

ILO Asia-Pacific Working Paper Series

Local economic development and
youth employment in the Philippines:
the case of Concepcion

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Subregional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific
Manila

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Foreword

Youth unemployment and the difficulty of transiting from school to work has been a persistent and significant problem not just in the Philippines, but throughout the Southeast Asia and Pacific region. A number of policy and programme initiatives have been introduced to address youth unemployment problems including provision of labour market information, skills training and upgrading, online job-matching, nurturing of entrepreneurship skills, etc. All these initiatives benefit from the political will of different stakeholders and often require both large sum of money (usually taken from national budget appropriations where they have to compete against other urgent priorities) as well as human resources and the energy to sustain each initiative. Despite all these programmes, the problem of youth unemployment persists. This might lead one to pose questions such as: “are we doing the right thing?”, “what types of youth-oriented and labour market initiatives would lead to employment creation?” and so forth.

In order to ensure these initiatives and reforms impact on young people and their lives in a positive and tangible manner, there is a need for a greater understanding of the nature of the environment that such initiatives are designed to address. As well as understanding the dynamics of the labour market, an important first step is to know the current profile of young people entering the workforce for the first time. This study is a response to that need and was commissioned by the International Labour Organization (ILO) through the *Promoting Youth Employment in the Philippines (PYEP): Policy and Action Project* to assist policy makers (especially those operating within local government units who interact most often with young people needing work) in analyzing the real situation of the youth today in their locality: their needs, aspirations, and constraints, etc. so that officials and social workers can target and prioritize particular youth groups in greatest need, better address the problems they face and craft value-for-money solutions, measures, and/or youth investment options.

As always, we at the ILO Office hope that this initiative can be used by other local government units (LGUs) towards better understanding of the youth and employment challenges in their locality for them to craft effective and efficient measures to address youth unemployment.

Linda Wirth-Dominice
Director, ILO-SRO Manila

Preface

The Philippines was one of four countries selected for an initial three-year phase of the ILO's Action Programme for Decent Work under an agreement signed in 2002 between the local tripartite partners.¹ Promoting youth employment is one target outcome under this Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) specifically under Pillar 2: "creating employment opportunities for men and women".²

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Philippines through its Private Sector Development Fund provided a grant to pilot-test the youth employment project in the Philippines. The PYEP project aimed at capacitating relevant stakeholder institutions to assess the state of the labour markets at both the national and local levels, identifying employment growth areas that would provide opportunities for current and future youth, and its various segments. These segments were identified as: (i) students; (ii) the employed youth (including those that were self-employed); (iii) the unemployed job-seekers; and (iv) those not in the workforce.

Finally, armed with the knowledge of current and potential future opportunities, the project sought to foster the necessary conditions to realize these opportunities. An important component of this was recognition of the need to promote entrepreneurialism among the youth and a series of training modules were introduced and piloted in specific localities designed to encourage youth to think of themselves as micro entrepreneurs.

Importantly, the project disaggregated the factors and conditions surrounding youth unemployment from the more general unemployment and underemployment problem facing the Philippines and fostered the realization among stakeholders that this was indeed a separable problem that required its own specific set of interventions in order to resolve. Unemployment during a person's early working years can discourage a person and reduce self-esteem. This often leads to a lifetime of unemployment or underemployment and wasted potential for the country.

To make the programme implementable and measurable, the project management team dovetailed its project strategy with the ongoing effort of the ILO Manila to promote local development and decent work in other areas.

Thus there were a number of activities funded under the youth employment project that were carried out to address broader targets of the DWCP and which were co-funded through other allocations: for instance promoting local development and decent work (such as developing the studies linking youth employment to local economic development strategies) and also funds allocated for promoting gender equality in employment.

Eight pilot locations were selected partly on the basis of recommendations of the Department of Labor and Employment–Bureau of Rural Workers (DOLE-BRW) which the DOLE assessed as showing already some level of success based on implementation of other national flagship programmes including those on poverty reduction. The final decision was also made on the basis of an assessment of the ILO Manila as to the openness of the local LGU leadership to work with the ILO in this regard.

Policy research was undertaken which led to consequent technical discussion and advocacy activities conducted to harness multi-sector support for a policy and action agenda that would complement,

¹ See for example http://www.unwire.org/unwire/20020514/26368_story.asp (accessed 21 November 2009).

² See for example ILO, 2006 *From Pilot to Decent Work Pilot Programme*, Geneva; available online at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---integration/documents/publication/wcms_079471.pdf (accessed 23 November 2009).

replicate, disseminate, and scale up the delivery of tried and tested employment support services for youth throughout the country. These policy research papers are integrated into this set of working papers.

National and local partners participated in a series of ILO-organized advocacy and learning forums and were oriented in the ILO entrepreneurship tools (KAB, GYB/SYB, and GET AHEAD) which were pilot tested in 48 secondary schools throughout the country as well as in the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)-administered schools.

Knowledge materials were produced to assist both institutional partners and target youth beneficiaries during and after the project period while documentation of the supported demonstration projects helped in disseminating lessons and facilitated replication of good practices by other parties.

Finally and at the local level, ILO-CIDA-PYEP supported research into youth unemployment in each pilot location through a youth employability survey. This was followed by a multi-stakeholder consultation, the outcome of which provided the basis for development of a local youth employment strategy.

Location-specific projects were developed to create immediate and limited scale demonstration effect on jobs, incomes, and decent work status of target youth segments. These were piloted in the eight localities using ILO tools and expertise and generated results favourable to intermediary local institutions and target youth beneficiaries. These demonstration projects were useful for improvement, replication, and scaling up. These particularly covered:

1. Angono – five demonstration projects anchored on art tourism including: (i) arts exhibits; (ii) traditional animation and artistic training; (iii) souvenir items development and culinary arts; (iv) souvenir items development using recycled materials; and (v) tour guide training and transport-aided tourism promotion that directly enhanced skills. These were translated into jobs and income opportunities initially for 110 young artistically inclined youth.
2. Concepcion – one project anchored on eco-tourism titled “LGU and Youth Employment Generation Capacity on Tourism Development” that enabled 20 youth direct beneficiaries duly screened and selected, from the different barangays of the town to acquire through structured learning opportunities necessary attitude, exposure and skills to start, grow and sustain in a business-like manner the operations of an LGU tourism services shop, This will indirectly benefit 400 local potential and existing artisans and entrepreneurs by providing new outlets for their products.
3. Cotabato City – one demonstration project focused on enabling a Muslim youth-run organization to prepare and expand its social enterprise service lines to include blueprinting services on top of established computer and photocopying services; in effect creating additional opportunities for the organization’s target out-of-school-youth; and enabling employed out-of-school-youth to earn incomes sufficient to cover for their needs and for costs in pursuing a short vocational/technical training course of their choice.
4. Davao City – one project involving various stakeholders in enhancing the employability factor of targeted disadvantaged youth in the city such as the out-of-school-youth and the job seeking unemployed youth technically inclined to engage in jobs in the hotel and restaurant industry, building electrical wiring trade and metal arc welding trade. The programme provided for skills training, testing and certification; entrepreneurship orientation, personality development, post-

training employment services, and a mechanism for employers' feedback on programme participants.

5. Dumaguete – one demonstration project involving various stakeholders in enhancing values, industry/trade skills and entrepreneurship base of local unemployed graduates. As an adjunct to this, the city provided two tracks of post-training employment facilities services for the youth. One track is geared towards getting trainees employed in the labour-short but high-paying business process outsourcing-information and communication technologies (BPO-ICT) sector as well as in hospitality and automotives sectors. Another track was geared towards enabling these young people to start-up their own service shops.
6. Guimaras Province – two different projects with the first one supporting employability and actual employment of 50 local youth for housing sector jobs implemented prior to employment strategy planning as an emergency response to the oil spill disaster that affected local livelihoods and incomes of affected communities in the province in 2006 and the second one complementing resources mobilized by the provincial government to implement an integrated set of employment interventions based on identified gaps and action points from the youth employment planning workshop.
7. La Castellana – one demonstration project affording young people and their parents in comprehensive agrarian reform programme (CARP) whose long pending land disputes case have been finally settled and thus ready to respectively invest in the development of their respective lands, with entrepreneurship orientation, training, and post-training advisory services.
8. Marikina City – in addition to the survey and youth planning forums, the ILO provided the city with technical (e.g. feasibility studies, trainings, forum facilitation, and advisory services) and brokering (e.g. between BPO firms and Marikina LGU) services to complement the overall efforts of the LGU to organize a fully functioning one-stop-shop labour market center capable of delivering a comprehensive set of employment services for the city with a special focus on the more disadvantaged youth segments.

These projects served as a deciding point for LGUs and stakeholders to mainstream youth employment policy and action points in local development planning, budget, and administration processes.

This second set of papers in this series provides the case studies that highlight how these ILO-sponsored interventions complemented local economic development initiatives in each of these eight areas and the result obtained.

As noted in the independent evaluation report,³ PYEP is clearly just a beginning. Nevertheless, it has managed to establish momentum that can be carried on by the project partners with or without further project support.

It underscored the challenges facing all the partners involved: the local governments, the partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the schools and training institutions, the employer groups, trade unions, national government agencies, and the international development institutions involved (ILO and CIDA), that is to do what is necessary to ensure that such momentum is not dissipated.

³ Working Paper No. 7 of the Youth Employability series.

This current series of working papers provides a useful benchmark of the various youth employability outcomes against the backdrop of local economic development strategies. From this, it is possible to assess the longevity and achievements of the various projects undertaken as well as the concepts and lessons that can be carried over into other localities concerned with building youth employability into their development programmes. For more detailed information, readers are referred to the Terminal Report, produced by ILO Manila.

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List of acronyms

ABC	: Association of Barangay Captain
BLT	: Build-Lease-Transfer
BFAR	: Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources
BRW	: Bureau of Rural Workers
CIDA	: Canadian International Development Agency
CDA	: Cooperative Development Authority
CLETF	: Child Labour Education Task Force
CLPIMS	: Core Local Poverty Indicators and Monitoring System
CMFO	: Comprehensive Municipal Fisheries Ordinance
CPP	: Career Pathways Programme
CRM	: Coastal Resource Management
CRM	: Community Resource Management
DA	: Department of Agriculture
DAR	: Department of Agrarian Reform
DENR	: Department of the Environment and Natural Resources
DepEd	: Department of Education
DOH	: Department of Health
DOLE	: Department of Labor and Employment
DOST	: Department of Science and Technology
DPWH	: Department of Public Works and Highways
DSWD	: Department of Social Welfare and Development
DTI	: Department of Trade and Industry
DWCP	: Decent Work Country Programme
EC	: European Commission
ERDA	: Education Research and Development Assistance
GK	: Gawad Kalinga (see glossary)
GYB	: Generate Your Business
IASSF	: Improvement of Agricultural Support Services and Facilities
ICT	: Information and Communication Technologies
ILO	: International Labour Organization
KAB	: Know About Business
LDDW	: Local Development and Decent Work
LED	: Local Economic Development
LGSP	: Local Government Support Programme
LGU	: Local Government Unit

MDGs	: Millennium Development Goals
MERP	: Municipal Education Reform Programme
MPAs	: Marine Protected Areas
MSMEs	: Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
NGLA	: National Government Line Agency
NGO	: Non-Government Organization
OTOP	: One-Town-One-Product
PEEC	: Public Economic Enterprise Council
PESO	: Public Employment Service Office
PFZ	: Poverty Free Zone
PMT	: Project Management Team
PPO	: Provincial Planning Office
PYEP	: Promoting Youth Employment in the Philippines
RAUL	: Reform in Accelerated Learning (see Project RAUL in Glossary)
SB	: Sangguniang Bayan (see also Glossary reference)
SEA-K	: Self-Employment Assistance-Kaunlaran
SK	: Sanguniang Kabataan or Youth Council (see also Glossary Reference)
SYB	: Start Your Business
TASFA	: Tambaliza Small Fishermen's Association
TESDA	: Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TNS	: Taylor Nelson and Sofres
UNDP	: United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	: United Nations Population Fund
USAID	: United States Agency for International Development

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Acknowledgement also to all assisting researchers and local stakeholders from the government and the private sector who assisted and contributed in the various stages of developing and updating the case studies for each of the pilot sites, from 2005 to 2009 and to the ILO-PYEP, Employment, and Publication teams for the overall efforts in delivering this knowledge product and especially Maria Asuncion Ortiz who coordinated the research, writing, and compilation of these case studies.

