobile AICS service units 2. Coordinate with local transport services for discounted fares 3. Establish satellite offices in far-flung areas and designate a Barangay Focal Person 4. Designate a Social Worker in the Barangay.	LGUs, DOTR, MSWDO, Barangay Personnel	1 year-3 years	Wider program reach, especially in geographically isolated areas

4. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Summary

This study aimed to assess the status of the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) Program in selected municipalities of the Fourth District of Laguna. Through analysis of data collected from 160 respondents, including both client-beneficiaries and program implementers, the key findings were as follows:

1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

- Age: Most respondents were within the 31–40 years old age bracket.
- Gender: A majority (60.6%) of the respondents were female.
- Educational Attainment: Most had reached high school level or vocational/technical education.
- Socio-Economic Status: More than 54% of the respondents were belong to low-income earners, qualifying them as priority recipients of crisis assistance.
- Client Category: The largest group of beneficiaries were recipients of medical and educational assistance.
- Position: The sample included 75% client-beneficiaries and 25% program implementers, ensuring a balanced perspective on service delivery and program management.

2. Extent of Availment/Provision of AICS Services

- The most availed services under AICS were:
 - Medical Assistance
 - Food Assistance
- The least availed services were:
 - Psychosocial Services
 - Transportation Assistance
- Educational Assistance also showed high levels of availment, particularly among low-income families with school-age children.

3. Assessment on the Status of AICS Provisions

- Medical, Educational, and Food Assistance were rated as “Effective to a Great Extent.”

- Burial Assistance received a moderate rating, pointing to issues with timeliness or fund availability.
- Psychosocial Services were underutilized and rated lower, which suggests a need for better mental health support in crisis situations.
- Transportation Assistance was found to be inconsistently implemented across municipalities and rated as moderately effective.

4. Implementing Measures of AICS

- **Timeliness:** Responses to urgent requests were not always delivered on time, particularly in the case of psychosocial and burial assistance.
- **Effectiveness of Implementation:** Most implementers recognized challenges in manpower, logistics, and funding that hinder efficient service delivery.
- **Fairness and Consistency:** While efforts were made to follow standardized processes, there were variations in implementation from one municipality to another, affecting the perceived fairness of service.
- **Emergency Level Response:** The program was found to be most responsive in cases of medical emergencies and disasters but less effective in responding to situations involving abandonment, abuse, and rescue.

5. Significant Relationships

- A significant relationship was identified between:
 - Client satisfaction with services (especially medical, food, and burial assistance) and
 - Implementers' evaluation of the program's timeliness, effectiveness, and emergency responsiveness.
- Psychosocial services, though less availed, had notable correlations with emergency response to abuse-related cases, indicating a gap between need and delivery.
- Transportation and cash assistance did not show significant relationships with implementing measures, suggesting a potential disconnect between availability and community need.

4.2. Conclusion

Based on the earlier findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between the recipient-respondents' extent of availing themselves of different services offered by the agency and their assessment of the agency's services for Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations is rejected.
2. The hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the recipient-respondents' assessment of the agency for Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations' services and the implementer-respondents' assessment of their implementing measures on the different provisions offered is rejected.
3. The study confirms that socio-economic status plays a crucial role in utilizing AICS services. Most beneficiaries come from low-income households, highlighting the program's importance in providing financial relief.
4. Women make up a significant proportion of the beneficiaries, suggesting that AICS services are vital for family support and caregiving responsibilities.
5. Medical and cash assistance are the most frequently utilized services, demonstrating their necessity in addressing immediate financial and health-related crises.
6. The program is generally perceived as effective, though there are concerns about timeliness and fairness in service distribution.
7. Awareness and accessibility of certain services, such as psychosocial and burial assistance, must be improved.

8. Delays in service delivery reduce the program's efficiency and its ability to provide timely crisis relief.
9. Beneficiaries' assessment of the program's fairness and efficiency differs from the implementers, indicating a need for clearer communication and policy adjustments.
10. There is a need for better allocation of resources and streamlined processes to enhance program effectiveness.
11. The study found a significant correlation between the extent of service availment and program assessment, reinforcing the impact of AICS on crisis management.
12. Differences in the perceptions of recipients and implementers highlight the necessity for feedback mechanisms to improve service delivery.
13. The AICS Program plays a vital role in supporting individuals in crisis. While it effectively addresses immediate financial and medical needs, improvements in implementation, efficiency, and accessibility can further enhance its impact. By addressing the identified gaps and strengthening service delivery, the AICS Program can continue to serve as a crucial safety net for vulnerable populations.

4.3. Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions made, the following are recommended:

1. AICS Clients. Familiarize yourself more with the different programs and services offered by the agency to ensure that you receive and receive accurate and the right assistance.
2. AICS Focal Person/Worker. Attend different seminars and workshops relevant to the field of work to further understand and apply the current trends in providing assistance to clients, ensuring that they will be given quality service and, in turn, attain satisfaction from the clientele.
3. Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWD). Employ additional officers in the agency, such as SWO I or SWO II, to better facilitate the implementation of the different programs under the agency and to prevent having multiple areas of facilitation for one officer, making the quality of services provided low. Doing so in turn will enhance the quality of service the agency gives.
4. Municipal Social Welfare and Development (MSWD). Modification to the current workforce design utilized by the agency is suggested where easier and more accessible service will be available for the clients to avail. Creation of a unified system or drive will also assist the agency in designing a better flow of process where one personnel will be able to access and approve applications anywhere, even if assigned to work in the field, thus ensuring a quick and easier application of assistance offered by the agency.
5. Future Researchers. Additional relevant research should be conducted to fully validate the significant findings and address the gaps identified during this study.
6. Enhance Service Timeliness: Improve processing times for assistance requests to ensure prompt relief for beneficiaries. Implement digital tracking systems for applications to minimize delays.
7. Increase Awareness Campaigns: Promote lesser-known services such as psychosocial and burial assistance to ensure eligible individuals can access them. Utilize social media, community outreach, and local government announcements.
8. Improve Fairness and Transparency: Establish clearer guidelines and monitoring mechanisms to ensure equitable distribution of assistance. Introduce a grievance system for beneficiaries to report concerns about fairness.

9. Strengthen Communication Between Beneficiaries and Implementers: Establish regular feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and community forums, to ensure that program expectations align with actual service delivery.
10. Optimize Resource Allocation: Increase funding and staffing for AICS services to accommodate growing demand and enhance service quality. Strengthen partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector for additional support.
11. Regular Evaluation and Policy Review: Conduct periodic assessments of the AICS Program to identify opportunities for improvement and update policies based on evolving community needs.
12. Capacity Building for Implementers: Offer training programs for AICS implementers to improve their efficiency, responsiveness, and compliance with program policies.

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