A note on spelling and other conventions

In accordance with the practice of the ILO this document follows the general spelling conventions as laid out in the Oxford Dictionary. Where two or more alternative spellings are allowed, we normally apply the first such spelling.

Exceptions are made for proper names. Thus we use the general term of “labour market” and “labour scenarios” but “Department of Labor and Employment” and “Labor Code of the Philippines”.

The Philippine *Youth in Nation Building Act of 1997* defines youth as those within the age group of 15–30 years while the Department of Statistics uses the cohort 15–29 years. Both are used in this group of studies depending on the source of information.

Glossary of terms

- ABK : Ang Pag-aaral ng Bata para sa Kinabukasan (*Education for the Children's Future*) Initiative is a support programme addressing the needs of a child labourer. It is aimed at providing children below 15 years old access to formal education complemented with providing alternative livelihood and income support for parents of child labourers and child labourers over 15 years old and with raising awareness of community stakeholders
- Aksyon ng Sambayanan Laban sa Kahirapan : Poverty Free Zone (PFZ) project of the DOLE; a component of the action programme for decent work in the Philippines (See also Poverty Free Zone Project)
- Barangay : The smallest administrative district of government in the Philippines; also 'barrio' from the Spanish
- B/MFARMCs : Barangay and/or Municipal Fisheries and Aquatic Reform Councils (two bodies)
- Career Pathways : A DepEd pilot programme integrating trade skills and entrepreneurship instruction in select high schools to be mainstreamed in the secondary education programme
- CITEM : Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, a trade promotion organization within the Department of Trade and Industry
- CLETF : Child Labour Education Task Force; a component of the ILO's international programme for the elimination of child labour
- Consuelo Zobel Foundation : See Consuelo Zobel Alger Foundation
- Consuelo Zobel Alger Foundation : A private foundation operating under US law and based in Hawaii, founded in 1998 to assist disadvantaged women, children and families in the Philippines and in Hawaii. In July 2002, it was officially renamed the Consuelo Zobel Foundation Incorporated
- Galing Pook Foundation : Founded in 1993 and headquartered in Quezon City, the Galing Pook Foundation is an advocacy for good government and manages an awards programme that issues annual awards for excellence.
- Gawad Kalinga : Officially the Gawad Kalinga (GK) Community Development Foundation, which was launched by Couples for Christ, a Catholic lay community. Its purpose is "advancing and upholding an integrated, holistic and sustainable community development program, especially in the depressed areas, addressing shelter, livelihood, education, and health issues in the spirit of nation building, to strengthen the development and improvement of human and spiritual formation of couples and their children and to foster cooperation with others in the pursuit and realization of the objectives for which (GK) has been established. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gawad_Kalinga (accessed 24 December 2009)
- GET AHEAD : Gender and Entrepreneurship Together (GET) an ILO training and resource kit in four modules targeting women; see for example <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/library/pub4c.htm> (accessed 2 December 2009)

- Habitat for Humanity International : A non-profit, ecumenical Christian housing organization building simple, decent, affordable housing in partnership with people in need (see www.habitat.org)
- KALAHI-CIDSS : *Kapit-bisig Laban sa Kahirapan* (Linking Arms Against Poverty) – Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services, a national flagship programme implemented by the DSWD with support from the World Bank. “It was first implemented in 2003, as a community-driven development project that aims to empower communities through their enhanced participation in community projects that reduce poverty.”
<http://web.worldbank.org> (accessed 24 December 2009)
- Kapit-bisig Laban sa Kahirapan : Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services
- Liga ng mga Barangay : League of Barangays
- MERP : Municipal Education Reform Programme, a local initiative of the LGU of Concepcion, Iloilo
- Pandan (leaves) : Pandan leaves come from plants in the wild with only the young leaves cut so the plant will naturally regenerate. It has many uses especially for dishes and handicrafts. For handicraft making, it can basically produce pandan mats, pandan bags and pandan ropes. The whole process from harvesting of raw materials to finished product is normally handled by craftswomen operating at the community level. (See further details: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandanus>, accessed 24 December 2009)
- Poverty Free Zone Project : A flagship programme of the DOLE aimed at reducing the incidence of poverty in targeted areas through skills development for livelihood opportunities. Technology-based training and provision of needed materials, tools and equipment are extended to target beneficiary groups
- Project RAUL : Reform in Accelerated and Unified Learning, a key programme of the education reform agenda
- RoRo (ferries) : These are the types of ferries that transport people, goods and heavy cargo like cars and even buses. They are named so because wheeled cargo gets on and off the ferry by rolling on and rolling off a giant platform that also serves as the main door.
(http://www.experiencephilippines.ph/LM/transportation/id-1208184886188/Roll_on_Roll_off_RORO.html, accessed 24 December 2009)
- Sangguniang Bayan : The local legislative body of a municipality
- Sangguniang Kabataan : Youth Council (local level)
- Sangguniang Panlalawigan : The legislative board of a province under the chairmanship of the vice governor
- Sangguniang Panlungsod : The legislative branch of a city government

- Sari-sari store : The Filipino equivalent of a ‘mom-and-pop’ store that sells to local communities
- SEA-K : A livelihood enhancement facility organized by the DSWD and designed to diversify income sources for indigent groups
- Sentrong Sigla : The *Sentrong Sigla* (Filipino for "Center of Vitality") Movement in the Philippines started in December 1999 to enable local government units (LGUs) to provide high quality services within a devolved health care system. Sentrong Sigla publicly recognizes and certifies government health facilities that meet national quality standards. The Sentrong Sigla programme fosters collaboration between the Philippines Department of Health (DOH) and the LGUs by effectively enabling the DOH to set quality standards and policies and allowing local government units become more decentralized. To date, over a thousand centers have been certified. JHU/PCS supports the DOH with technical assistance in implementing the overall Sentrong Sigla Movement, through strategic communication campaign planning; production and evaluation, analysis of improving the quality of IPC/C and other related support to promote goals of DOH's family planning programme
- Sitio : An administrative enclave within a barangay
- Taytay sa Kauswagan : An NGO with a significant presence in the Visayan region concerned with organizing values formation, skills training and micro-financing work for enhancing the productive, enterprising and income generation capacities of the working poor especially those in the informal economies (Taytay sa Kauswagan brochure)

Figure 1: The eight pilot areas



Local economic development and youth employment in the Philippines: the case of Concepcion

1 Introduction

The municipality of Concepcion is one of the 42 municipalities and one component city of the province of Iloilo, the largest of the three provinces of Panay Island, located in the western portion of the island grouping in the central part of the Philippines.⁴ It is within Region VI or the Western Visayas.

The local economic development challenge for the municipality lies in attracting partnership programmes and large investors to improve on the basic infrastructure, productivity, and income levels of poor farming and fishing communities within the town.

The local government has responded to this challenge by incrementally instituting a range of policies and programmes anchored on sustainable development principles resulting in creation of new and enhancement and preservation of existing jobs and income sources. It was one of eight locations selected for inclusion in the ILO-CIDA pilot programme.

1.1 Territorial profile

The town is situated 112 kilometers northeast of Iloilo City, the capital town of the province; at the easternmost portion of the Panay Island. It is bounded by the Visayan Sea on the east, the municipality of San Dionisio on the north, and the municipalities of Ajuy and Sara on the west (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

The municipality covers 9,702 hectares, representing 2.1 per cent of the province's total land area of 466,342 hectares. Other than that portion located on the mainland of Panay, Concepcion also covers 16 geographically isolated smaller island territories that constitute 40 per cent of the town's total land area. The nearest is called Tago, around 200 meters away from the mainland, while the farthest is Baliguian, 22 kilometers away. The largest such island is Pan de Azucar covering 1,840 hectares (ha).

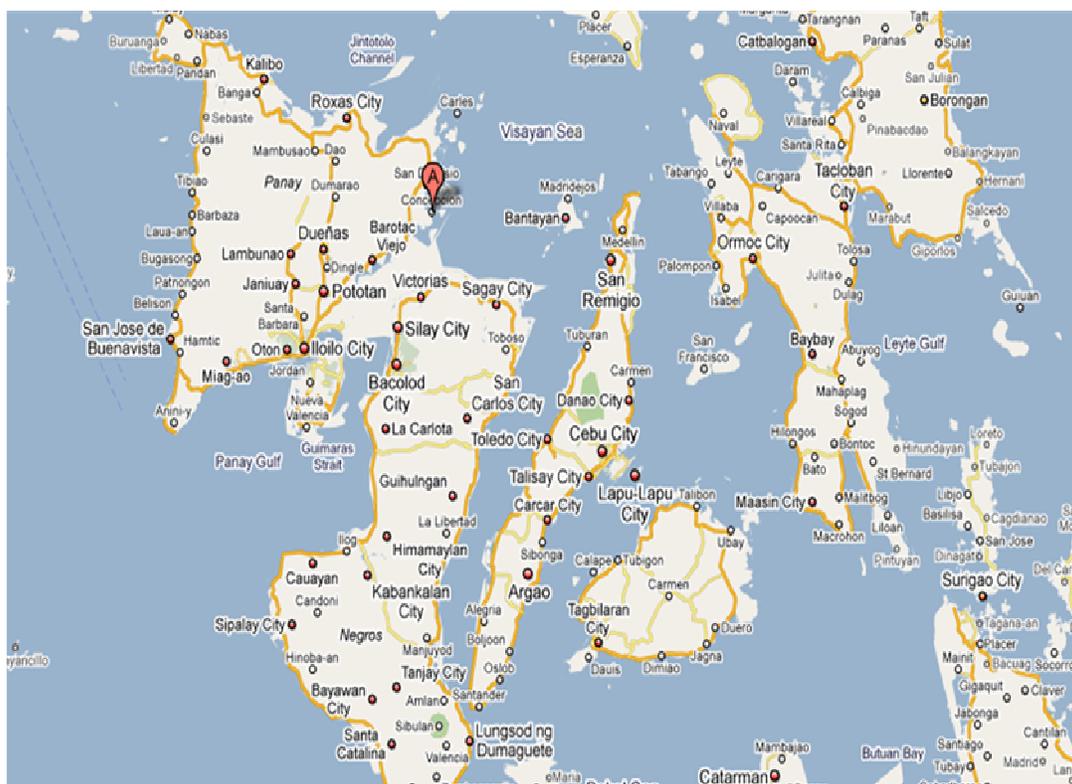
Of the municipality's 25 barangays, 14 are located on the mainland, while the remaining 11 are island barangays. The land area of the town is largely allocated and zoned for farming, fishing, and other development purposes.

1.2 Local economic resource base

This is a predominantly rural community; the economic base of the municipality is anchored in agriculture and fisheries, to which ecotourism is now being added to create an additional livelihood stream for local residents.

⁴ Interview questions for 2005 and 2007 by Maria Asuncion Ortiz and reviewed by ILO; field interviews and study report (2005, 2006) by MAO with Lionel Abril. Follow up interviews on mainstreaming youth employment strategies in local economic development plans, implementing structures, and programmes by MAO (2007, 2008, and 2009).

Figure 2: Concepcion and the Western Visayas



Source: Google maps

1.2.1 Agriculture

The total area devoted to agriculture is 7,480 ha comprising 77.1 per cent of the municipality's total land area.

Rice, corn, and coconut constitute the town's staple crops. Although rice is the largest crop produced in the town, Concepcion's total production output amounts only to 1.24 per cent of the total rice production for the entire province of Iloilo. Corn as the second largest crop produced in Concepcion constitutes 8.79 per cent of the total corn production of the province.

1.2.2 Fisheries

The town has the considerable territorial waters under its jurisdiction, estimated at 22,000 ha, all within the Visayan Sea. The area is considered to be one of the richest fishing grounds in the country.

The sector provides the livelihood for a total of 4,703 fisherfolk and 1,520 fishing boats that are registered with the municipal government. Of the total number, 16 were vessels above 3 tons, 984 were below 3 tons, and the remainder (520) were *bancas* or traditional non-motorized outrigger boats. Town officials and fisherfolk claim the local catch is largely for the local markets with a small portion of the catch shipped to Metro Manila and elsewhere.

Being a coastal town where many local households are dependent on fishing for their primary sustenance, Concepcion has yet to develop value added activities for the fisheries sector that would qualify it for inclusion in the Iloilo Provincial profile as a town that ranked among the main fish producers of the province.

1.2.3 Ecotourism

Concepcion is an emerging tourist destination for island hopping adventures, especially by younger people. It is a participating town in the 'Iloilo Circuit', one of the three ecotourism circuits constituting the Otso-otso Eco-Tour on the Panay Peninsula.

Otso-otso (literally translated: eight-eight) is a string of eight eco-tours creatively packaged to market eight distinct towns located across the three provinces—Iloilo, Aklan, and Antique—of the Panay Peninsula in the Western Visayas Region. Each participating town plans, organizes, and markets its own thematic-based tourism events and attractions in a given calendar year which are complementary to those organized by the other Otso-otso town destinations.

Concepcion for its part can boast of its wide and resource rich territorial waters, its alluring scenic seascape, coral reefs, fish sanctuaries, and its 16 component islands a number of which are endowed with white-sandy beaches. Among its prime attractions is the Tinagong Dagat (Hidden Sea) a body of water shared by the towns of Concepcion and Ajuy and noted for its beauty and its delicious aquaculture products.

The largest of the islands Pan de Azucar has one of the highest peaks of Panay. Also known as Mt Manapha, it rises to a height of 7,148 feet and is considered one of the steepest climbs in the Philippines, making it a natural destination for climbers and backpackers. Mt Apitong also within the town boundary is another area ideal for mountain climbing and other outdoor activities and provides a panoramic vista of Concepcion town and the outlying islands. Rancho Gloria Environment Resort, a declared bird sanctuary, features a 60-hectare lake that is nestled within the 240 hectare coconut plantation.

1.3 Population and labour force

According to the 2000 census, the town recorded a population count of 34,240 persons across 6,405 households with an average household size of 5.5 persons. The annual population growth rate was recorded at 2.97 per cent. The male population constituted 17,588 or 51.37 per cent of the total population, slightly higher than the female population count of 16,652.⁵

Table 1-1 shows the population by age and gender based on the Census 2000. The local population pyramid peaked within the age group 5–9, with a count of 5,006 persons. The next highest population counts were respectively for the age group 10–14 with 4,464 persons, and the age group 1–4 with 3,790 persons. Children of ages 14 years and below made up 42 per cent of the total population. The youth (within the age brackets 15 to 29 years of age) made up a further 25.7 per cent of the total population making the town population very young. As noted, this produces a median age of around 18 years.

Working adults (ages 30 to 59 years old), and the elderly (ages 60 and above) respectively constituted 9,143 or 26.70 per cent and 2,230 or 6.51 per cent of the total population.

⁵ See Box 1 for a discussion of intercensal results.

Table 1-1: Population by age group and gender, 2000 data

Age group	Male	Female	Both
<i>Children</i>			
Under 1	530	494	1 024
1 – 4	1 898	1 892	3 790
5 – 9	2 520	2 486	5 006
10 – 14	2 271	2 193	4 464
<i>Youth</i>			
15 – 19	1 896	1 643	3 539
20 – 24	1 548	1 231	2 779
25 – 29	1 216	1 049	2 265
<i>Adults</i>			
30 – 34	1 125	1 019	2 144
35 – 39	1 051	948	1 999
40 – 44	888	815	1 703
45 – 49	693	680	1 373
50 – 54	542	524	1 066
55 – 59	407	451	858
<i>Elderly</i>			
60 – 64	368	417	785
65 – 69	239	320	559
70 – 74	166	205	371
75 – 79	110	141	251
80 and above	120	144	264
Total	17 588	16 652	34 240

Source: NSO 2000 Census of Population and Housing

Working adults (ages 30 to 59 years old), and the elderly (ages 60 and above) respectively constituted 9,143 or 26.70 per cent and 2,230 or 6.51 per cent of the total population (Box 1).

According to preliminary data released for 2007 census, shows that the population had edged up by 7 per cent to 36, 881. Comprehensive data for the town's population by age group and gender for 2007 is not yet available. However, available data held by the LGU and verified by local stakeholders shows that comparing 2007 data with 2000:

- The schooling age population had increased in number.
- More children and youth were dropping out of school.
- An increasing number of local graduates remained unemployed.
- A young women and young men have low levels of work and life aspirations.
- The town continued to have a weak base in terms of mix of levels and types of skills needed to meet the workforce requirements of potential investors.

Box 1: How fast is the population really growing?

An examination of the available comparative data from the 2007 and 2000 census results suggests that the 2.97 per cent population growth rate for Concepcion during the period 1995–2000 may have been an aberration insofar as it is significantly higher than the growth recorded in surrounding areas and nationally. (A similar result pertains to Guimaras province). At the same time, the 2007 results show abnormally low growth rates. In the absence of any explanation for this phenomenon, results should be read with caution and it may be more appropriate to consider the 1995-2007 computation as a better indicator of long-term averages, or consider the longer-term trend.

Region	Total population			Annual population growth rate		
	1-Aug-07	1-May-00	1-Sep-95	2000-2007	1995-2000	1995-2007
Philippines	88 574 614	76 506 928	68 616 536	2.04	2.36	2.16
Region VI - Western Visayas	6 843 643	6 211 038	5 776 938	1.35	1.50	1.43
Aklan	495 122	451 314	410 539	1.29	2.05	1.58
Antique	515 265	472 822	431 713	1.19	1.97	1.49
Capiz	701 664	654 156	624 469	0.97	1.00	0.98
Iloilo	1 691 878	1 559 182	1 415 022	1.13	2.10	1.51
Iloilo City	418 710	366 391	334 539	1.86	1.97	1.90
Concepcion Municipality	36 881	34 240	29 450	1.08	2.97	1.90
Negros Occidental	2 370 269	213 664	2 031 841	1.44	1.08	1.30
Bacolod City	499 497	429 076	402 345	2.12	1.39	1.83
Guimaras	151 238	141 450	126 470	0.93	2.43	1.51

Source: National Statistical Office, results from <http://www.census.gov.ph/data/sectordata/datapop.html>. 1995 figures for Concepcion are interpolated from available data as raw data for 1995 is no longer available

These findings pose a challenge for the local government to pursue measures to reform the primary, secondary, and tertiary education available to young people and to mobilize external support to complement available local resources in education.

Steps have been taken to bring about on-the-ground education reforms in terms of enhancing child and youth access to schools in each barangay; ensuring the adequacy and quality of instructional materials, methods, facilities; enhancing teacher-student ratio; and working on the relevancy of local course offerings to local economic development.

Disaggregated employment data by age, province, and municipality is not available although data is published by regional level. From this data and from the population data we are able to infer some trends within Concepcion.

The total working age population of Concepcion according to the 2007 census (population between 15 and 64 years inclusive) amounted to only 52 per cent of the total for the municipality. If we assume a labour force participation rate roughly in line with the average recorded for the Western Visayas (Table 1-2), we can deduce that only 32.6 per cent of the population participates in the labour force. This produces a raw dependency ratio of more than 2:1 (working age person is supporting two of non-working age). However, if we fold in the combination of unemployment and underemployment, we can see that only 23 per cent of the population is actually fully employed. This factor, combined with the young median age of the population illustrates the magnitude of the problem that confronts the local administration in finding decent work for the population of Concepcion. This is discussed further in Section 1.3.

Table 1-2: Comparative data from the labour force surveys

Index	Philippines			Western Visayas		
	2007	2006	2005	2007	2006	2005
Total population aged 15 and above (m)	56 845	55 638	54 363	4 649	4 498	4 391
Labour force participation rate	63.2	63.8	64.7	63.5	63.3	66.6
Employment rate	93.7	92.6	92.5	94.0	93.8	95.1
Unemployment rate	6.3	7.4	7.5	6.0	6.2	4.9
Underemployment rate	18.1	20.3	21.1	22.0	26.0	35.1

Source: Labour Force Survey, October rounds; population in millions

1.4 Economic growth prospects

A relatively small number (238 as of 2006) of registered private businesses are found in Concepcion. These are typically micro-sized and home-based enterprises, focused on retailing or on trading of primary as well as semi-processed agricultural and fisheries produce. The town has numerous sari-sari stores, small eateries, and personal service types of businesses such as hairdressing and manicuring, which are mainly sole proprietorship or family-owned businesses that generate few new jobs outside of the immediate family; and those that are generated are generally of low skill levels.

There are 12 agri-processing facilities in town— two involved in crab meat processing, another two processing either anchovies, or other small fish and eight rice mills—which can be classified either as small- or medium-scale enterprises. The two crab meat processing facilities in fact are the only private enterprises classified medium-scale and which were projected to be major job generators for the town but which so far have failed to operate on the intended scale as evidenced by fluctuating levels of production output associated with natural seasonality and legal permissibility of ‘fishing’ and fisheries capture activities within the municipal waters. In fact, there are certain months when there is no production output at all, that is, when fishing is totally off season or when fishing is allowed but the catch is insufficient to make operating the plants viable.

1.4.1 Problems of building investments

In recent years, there have been no large-scale investments in the town to trigger the development of additional infrastructures with the potential to generate new jobs, offer alternative livelihoods, and significantly augment household incomes. Although in the 1990s, with the passage of the Local Government Code (LGC), there were five build, lease, and transfer contracts entered into, implemented (since 1997) and completed through the local government. These contracts financed small-scale commercial buildings of grocery, store, or storage type of facilities but there has been no new investment since that time.

For the nine years to 2007, under the administration of the former mayor Dr Raul Baniyas, three important physical infrastructure projects were completed as an aid to boosting growth of the local economy and enterprises using public funds. These were the wet market, the dry market, and the fish landing port—all found in the town proper or the *poblacion*. In addition, two major private investment projects, the power plant and the ecotourism resort, were in the process of being activated during that time but did not come to fruition.

The Coal-fired Power Plant Project

The *Coal-fired Power Plant Project* proposed by the DMCI, an engineering and construction giant in the country, was one of the two major investment projects expected to materialize in the town and generate 2,000 jobs during the construction phase and 250 jobs during the operational phase. However, obtaining an environmental compliance certificate proved to be a lengthy and difficult process.

Cause-oriented groups raised issues related to risks to human health and the environment posed by operating the plant within the town. These required a series of consultation-dialogue meetings amongst local stakeholders and study visits to similar facilities in other parts of the country to learn from other concerned stakeholders, the problems encountered, actions taken, and lessons learned.

Further, the local government raised concerns as to the adequacy of local human resources with suitable skill types to fill the technical requirements of the jobs that would be created. At the same time, it appeared wary of the possibility that its own qualified local graduates, skilled and professional workers, though limited in number, might not be considered for available jobs by project contractors. This of course, neglected the fact that if some workers were brought in from outside to complement the local workforce, this would develop new local skills, help the town grow and create a multiplier effect within the economy.

The Ecotourism Project

The *Ecotourism Project* of the Active Group,⁶ the other employment and income creation prospect for the town began construction on Tago Island and was intended to become a major beach resort. This project ran into financial difficulty and was the second major project that remained uncompleted. As a result, the project became dormant for many years. During this time, the LGU began to explore and pursue alternative approaches to local ecotourism promotions with the same intended result of making the town known as a major tourist destination and with ecotourism, along with related local economic activities, producing a new source of income for the local people.

Indeed, the eventual activation of large scale investment projects such as those described above were expected to trigger expansion and upgrade of local economic activities across the agriculture, manufacturing, service, and trading sectors. Attraction of large investments was seen as a means of expanding the tax base of the LGU enabling it to leverage the resources available from development agencies in financing the more costly infrastructure needed for growing and sustaining local enterprises over the longer term.

1.4.2 Interventions from the ILO

During a local youth-focused employment creation strategy planning forum (2007) organized by the LGU in Concepcion with technical support from the ILO, key local development stakeholders identified ecotourism as a strategic economic growth sector that would open-up new job opportunities directly for the local 'educated unemployed' youth and would enhance opportunities indirectly for existing and potential local entrepreneurs.

At the same employment planning forum, local stakeholders were in agreement that adapting value-adding processes to agri-fisheries primary resources and targeting higher end non-local markets could result in even more and better economic opportunities for many. Bamboo and *pandan* handicrafts

⁶ A private corporation.

making, livestock development, capture fisheries, fish processing, and mariculture (milkfish, grouper, and avalon) were identified as sub-sectors with high market potential providing opportunities for job growth within the next three to five years.

Following the local employment forum, the LGU intensified standing efforts to pursue a community-based approach to developing the local ecotourism sector capitalizing on the LGU funded (and recently completed) construction of a tourism building intended to house various tour-related services including a souvenir shop and ICT services.

Obtaining matching external support, the LGU selected and trained 20 ‘educated unemployed’ youth from the town and with their individual and combined talents engaged them to effectively market and deliver local eco-tour packages and coordinate activities with the intention of stimulating growth of privately operated economic activities attached to supporting town visitor arrivals and returns.

Although the youth-run ecotourism project was only a modest initiative, it was in line with the goal of marketing Concepcion more effectively and thereby stimulating creation and growth of local enterprises, generating jobs and enhancing incomes opportunities for the ordinary town folk. This initiative will be discussed in details later in this case report.

1.5 Employment and unemployment profile of Concepcion

Based on the 2000 census data, total local population in the labour force was placed at 16,901. Of this number, 5,831 or 34.5 per cent were employed, while the majority (11,070) were unemployed. The high rate of unemployment of 65.5 per cent included the so called frequently found unemployed—the seasonal agricultural workers or marginal and subsistence fishers.⁷

The provincial figures on labour distribution across economic sectors reflect the agricultural character of the province, with 45 per cent to 53 per cent of all employed persons in Iloilo working in the agricultural sector; 37 per cent to 41 per cent in the services sector, 6 per cent to 18 per cent in the manufacturing/industrial sector. The average unemployment rate across the seasons of the year averaged 13 per cent, which is a rate comparable to national unemployment figures.

In the absence of sex- and age-disaggregated labour data from either the municipality of Concepcion or the province of Iloilo, Region VI data are instead used as a proxy data. If regional trends are true for the municipality, then the data for the Western Visayas region would reveal that two of the population groups that are most vulnerable to unemployment are the youth and the women.

In relation to the first group, the young persons in the region posted the highest levels of unemployment rates, with the age groups 15–20 and 20–24 recording unemployment rates of 15.38 per cent and 14.56 per cent, respectively. In relation to the second group, women across all age groups in the region recorded higher unemployment rates as compared to males, with 15–24 year old females posting unemployment rates above 20 per cent.

Data on youth unemployment trends have been validated as true and complement with the results of the local youth profiling survey in the town (ILO: TNS 2006) as will be discussed in details later.

⁷ Based on interviews with former Community Development Officer and incumbent Sanggunian Bayan Member, Romeo Lanciola: 2005 and 2007.

1.6 Challenges and key responses

As earlier discussed, faced with extremely high unemployment rates, the development and employment challenge for Concepcion lies in attracting partnership programmes and large investors able to improve basic infrastructure, productivity, and income levels of benefit to the poor farming and fishing communities in the town. This can only be done by creating more enterprises and jobs as well as better income status for the town sufficient for it to supply additional resources back to the community.

So far, the local government of Concepcion has responded to the general challenge by taking a number of measures:

- instituting local policies conducive to sustainable economic development;
- structuring a public economic enterprise council in accordance with R.A. 7160 to support local enterprise development and LGU revenue generation functions;
- pursuing more integrated human capital formation programmes which include as components, a health reform programme, an education reform programme, and a housing development programme;
- identifying and bringing in various livelihood creation and enhancement programmes of the national government line agencies (NGLAs) and NGOs;
- instituting LGU staff performance management tools and practices to better deliver basic services in line with local development plans;
- adopting project success measures such as the minimum basic needs as performance reference and benchmarking tools;
- documenting and scaling-up small successes for resource leveraging and public advocacies; and
- activating a local youth-focused employment strategy to stimulate growth of job-creating sectors and harness the economic potential of the unemployed youth and underemployed portions of the local population.

2 Development of and results from key LED strategies

2.1 Local policies conducive to sustainable economic development

The *Sangguniang Bayan* (SB), the legislative arm of the municipal government of Concepcion has been generally supportive of the LGU vision, mission, and goals (Box 2) that were redefined through a participatory approach by the LGU under the three-term (1999–2007) leadership of Mayor Raul Baniyas and sustained under the incumbent, Mayor Elizabeth Salcedo (2007–2010).

Box 2: The LGU vision and mission

Vision	Purpose
<i>A highly competent and dynamic LGU serving as agent of change in partnership with the civil society targeting zero poverty by 2020.</i>	<i>Provide excellent public service for all</i>
Source: Concepcion LGU	

In order to reduce and eventually eradicate poverty in the municipality, the LGU is promoting a local policy environment conducive to economic growth and the creation of decent jobs and incomes sources for the people of the town. Local legislation has been adopted in line with the LGU vision.

Although about 50 per cent of the SB elected members during the incumbency of Mayor Baniyas were from a political party different from his own, the legislative support he needed was mustered by the Vice Mayor (the presiding officer of the SB), the chair of the Youth Council (or the *Sangguniang Kabatan* [SK]), and the chair of the Association of Barangay Captains (ABC) who were all from the ruling party and had influence in the SB.

Because of the bipartisan support gained, the SB was able to pass landmark legislation such as:

- Local Investment and Incentive Code
- Local Market Code
- Local Land Use Ordinance
- Comprehensive Municipal Fishing Ordinance
- Centralized Landing Ordinance
- Local Revenue Code
- Annual Appropriation Bills
- Local Ordinance that allows for single motorcycles to commercially operate to address the transport needs of upland communities
- Ordinance declaring seven Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) for the town

As a result of this legislation, investment areas were identified and Coastal Resource Management (CRM) plans drafted and approved. Both the previous and the current versions of the Comprehensive Municipal Fishing Ordinance (CMFO) have already reaped positive impact for the town.

Testimonials from the fisherfolks and the Barangay and Municipal Fisheries and Aquatic Reform Councils (B/MFARMCs) have shown the local fish catch has grown and become more diverse, increasing from 1.8 kilos/outing to 4.8 kilos/outing i.e. the average daily catch per fisher. Because of better management of marine resources, the time spent in fishing has been reduced, providing the fisherfolk with more time to explore and engage in other economic activities.

The local fish catch observations have been recorded since 2003 on a daily basis by local fishers (who were trained accordingly by the Save the Children Organization),⁸ collected and collated every six

⁸ See Box 3.

months by a project staff of Save the Children and interpreted by its consultant, Nygiel Armada of the University of the Philippines in Visayas.

The Save the Children consultant initially executed a trend analysis of the daily fish catch findings covering 2.5 years to 2005 and validated the same with concerned fisherfolks groups in coastal communities of Concepcion in a local forum in 2005.

Noteworthy, even when the Save the Children project was completed and even after the consultant resigned from the university to work as a Fisheries Management Specialist for the USAID-BFAR Fish Project and assigned in Cebu Province, he continued to collect fish catch data from Concepcion for another round of interpretation for the municipality considering the various factors affecting the local fish catch across the years for the periods 2005–2007 and 2007–2009. These factors include the Solar oil spill tragedy in 2006,⁹ as well as the effects of El Niño and extreme weather phenomena.

Though previously, many fisherfolk were initially against the MPAs fearing economic dislocation, eventually it was the fisherfolk themselves who requested the establishment of more MPAs, once the benefits were demonstrated. Through the MFO, it was also expected that child labour in the fisheries sector would be minimized with the mandatory registration of fish workers, fisherfolks, and boat operators with the municipal government.

With effective enforcement of these local ordinances, the municipal government was able to expand its local revenue base. Collection efficiency rose from 62 per cent in 2003 to 76 per cent in 2004, and to 95 per cent as of the first quarter of 2005. The LGU effort to expand the revenue base appears to have been sustained.

2.2 Activating a public economic enterprise council

Article 30 of the LGC provides that LGUs may, by ordinance, sell, lease, encumber, or otherwise dispose of public economic enterprises owned by them in their proprietary capacity to ensure active participation of the private sector in local governance.

Following the passage of a local ordinance, a local Public Economic Enterprise Council (PEEC) was organized involving both government and non-government representatives including individual entrepreneurs, and with the intent of building local government capacity to responsibly make use of existing public property and lands, engage private individuals in developing local enterprises, and building local government revenues to address local development needs.

Thus far, the local government through the PEEC has been able to:

- draft guidelines and rationalize the use of existing government land properties and support the development of local enterprises;
- engage private individuals in three locally devised “Build-Lease-Transfer” (BLT) arrangements by using existing government properties where they were able to invest and build the town’s fish landing areas, the wet and the dry public markets (operators paid for the construction materials and human resource needs, while the local government through its

⁹ See for example, Sun Star Iloilo. "Guimaras oil spill a national disaster." August 26, 2006. <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/static/ilo/2006/08/26/news/guimaras.oil.spill.a.national.disaster.html> (accessed December 22, 2009).

planning and engineering offices provided the planning, design, and construction management services). In effect this:

- made the BLT facilities beneficial to: (i) private individual investors as they were able to grow and sustain their own private businesses using the facilities; (ii) the general public whose facility service and household needs have been met; and (iii) local as well as national government with the revenues generated from payments of business taxes, mayor's permits fees etc.;
- enabled the local government to provide management services to support the proper management of the BLT facilities on behalf of the private individuals involved while, at the same time, protecting consumer welfare and interests;
- allowed the investors to recoup their investments with profit before transferring ownership to the local government after a period of 10 years (2007 extended to 2012) at which time the local government would be in a position to support and manage local enterprises using the user-pays schemes already devised; and.
- addressed the initial concern of the LGU in subsidizing the cost of operating and maintaining public service facilities. The measures put in place allowed these facilities to become self-sustaining over time.

2.3 Pursuing a better integrated human capital formation programme

2.3.1 Integrating population, health, and environmental concerns

The LGU has invested in a range of interventions to cover the local health needs of its constituents in line with the belief that a healthy population is a prerequisite to having and keeping economically productive local human resources. These interventions include:

- investing in quality health facilities and services that are *Sentrong Sigla* accredited;¹⁰
- mobilizing well-trained and equipped volunteer health workers;
- extending social health insurance to families;
- addressing development needs of the younger segments of the local population—infants, young children, and teenagers; and
- cooperating with external resource agencies to support the local health reform agenda.

The LGU has been able to so far lower its infant mortality rate to two per cent and kept the maternal death rate at zero, during 2002 to 2004. Although there are no hospitals in the locality, the local government has been able to provide a range of primary health care services through its main health center in the town proper and three barangay-based health centers.

All centers are *Sentrong Sigla* accredited and therefore compliant to the standards set and endorsed by the Department of Health (DOH) towards improving the quality of LGU health services. In addition, there are also 18 satellite health stations with 10 of these also *Sentrong Sigla* accredited. One hundred and fifteen volunteer health workers keep these health stations operational at the service of local community members.

¹⁰ See Glossary.

Box 3: Externally funded population, health, and environmental initiatives

A population, health and environment study known as the People and Environment Co-Existence and Development (PESCODEV) Project was started in the year 2000 by Save the Children (USA) through Save the Children Western Visayas. Originally, this project was intended as a study based on a development assistance package implemented in two towns in Guimaras Province and two towns in Iloilo (Ajuy and Concepcion).

The project attempted to link in holistic fashion, the issues of population, reproductive health and the environment using an approach designed to show the community the link between population, health, and the environment in the fight against poverty.

With the determination of the municipal leadership to continue the momentum gained by the PESCODEV Project at the end of its three-year initial life, fresh funding was secured from the Philippine Canada Development Fund (PCDF) to continue this work under "Project Cope" (Convergence on Poverty Eradication). The initial programme was expanded to nine areas and its formation was supported by the DOH and the Iloilo Provincial Government.

The town mayor of Concepcion believes "success begets success" and the project was extended a second time. The mayor was able to secure funding from the UNFPA and the third phase named "Project ReCAPHE" (Replicating Convergence Approach on Population, Health, and Environment) was started. In 2005, PHE gained the coveted Galing Pook Award (see for example, www.galingpook.org) as one of the 10 most outstanding programmes of local government. The following year, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) named Concepcion as one of the 10 LGUs given a Special Citation for local implementation of the millennium development goals (MDGs). As an incentive, the Philippine Center for Population and Development (PCPD) granted a one million financial package to further the programme called LITA-MDG-PHE (Local Initiatives Towards Achieving the MDGs through Population, Health, and Environmental Management).

Source; Concepcion LGU; World Watch Magazine, October 2004, Vol 17 No 5, available online at <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/558> (accessed 1 November 2009)

Given the large network of volunteer health workers capable of reaching out to and integrating with the community even in the more remote and far flung barangays, the LGU was also able to, implement a range of barangay-based awareness programmes for the local citizenry. This initiative involved parents, youth, school, and the government in tackling issues related to gender awareness, reproductive health, and family planning. This was done in the context of enabling the community to plan, manage, and balance concerns for population size, conservation of local resources, and productive economic life.

In the seven years to 2005 the LGU was also able to extend social health insurance to 1,200 poor families and address the needs of children through the early child education programme and establish 28 new day care centers. As of end of December 2005 there were already 53 operational day care centers in Concepcion.

Complementary to all the local health initiatives undertaken by the LGU from its own resources, are the efforts to integrate population, health, and environmental management concerns through an externally funded programme implemented with Canadian assistance (Box 3).

2.3.2 Educational reform programmes

The LGU has intentionally made basic quality education a priority in its human capital formation programme given local trends observed prior to 2005 which included:

- the completion rate in elementary falling below 70 per cent, i.e. between 68–69 per cent;
- the rate of students able to transit from elementary to high school falling below 50 per cent;
- the deterioration of English instruction affecting the English language ability of local graduates;
- the approach in addressing education problems being neither holistic nor systemic;

- the parents of students not being involved in the approach to education; and
- the hiring of teachers based on their political affiliations rather than being qualification-based.

A further factor was evidence from elsewhere of a long-term decline in the quality of education nationally.

The local response to national concerns has been to initiate its own programmes as well as to participate in projects of the national government and the international agencies. These include the following:

- Project RAUL (Reform in Accelerated and Unified Learning)—key to the Municipal Education Reform Programme (MERP).
- CLETF (Child Labour Education Task Force)—a facility for mobilizing support for children and parents in line with the MERP.
- ABK (Ang Pag-aaral ng Bata para sa Kinabukasan)—a child schooling support programme involving more than 500 pupils from Concepcion.
- KAB (Know About Business)—an ILO training package pilot-tested in select schools to be mainstreamed in secondary education programme.
- Career Pathways—a Department of Education (DepEd) pilot programme integrating trade skills and entrepreneurship instruction in select high schools to be mainstreamed in the secondary education programme.

These programmes are outlined below and in the following section of this report.

These interventions are in support of the town's long-term goal of holistically and systemically boosting the quality of its local labour supply so as to make Concepcion attractive to investors. The immediate goal is to make quality schooling accessible to all, enable parents to afford and keep children in school and ensure schools and teachers are equipped with the knowledge and tools to make students employable and competitive to enter the workforce.

Project RAUL with the support of Ford Foundation was intended to improve the quality of the public education system of the town through the following component strategies:

- teacher development;
- organization of remedial classes across the main and island barangays of the town;
- development of instructional materials;
- child health and nutrition programmes;
- strengthening of the Parents, Teachers Community Association (PTCA); and
- strengthening of the local school Board and advocacy and replication support.

Monitoring the progress and effectiveness of the programme was aided by mapping sites covered, served, and visited for tracking developments. Performance indices such as the district achievement test rates and student participation, survival, retention, and drop-out rates are used to benchmark progress. Since SY 2001-2002, when the LGU began to monitor the district, school and student performance, modest improvements have been noted each year.

The LGU provides counterpart funding in all its partnership programmes. For the year 2005 for instance, it allocated PhP1.4 million for regular school support and a further PhP1.9 million for the education reform programme. For the same year, a cumulative total of 15 new public elementary schools and one high school were constructed. Priority was being given to island barangays as a way of making schooling physically accessible for children and less costly for parents as children need no longer cross to another island to enable them to attend school on a daily basis.

The ABK was implemented as an anti-child labour programme with support from the Education Research and Development Assistance (ERDA) Foundation. This programme is aimed at preventing pupils from dropping out of school and turning to subsistence livelihoods such as fishing where child labour was previously rife. The programme extended necessary assistance to potential school drop-outs in the form of payment for school supplies, and to their families—especially parents—in the form of livelihood support. The programme also aimed to improve and develop basic and quality education, hence teacher, school, and materials development provisions were extended as needed.

Local education reform stakeholders noted that preventing children from dropping out of school was only one aspect of the problem. They stressed the need to ensure that primary and secondary schools were able to provide students with the basic trade cum entrepreneurial skills needed as a foundation for their future employability. They noted that skills gaps and the overall deterioration of quality of education is not unique to Concepcion but were merely local symptoms of the national state of the Philippine educational system.

Given the desire of the LGU to take local direct action and participate in the national education reform process, it was quick to express and acquiesce to have its town be a pilot area for KAB and later, the *Career Pathways Programme* (CPP).

2.3.4 Concepcion as a KAB pilot area

The ILO-KAB is a globally tested training package designed for secondary, vocational, and training schools providing teachers with instructional tools and business resource linkages that enable them to teach and expose young people to key elements of successful entrepreneurship. The main focus of the package is to sensitize participants as to the attitudes, skills and characteristics needed to become an active entrepreneur. At the same time the course also teaches the potential pitfalls of business. The course covers nine modules each addressing a basic business-related question (Box 4).

KAB was first introduced to the Philippines at an ILO organized entrepreneurship forum in November 2005. The DepEd expressed its interest in using this programme as a potential resource as it was to revisit and refine the general secondary education curriculum. The Concepcion Mayor who was also at the forum asked to have his town be one of the pilot areas. Eventually, two of Concepcion's schools were among the 48 high schools to pilot-test KAB nationally among fourth year students in SY 2006–2007. It directly involved and benefited four teachers of the town who were intensively trained in KAB and around 100 students who participated in the pilot classes.

As a result of taking the course, many of the KAB students in Concepcion, similar to other pilot areas, were able to run mini-businesses within the school premises. Among others, KAB stakeholder claim it

Box 4: The nine key questions of KAB

1. What is an enterprise?
2. Why entrepreneurship?
3. Who are entrepreneurs?
4. How do I become an entrepreneur?
5. How do I find a good business idea?
6. How do I organize an enterprise?
7. How do I operate the enterprise?
8. What are the next steps to become an entrepreneur?
9. How to prepare my own business plan?

helped many of the students pass the qualifying examinations for college that allowed them to pursue tertiary level education. School principals and teachers generally link KAB class attendance to better performance in the national qualifying exams for college given the fact that these students scored highly in the category of items requiring entrepreneurship knowledge and related skills.

The principal of the Roberto H. Tirol National High School was enthusiastic about the programme believing that the teaching of KAB in schools can benefit the entire local economy. In discussion with the author she said “*entrepreneurship is beneficial to stimulating growth of micro, small, and medium enterprises [MSMEs] in Concepcion. The town is largely a fishing economy. It is rich with fisheries and aquatic resources. What the few entrepreneurs know is how to catch these and sell them at low values. If local people become entrepreneurial, these resources can be processed into value-added products and can be sold at a higher price and better profit. Our youth can learn a series of related skills in processing local marine resources and at the same time learn to market them at higher value.*”

The two pilot schools in Concepcion, with the initiative and full support of the principals, district office of DepEd and the LGU, had the KAB classes re-run in the following school year 2007–2008 but still as an elective subject under the old Technology and Livelihood Education curricular programme. It was also offered to fourth year high school students.

The LETS GO Foundation monitoring and evaluation reports (2006–2007) complemented with this researcher’s interviews with concerned Concepcion high school principals and teachers (2007) indicated that the local initiative to re-run KAB was driven by two common beliefs: Firstly, KAB instruction enabled their schools, through the KAB pilot students, win regional skills and business competitions and, secondly, KAB enabled the 2006–2007 graduating students to pass the national qualifying examination for college through their thorough knowledge of examination questions that covered entrepreneurship-related items.

Many students in fourth year high school who chose to enlist themselves in KAB as their elective course in 2007–2008 were influenced by the positive feedback from those who participated in the pilot class the previous year and also inspired by those they witnessed starting their own small businesses. Asked about motivations for choosing KAB as an elective course, both female and male students claimed they wanted to:

- become successful in business;
- enhance their talent and develop new skills;
- learn the right attitude towards people with whom they work and deal in business;
- be confident in pursuing a business degree;
- learn business at a young age so as to develop skills needed for life, especially if unable to go on to (or finish) college;
- learn to manage a family business and develop ideas for their own business;
- be helped in developing ideas to venture into a suitable business;
- be helped to become a good leader by developing interpersonal skills;
- learn how to get into the food business out of a passion to prepare food or wanting to prepare for a Hotel and Restaurant Management (HRM) degree;
- experience selling products and earning profits; and
- learn more about the characteristics of a successful business.

The foregoing answers as motivation is the first step in raising the work and life aspirations of young people and creating a local entrepreneurial culture that can, in time, stimulate further development of the local economy.

However the inadequacy of school facilities, availability of supplementary reading materials, and the size of the class can be deterrence to entrepreneurship instruction. But even with these limitations, the more successful pilot schemes—in which Concepcion can be counted—were championed by teachers who themselves are enterprising, creative, resourceful, and innovative—and integrative in their approach to instruction, out of a commitment to ensure each student learn as much.

2.3.4 Concepcion as a career pathways pilot area

The DepEd-CPP came about while the KAB pilot-testing was on-going and was a result of revised priorities set by the (then) newly seated Education Secretary, Jesli Lopus. Originally, CPP was focused on intensively developing TESDA certifiable industry-oriented/trade-based skills at the high school level which can equip students for employment should they drop out of school or be unable to continue their education due to financial constraints.

The programme incorporated KAB entrepreneurship elements as a base in every trade skills elective course offered in high schools, from first to third year levels. Eventually in the fourth (and final) year in high school, the entire KAB package was expected to be offered as a required subject that will ensure all high school graduates are capable of preparing a simple, yet feasible, business plan.

The CPP curriculum, designed for first year high school students, was piloted in 2007–2008 and its mainstreaming in more schools began in the following year. The curriculum designed for second year high school students was piloted in 2008–2009 and mainstreamed in the following year; for third year high school in 2009–2010 and for fourth year high school in 2010–2011 when KAB would have to be re-piloted in full and eventually mainstreamed in all schools.

DepEd's Bureau of Secondary Education headed by Dr Lolita Andrada selected one of the two KAB pilot schools in Concepcion as one of the Career Pathways pilot schools. Teachers were trained to teach locally relevant trade skills and integrate entrepreneurship principles in the process.

In practice, the CPP pilot teachers in Concepcion handled it by (in their words) *“preparing and teaching skills programme based on the requirements of the local economy”* For example as a fisheries rich town, they claimed *“we are teaching de-boning as one skill in fish preservation and processing and teach them to become entrepreneurial at the same time, which goes with the discipline of packaging, marketing, and selling quality de-boned fish at a good price”*.

As feedback from the CPP first year level students: *“In our class we are divided into groups to do different tasks such as finding raw materials for our products, producing the product, marketing and recording and computing how much we spent and sell. We like the group work and it tells us how we are related to the other groups as our entire class is like one business organization”*.

Generally, the principal says: *“We are met by some challenges in implementing Career Pathways amongst first year students as well as re-running KAB for fourth year students. We need financing for equipment and materials needed to make the modules more practice-based”*.

Thus far (late 2009), according to the local planning and development coordinator, the local pilot schools for KAB voluntarily continue to offer the programme for third and fourth year students while the DepEd Career Pathways mainstreaming and monitoring work continues through the services of university based NGO, Synergia.

2.3.5 Human settlement programmes

The LGU with support from the national government (through PGMA and Local Government Support Programme [LGSP] funds) and from the NGO (Couples for Christ and USA private sector groups) was able to complete a number of *Gawad-Kalinga* shelter projects. The projects provided homes to 77 landless families, affording them with decent housing, access to social services, and an environment conducive to engagement and participation in economic and livelihood development activities that would enable them to generate incomes sufficient to finance and sustain their basic needs including paying off the cost of owning and maintaining the units provided to them.

2.4 Direct action programmes to support livelihoods and jobs

To complement the limited local resources of the LGU to support its local socio-economic outreach programmes, then Mayor Raul Baniyas had to be resourceful to find out and bring in to Concepcion existing national and international programmes of relevant NGLAs, NGOs, and international development agencies that could give effect to livelihood, jobs, and incomes creation, and enhancement.

Some of these programmes and initiatives that the LGU has supported for local implementation and attained some level of success include:

2.4.1 The KALAHI-CIDSS Programme

The *Kapit-bisig Laban sa Kahirapan* or Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (KALAHI-CIDSS) was a flagship programme of the national government implemented with support from the World Bank through the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in partnership with select LGUs throughout the country.¹¹

This was a three-year programme developed by the National Anti-Poverty Commission¹² that ran from 2001 to 2004 with the aim of reducing poverty by giving people greater control in analyzing and deciding upon their own situation and needs, prioritizing problems, proposing and justifying solutions, and developing barangay or community level action plans which they implemented based on values of good governance and sustainability. The programme was anchored in five core strategies to ensure the redistribution of economic opportunities and empowerment of the poor and the delivery of social services to vulnerable sectors.¹³

Concepcion was among the towns that implemented the programme through its own KALAHI-CIDSS *Kaunlaran at Kapangyarihan sa Barangay* (KALAHI-CIDSS-KKB) which supported specific components of the action plans prepared by each of the 25 barangays of the town. Among other things, it financed construction of small-scale infrastructure, capital equipment, and training. More specifically, it provided, as articulated in respective barangay action plans, a passenger pump boat, solar dryer, warehouses, and water system which supported local livelihoods start-up, development, and enhancement.

Concepcion started to implement the KALAHI-CIDSS programme in 2003 with KKB (progress and empowerment) as a focus. Eventually the local town adapted a local version with *makamasang tugon*

¹¹ Then DSWD Secretary Corazon J. Soliman facilitated the buy-in towards national cascading of the programme.

¹² See for example <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/library/download/pub03-08/chap8a.pdf> (accessed 2 November 2009).

¹³ See <http://www.napc.gov.ph/kalahi.htm> (accessed 2 November 2009).

(literally translated: mass or grassroots response) becoming the focus. Even with the formal end of the project in 2004, the barangay project committee structures, capital equipment and training continue to be relevant (although not in all barangays), and monitoring and assessment work by the local convergence group, district-based national staff of DSWD and the staff of World Bank continues to the present. In particular, the World Bank performs sustainability and fiduciary assessment of the projects implemented through the KALAHI-CIDDS-KKB Programme.

To date, the local government claims the programme using minimum basic needs (MBN) tools has had positive effects on income generation, poverty reduction, and decent work at both the barangay and municipal levels.

These claims are based on surveys conducted by the municipal LGU. A reduction of poverty occurrences in the town is evident. In 2001, 87 per cent of the local population were below the poverty line. In 2004, the poverty incidence decreased to 64 per cent of the population. By 2007, the incidence further decreased to 48.5 per cent.

Based on reports generated at the barangay level and shared by the municipal government staff during its interdepartmental meetings, improved barangay/community/household level economic capacity is indicated by increases in the enrolment of children in day care, a reduction in the number of child drop-outs in school, and increased productive capacities in agriculture projects.

The LGU relates (and claims it can hardly disassociate) such modest improvements to the KALAHI-CIDDS programme. It cannot claim however that it has been totally successful as it has yet to further improve the principles of participation, transparency, and accountability in managing development projects. In addition, according to the Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator, not all 25 barangays are able to sustain use of KALAHI-CIDD established barangay project committee structures. Feedback from World Bank staff indicates that involvement of the trained community volunteers in most barangays was not sustained an area that the local government needs to address.

2.4.2 The SEA-K Programme

The LGU of Concepcion has been a long-time DSWD partner in implementing Self-Employment Assistance-Kaunlaran (SEA-K), a livelihood enhancement facility designed to diversify income sources by: (i) organizing and training community members as a first stage intervention in target areas; and thereafter (ii) providing organized communities with loan assistance through a group-based seed capital to support individual income-generation and enterprising endeavours.

In making SEA-K work to the advantage of the town's indigents, the LGU Social Welfare Office initially planned to benefit ten barangays that were home to small fishing and farming communities and known to be most vulnerable to natural disasters (typhoons, storms, etc.). Such disasters could easily disrupt community livelihood activities and incomes flows, often with devastating consequences. The intention was to help fishing and farming-dependent families diversify their sources of incomes, raise income levels and build up contingency funds that would provide a coping mechanism in times of crisis.

SEA-K, as locally implemented in Concepcion, can be adjudged a success in reaping benefits for the targeted barangays, for organized beneficiary groups and for individuals in the organized groups and their dependent household members, particularly in terms of gains with respect to first stage intervention. From two women's associations organized in 1994, these were expanded to 10 organized women associations with 10 members each. By 2005, SEA-K had at least 23 strong primary

associations and eventually these were federated into a municipal-based Level II organization, all functional until today. This is one programme that has demonstrably provided long-term benefit.

In terms of gains with respect to second stage interventions the two organized women groups each qualified for a PhP50,000 group loan from DSWD which was quickly recouped through regular loan repayments by members.

In terms of changes in the income status of members, SEA-K generated increases in the members' income by an average of 300 per cent or equivalent to PhP3,000/month for those with a base income of PhP1,000/month. But even with the new base of PhP4,000/month, this was still insufficient to raise people out of their status as 'poor' and thus challenged members to seek further improvement towards decent levels of income.

The introduction of ILO's Generate Your Business/Start Your Business (GYB/SYB) training modules through trained local trainers provided existing SEA-K micro-entrepreneurs with an option to review and enhance their own enterprise operating practices and even to consider expanding to creating jobs for others.

In terms of changes in day-to-day behaviour of members, SEA-K has inspired and boosted confidence of women in their own economic potential and the actual contribution they can make to their homes and immediate communities.

Due to initial high member loan repayment rates and the good reputation created by the SEA-K associations and federation, they collectively:

- Merited a PhP882,000 housing and micro credit loan at one per cent interest rate per annum from DSWD. Fifty per cent of the fund was to provide shelter and the other 50 per cent for micro-lending. It initially benefited 31 members, with 11 for loans for actual house improvements.
- Leveraged credit funds from PAGCOR in addition to the funds built up through member loan repayments, with the intention of covering other barangays and barangay sectors not yet serviced by the programme.
- Obtained DSWD support to an SEA-K resolution to convert 'credit' funds to 'grant' funds to further expand its fund base so that benefits could be continually rolled out to members and non-members.
- Garnered a winning judgment for the Concepcion Market Vendors' Kabayan Association, as the Best SEA-K Association in Region VI (Western Visayas Region).

SEA-K also merited a larger micro-credit fund of PhP1 M from PAGCOR through the LGU and Cooperative Development Authority (CDA). PhP100,000 was allocated for the SEA-K Federation revolving fund, PhP200,000 for member associations and the rest for non-members. Borrowers were charged an interest of 4 per cent per month, a 3 per cent service fee and with a 10 per cent penalty surcharge imposed for delinquent payment.

Recognizing the need to expand and sustain the service operations of SEA-K, five people—a manager, bookkeeper, treasurer, and two credit investigators—were hired at minimal salary to manage the SEA-K fund. The management team ensures each member association conducts one meeting per week, while the SEA-K Federation conducts a monthly meeting. Several training sessions were

organized by DSWD for the member associations covering concerns on gender, leadership, financial management, business management, and bookkeeping.

Although the income status achieved by SEA-K beneficiaries is not yet of sufficient standard to adequately cover all household expenses it has become evident over the years that members benefit from participation through increased income.

The SEA-K president attributes the success thus far achieved, primarily, to cooperation of members in adhering to agreed organizational policies and meeting financial obligations. Secondly on the part of the leadership and management team there is the diligent monitoring and house-to-house visitation to ensure close contact is kept with members. Success was also due in part to LGU provisions of management and technical support.

2.4.3 The Poverty Free Zone Project

The municipality is also a local implementing partner of the DOLE's *Aksyon ng Sambayanan Laban sa Kahirapan* or Poverty Free Zone (PFZ) project, aimed at reducing the incidence of poverty in targeted areas through skills development for livelihood opportunities. Technology-based training and provision of needed materials, tools and equipment have been extended to target beneficiary groups.

The local component of the project is being implemented in one of the DOLE-BRW-assessed depressed communities in Concepcion, the island barangay known as Dungon. Groups have been organized in the barangay for *pandan* weaving, bamboo craft making, and bamboo furniture-making and recently also for crab trap making.

The municipality has pursued efforts to find new and larger markets for locally produced handicraft products to further increase local household incomes. This is one aspect local stakeholders identified and began to address, integrating handicraft sales into the youth-led tourism services promotion as well as the product development upgrading initiative of the municipal government.

2.4.4 Sustainable agriculture-fishery support programmes and service infrastructure

The municipal government has aggressively pursued improvements in its agri-fishery resource development and use, promoting (community outreach programmes) and enforcing (local ordinances) productive and profitable, but guaranteed environmentally sound, economic activities in collaboration with specialized resource agencies.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) through the LGU-municipal agriculture office extends financial and technical support for swine breeding and dispersal, egg production and native chicken, goat and carabao dispersal to targeted beneficiaries. Other interventions include artificial reef installation to promote fisheries, seed and fertilizer assistance to farmers, and distribution of chicken, swine, cattle, goat, and carabao to provide farmers and fisherfolk with alternative livelihood development commodities.

The DA also provides support in the form of pre- and post-harvest facilities, including multi-purpose drying pavements, small farm reservoirs, small diversion dams, and hand tractors. Its attached agency, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), provides technical support in boat building. The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) through the Improvement of Agricultural Support Services and Facilities (IASSF) programme assists in the development of farm-to-market roads. The World Bank through the DSWD

has supported barangay identified priority welfare infrastructure such as a day care centers, foot-rail, road, sea walls, and provision of livelihood equipment.

The LGU has set up a desk to provide organizing and resource linkage and mobilization support to households engaged in fishing and to organized fisherfolk within the framework of Community Resource Management (CRM).

One of the organized fisherfolk groups that the LGU provided help to was the Tambaliza Small Fishermen's Association (TASFA). TASFA is a self-organized group which started with around 33 members and which organizes advocacies for coastal resource protection, conservation, and rehabilitation. The active involvement of its president in CRM led him to become the Chairman of the Municipal Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Council (MFARCC) from which all municipal fishery laws emanate. As a result, many pieces of municipal fisheries legislation were passed by the *Sangguniang Bayan* and MPAs were declared. Fishing thus became more regulated.

In the course of TASFA's advocacy work addressing the environmental dimension of using coastal resources for livelihood activities, it had the adverse consequence of limiting the capacity of local fisherfolk to generate adequate household income. To fill the gap, TASFA was able to construct and self-manage a fishpen with which through which it can engage in *bangus* or milkfish culture.

The LGU was able to link-up TASFA to both formal and informal livelihood support providers able to provide:

1. Start-up fund support—the LGU was able to link TASFA with an NGO known as BIGKIS LAKAS that provided it with soft loans amounting to PhP164,000 to cover the costs of construction materials for a half hectare fishpen and which became the alternative livelihood base for those fisherfolk willing to invest their time and efforts to pursue this alternative livelihood activity.
2. Supplies sourcing support—the LGU connected TASFA with the local chief executive of the neighbouring town of Ajuy. This local politician, in his private capacity, manages a stock of *bangus* fries, fingerlings, and feeds. TASFA was able to arrange for sourcing of its required fingerlings and feed supplies with delivery free of charge at discounted price rates, payable after harvest.
3. Equipment support—TASFA was able to arrange with the same fingerling supplier for its group to be provided with a generator and a feeding machine payable after harvest. This simple request was granted even without contract.
4. Market support—TASFA was able to arrange with the same supplies and equipment provider to buy the *bangus* harvest at a favourable market price.

TASFA was able to fully pay out its initial loans within two years although the initial target was for repayment was three years. The only counterpart input of the TASFA was the collective and individual man-hours supplied for the construction and management of the fishpen and its production operations. Overtime, the good reputation it made and the trust it earned from its partners became the only collateral necessary in its external transactions.

TASFA earned:

- a net income of PhP70,000 from its first operations in 2002;
- a net income of PhP430,000 from the second harvest plus income that was spent for the fish net and bamboo poles and at this time it was able to fully repay the loan from Bigkis Lakas; and
- enough to purchase the group's pump boat leaving some PhP40,000 for distribution to members for its third operation.

From the operational net income, 75 per cent was distributed to its members and the remaining 25 per cent went to pay for maintenance of its livelihood assets. Each member received an average of PhP12,000 as additional income starting from the second operation.

Due to the good reputation and the support of the LGU, TASFA was approached by national line agencies to use grant funds under available programmes for livelihood development such as those offered by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The group accepted only where they could implement the type of projects that they could manage within their expertise and in which more likely members could realistically engage.

By way of example, TASFA accepted a grant of PhP20,000 for non-fishing income-enhancing activities such as swine dispersal that initially benefited at least 10 of its members and which indirectly benefited other members based on a scheme whereby each beneficiary was obliged to pay in due time for two piglets for distribution to other members. This provided the means to open the opportunity to others and redistribute the benefits from non-fishing livelihood activities to other fisherfolks. This was deemed doable by most.

But it did not accept a grant fund for crab trap making since the location of the group's livelihood base, a lake, was unsuitable for this activity. The group instead requested support for its planned purchase of boats and Petromax lighting equipment to which DENR acceded in the form of a livelihood loan.

The impact of their organized advocacy and on-the-ground efforts in coastal resource generation, protection and management has borne fruit. The local fish catch has increased overtime; fishing time has been reduced giving workers more opportunity to diversify their income by engaging in other productive activities. There is a greater variety of fish being caught; fishing grounds are now closer to shore and illegal fishing activities have decreased significantly especially illegal fishing in municipal waters by commercial fishing vessels. It was because of activities such as these that the many small fisherfolk initially against the establishment of MPAs for fear of being displaced from their traditional fishing grounds, became firm supporters.

TASFA as of 2007 was again at a cross-road. As fishing operations grew and partnerships with resource and marketing agents matured, the group was offered the opportunity to enter a joint venture with the partner in Ajuy. A decision had to be made as to whether this would be the most economically viable (and desirable) option for the future and in keeping with the organization's beliefs and principles.

According to the LGU CRM specialist,¹⁴ in the same year (2007) TASFA eventually decided to enter into a joint venture with the Ajuy partner considering the organization and its members would be assured of a supply of feeds, fingerlings, and a share of 50 per cent from net income. This was deemed to be a fair proposition.

However, of its 33 members only 20 supported the decision while 13 did not and consequently had to leave the organization. New members are still being invited to join. Thus far, the arrangement and outcomes of the joint venture entered into by TASFA has sustained the progression of annual incomes generated for the organization and members. It remains active in keeping its sector and LGU links. It is expected to become a partner in the upcoming DENR supported ecology park project.

3 Implementing youth-focused LED strategies

The municipality of Concepcion is a 4th class town situated 112 km northeast from Iloilo City, in the Province of Iloilo. The geographical location, distance from the main urban center of Iloilo City and consequent inaccessibility to education, communication and technology are major problems facing the LGU and which need to be addressed in order to deal with the high levels of unemployment and poverty among the population.

The Core Local Poverty Indicators and Monitoring System (CLPIMS) Survey conducted in 2006 showed that the town then had a population of 37,877¹⁵ composed of 7,162 households. The Municipal SK Federation Survey of 2005 revealed that 19.8 per cent or 7,501 of the population were in the 15–29 years old age bracket¹⁶ of which more females than males are unemployed. Those not in employment are categorized either as out-of-school-youth or unemployed.

The LGU of Concepcion has recognized the need to address the problems attached to significant rates of out-of-school and unemployed youth in town and has partnered with the ILO as a pilot area for the PYEP project.

The LGU along with representatives of NGOs, youth group, line government agencies, the Provincial Planning Office (PPO), provincial Public Employment Service Office (PESO), school principals and teachers have been engaged in the varied activities intended to mainstream youth unemployment interventions within the local economic development frameworks, plans, and actions. This support from the LGU and stakeholders has continued even with completion of the PYEP project.

3.1 Profiling the youth sector in Concepcion

In 2006, ILO engaged the services of TNS Philippines Inc. to conduct an independent survey on youth employability in Concepcion. A sample size of 200, evenly representing young women and young men, was covered to obtain their perceptions, socio-economic and employment status, and general outlook.

Key findings of the survey provided a more detailed profile of the situation related to youth employment that encouraged a sharper look at the status of youth in general as well as differentiated

¹⁴ Emelinda Abian, interviewed in November 2009.

¹⁵ We note that this is higher than the 36,881 residents recorded in the 2007 census. No explanation is offered for the discrepancy other than that it may indicate a wide margin of statistical error in the data results.

¹⁶ Again, we contrast this figure with the result of the 2000 census which showed a youth population of 8,583 representing 25 per cent of the (then) population, see Table 1-1.

by segment—youth in school, youth not in the workforce, working (wage and self-employed) youth, and the unemployed youth.

All those surveyed in Concepcion, came from the lower income classes (class D: 41 per cent, class E: 59 per cent). More than half (54 per cent) of the surveyed youth were of ages below 19 years old, mostly those in high school, just completed high school or dropped out of school. One in four youths (25 per cent) had not even progressed beyond elementary school and these were mostly those with the status of the older youth within 25–29 years old (32 per cent) and the married youth (31 per cent).¹⁷

Although there seemed to be very few unemployed job-seekers (8 per cent) it is alarming to find out that the largest proportion of the local youths were classified *not in the workforce*. This implies that many beyond normal schooling age are jobless but not inclined to work within the next 12 or even 24 months. Many of these are females, married, and tied to family responsibilities.

The youth employability survey findings were subjected to a validation process, firstly through a focus group discussion in November 2006 and then at a larger planning forum held in February 2007 and which became the basis for fine-tuning local economic plans and actions to mainstream employment strategies to benefit primarily the youth and generally the local economy. Table 3-1 to Table 3-5 provide analytic indications of the local youth employability situation and suggested actions to connect youth to existing job prospects.

The multi-stakeholder forum was held on February 2, 2007 with the expert facilitation support from ILO. It was designed to enable the LGU planning coordinator and employment creation focal persons (under the mayor's supervision) to team up and mobilize local economic development stakeholders in a dialogue that addressed demand and supply sides issues of employment and which then discussed how to connect them.

The forum was attended by:

- Elected and career service officials of the municipal LGU (including the mayor, two of the sangguniang bayan councillors, the planning and development coordinator, tourism officer, registrar, budget officer, social welfare officer, operations officer, community development officer-cum-PESO officer, coastal resource management officer).
- The elected barangay chairman and councillor of Barangay Nipa.
- Representatives of women, children, and entrepreneurship services organizations.
- Representatives of basic, secondary, and tertiary schools (two elementary school principals, high school officer-in-charge, two teachers, and two high school students and an official of the town's polytechnic college). It also involved representatives from regional and provincial line government agencies including the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), DOLE, TESDA, Department of Science and Technology (DOST), DSWD, PPO, and the provincial PESO.

A total of 32 persons attended this forum.

¹⁷ Note that the Philippine Youth in Nation Building Act defines youth of ages 15-30 however reference surveys use in this report including those of the Sanggunian Youth Federation, NSO, and DOLE Labour Force surveys use youth age sub-groupings such as 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34. The ILO-TNS survey adapts the 15-30 youth age definition however for consistency purposes in this case report age grouping for 25-30 will be treated as 25-29.

3.2 Assessing job prospects for local youth

The first part of the forum focused on the likely future demand situation and a time horizon of five years was used to focus discussion. Issues addressed within this framework dealt with employment creation and included discussion of where the likely jobs would be in Concepcion in five years time and would young people be prepared and ready to seize the opportunities available? Would the youth be able to take up jobs for wages or would they need to find their own vocational path through self-employment?

The town has one polytechnic state college that was formerly a fisheries school. Many of its graduates are now working as supervisors in the aquaculture industry. The town has four high schools with two of them used for the KAB pilot programmes. There are 49.5 hectares devoted to fishpen operations, 3,000 hectares for rice growing and areas for certified seeds production. Iloilo is now known as the bamboo capital in the country and Concepcion has a share in this. The town has a facility capable of processing up to 3 tons of crabmeat a day.

There were 40 foreign tourist arrivals in 2006 and over thousand local excursionists who came to enjoy the island beaches of Concepcion. The islands of Igbon, Tagubahan, Pan de Azucar, Tago, Malangaban, and the smaller islets of Bolobadiangan and Botlog are among the local destinations packaged in the island hopping tour operated as one of the LGU initiated services.

Participants in the forum came up with a long list of potential employment opportunities including beach resorts, food catering services, massage clinics, rag making, dried fish making, bamboo furniture, beauty salons, land transport, fish vending, banana processing, coconut processing, bakery, repair shops, photography, landscaping, catering, restaurants, medical transcription, aquaculture, fishpen, fish cage, seaweed and processing, shell gathering, boat building, internet café, bridal boutique, gym and spas, hotel and restaurants, communication, laundry, handicrafts, construction, carpentry, tour guides and operators, poultry, and livestock.

From this laundry list, a smaller number of growth sectors were selected from across micro (below PhP3 M), small (more than PhP3 M but less than PhP15 M), and medium (PhP15-100 M) businesses. These perceived opportunities are identified in Table 3-1.

The stakeholders were able to sort and point out as to major obstacles and advantages in advancing to immediate job creation in particular sectors such as:

- Chicken layers: the critical component was bringing the day-old chick layers from Cebu.
- Fish production: here the critical component was the seasonality of prices in the market.
- Fish processing: a number of components were identified as needing to be addressed. These included lack of information and technology in packaging; high financing cost for inputs; lack of investment that could support those already in this trade. There are skilled graduates in fish processing available and in Barangay San Dionisio there is one who has already invested in a fish processing plant.
- The municipal government was tasked to identify those who would be willing to take the lead in facilitating and bringing forward the prospects for poultry, fish processing, hog-raising, and other investments such as beach resorts. It was recognized that in many areas they had yet to identify local champions.

- Once the potential job growth sectors for the next five years had been identified, local stakeholders were then asked to analyze potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the development of these opportunities, paying particular attention to the mechanics of how these could be realized (Table 3-2 and Box 5).

Table 3-1: Perceived job growth sectors, Concepcion, February 2007

Sector	Micro	Small	Medium
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handicrafts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bamboo ▪ Pandan • 30 members in Pandan Association in one barangay who are into handicrafts • Poultry (layers) • Livestock, fish processing, capture fisheries • High employment potential for the above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice plant and cold storage (only one exists) • Fish culture – bangus, snapper, grouper • Fishpens are employing many as of now 	
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational tourism • Government driven since tours are for currently LGU-managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel and tours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beach/island resorts • Resort hotel development • Hospitality and courtesy services
Retail and wholesale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish vending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine products trading 	
Business start-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish processing • Bakery • Handicraft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurants • Construction services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banking and finance (one rural bank in town only) • Real estate development

Source: Proceedings: Multi-stakeholder Youth-focused Employment Planning Forum in Concepcion, 2007

At the end of the exercise, the attending local planners and employment focal persons were expected to use the process guide and its outcomes in:

- mainstreaming/reinforcing/sustaining use of approaches and tools in developing multi-stakeholder employment strategies and plans (planning with a focus on youth as a beneficiary target group for job creation was only a starting point; parallel frames and processes on employment planning should be considered and use to benefit all other working age groups, social sectors, and poverty groups);
- inclusion of specific recommendation/action points in local executive legislative planning agenda, implementing structures, and programmes under the new mayor and council members; and
- conducting a similar exercise at the barangay level and developing an updated barangay action plan.

Table 3-2: Initial action plan for employment creation in Concepcion, February 2007

Threats and weaknesses	Strengths and opportunities	Recommended actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pests and diseases (poultry and livestock) • Insufficient power supply (ice plant) • Lack of capital (resort, hotel, hospitality services) • Resistant to adopt new technology (fisheries) • Conflicting laws in fisheries • Intrusion of other fishers • Degradation of resources • Poor natural resource management • Natural calamities • Poor road network • Possible shortage of raw materials (especially bamboo) • Inadequate post harvest facilities • How to sustain good governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound political climate • Rich marine habitat • Adequate and skilled manpower resource to start with • Convergence of NGAs, NGOs, and peoples organizations • Strong support from GAs and NGOs • Presence of training institutions • Tourism/natural resources potential • Empowered community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote (limited) tax holidays/exemption • Establish business friendly municipality • Fund accessing through grants for upgrading of post harvest facilities • More marine protected areas • Create people's congress • Involvement of youth in coastal resource management • Adoption of appropriate technology • Strong advocacy effort • Organize business sectors group

Source: Proceedings: Multi-stakeholder Youth-focused Employment Planning Forum in Concepcion, 2007

3.3 Assessing youth status and connecting them to job prospects

The next stage of the exercise involved looking at the needs of youth under the identified categories.

3.3.1 The youth in school

Few students are business-oriented (15 per cent). Most plan to seek employment for wages after graduation from either high school or college (85 per cent). More students than their employed/unemployed counterparts prefer to work abroad (61 per cent) and this is one reason driving the completion of their studies.

Among young people, students are the most optimistic about their future with more of them believing their quality of life will improve in the next five years and with the expectation that they will finish college someday.

Box 5: The consultative process

The 1991 Local Government Code recognizes a number of local consultative initiatives.

A ‘people’s congress’ is a local assembly or any organized action of all interest groups. It is an organizational form that provides an opportunity for every sector and interest group to gather together and obtain representation in the project intervention context towards further tackling identified youth employment issues particularly the threats and weaknesses that can inhibit the creation of new jobs, new businesses and requisite conditions. This would not just entail lobbying for policies and programme actions at the local LGU but also elevating issues and concerns before the provincial, regional and national government institutions. Even without using the term ‘peoples’ congress’ the intent can be pursued by among youth/employment interest groups and individual voters through local initiative.

Local initiative is defined in Rule XX of the Rules and Regulations Implementing the Local Government Code of 1991 as the “*legal process whereby the registered voters of an LGU may directly propose, enact or amend any ordinance through an election called for the purpose*”.

A ‘business sectors group’ (with emphasis on the plural “s”) is a convergence of varied business enterprises and their associations, federations and confederations operating within and beyond a town (or city, municipality, province, region, country). The purpose is to level the rules of play among businesses and create an environment conducive for start-up and development of all types, sizes and legal forms of business. The purpose can be achieved through holding of regular policy and practice learning forums and dialogues amongst business owners and their representatives, building of business alliances along and across comparable functions (e.g. of owners, chief executives, managers, line professionals) within and across sectors/industries/territories; and engaging and sustaining public-private sector partnerships and joint programmes.

A ‘chamber of commerce’ is one among the varied types of businesses and business associations which constitute the business sectors group. Chambers mainly operate in key cities and metropolitan areas of a province and region, where enterprises are many and capable of paying up for and sustaining membership and often with a permanent secretariat.

A ‘local chamber of commerce’ is a ‘local meeting place’ for businessmen/entrepreneurs from different industry/sector lines for the purpose of building consensus on tackling common issues and challenges that hamper effective and efficient business start-up, growth, expansion, sustainability and market responsiveness. Often, it analyses general and sector/industry/locality specific business-related policy and practice issues, organizes itself into issue-based advocacy committees and support units, defines its positions, priorities, strategic approaches, activities and expected results to addressing policy and practice issues and organizes its structures, operating systems, and resources to support public advocacies and member development services.

In the Philippines the local and national chamber tackles most issues and pressures affecting business except in tackling labour-management relations issues. There are also other business organizations in the Philippines that influence local and national policies and practices.

But are local students indeed being provided with the necessary tools to get them employable locally and outside the town? Table 3-3 lists those factors identified in the forum which could inhibit or facilitate students in connecting to current and near future job prospects.

Table 3-3: Employability situation of youth in school, Concepcion, 2006

Inhibiting factors	Facilitating factors	Recommended actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of skills capabilities • Financial constraints • Full time students focus on their studies • Lack of entrepreneurial spirit • Poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching KAB to high school students • Implementation of KAB in secondary curriculum • International exchange programmes for youth to widen localized perspective and boost work and life aspirations of youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revival of practical arts and vocational courses in high school • Dialogue between DepEd and employers re. matching of skills-industry needs • Benchmarking missions to successful youth projects • Career counselling

Source: Proceedings: Multi-stakeholder Youth-focused Employment Planning Forum in Concepcion 2007, prepared by J. Sescon

3.3.2 Youth not in the workforce

In the TNS survey, family obligations were the main reasons declared by youth respondents in this segment as to why they were not presently working (50 per cent). The bulk of these youths claimed

they had plans to seek work (83 per cent) but not immediately, that is not within the next 12 to 24 months.

A majority in this segment are inclined towards business (59 per cent). Most appear to be thinking of running a sari-sari or grocery store or buying and selling ready-to-wear clothes. Only three in 10 are open to working abroad (30 per cent).

Many of the youth in this segment perceived a college diploma, an entrepreneurship know-how as well as capital are the main prerequisites to obtaining a livelihood income.

Further analysis of reasons local youths have chosen to drop out of the workforce and its implications for future employability of the town's youth was undertaken in a multi-stakeholders forum and brought to light more concerns as indicated in Table 3-4.

Table 3-4: The employability situation of youth not in the workforce, Concepcion, 2006

Inhibiting factors	Facilitating factors	Recommended actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of information • Lack of self-confidence, lazy, choosy • Dependent on outside assistance e.g. OFW relatives • Unskilled and low educational attainment • Unidentified opportunities • Family responsibility and early marriage • Health problems • Negative cultural orientation • Close family ties • Family economic status (rich) • Lack of funds (poor) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modification of values and attitudes • Provision of specialized education • Sustained community-based advocacy • Conduct of home and community enterprises • Effective parenting and responsible parenthood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support conduct of home/community based enterprise • Reorient youth values and attitudes through advocacy • Conduct leadership training and capability building • Conduct non-formal education and economic productivity enhancement programme • Provision of life skills enhancement programme • LGU to facilitate access to funds • Attend family planning sessions

Source: Proceedings: Multi-stakeholder Youth-focused Employment Planning Forum in Concepcion 2007, prepared by J. Sescon

3.3.3 The working youth

This category covers both those working for wages as well as self-employed youth.

Indications are that employed youth obtained their jobs after looking for work for an average of three months and applied on average for two jobs and underwent two interviews. The data implies that every application was met with an interview by a prospective employer indicating: (i) labour market supply shortage; and (ii) direct match of qualification of the applicants with the demands of the job requirement. These jobs may not necessarily be in Concepcion but are located outside in Iloilo City and in other cities in and out of the province, region or country.

Working youths learned of job vacancies or business opportunities mainly through friends and relatives. In fact, they considered friends and relatives vital in getting their current jobs and small businesses. Almost all these self/wage employed youths claim to like and be satisfied with their present work. Youths in this category work mainly in two industries: fishing (57 per cent) and private household services (28 per cent).

Working youths in the fishing and aquatic resources industry include fishers, fishpond operators and aquatic farm operators. While household services working youths include family members, relatives and stay-in hires who act as ‘sales attendants’ in household-attached commodity stores, eateries and other service shop and as ‘additional hands’ in farmhand jobs (28 per cent). A few other working youths are small scale business persons (12 per cent), skilled (5 per cent), and unskilled (12 per cent) wage workers involved in varied trades.

Local employed youth generally earn an average of PhP2,570 per month. This is very low amount relative to general wage trends in the province and the rates set by the wage board for the Western Visayas region and far below national trends. It is indicative of low skilled jobs available and most working youth are in either the fishing industry or private household services and related sectors. Youth in this segment generally believe their education attainment is not very useful to their current jobs and makes them technically underemployed.

Another factor to consider is that the bulk of working youth have not received any additional training since leaving school. Among those who have their own businesses, 15 per cent believe they are losing the opportunity to grow their business but do not know what kind of training they need to improve their situation. If given the chance, only a third of working youth are inclined to work abroad (35 per cent).

An analysis of the operating/working conditions of the self/wage employed and the implications of these for achieving decent standards of living was locally undertaken with results indicated in Table 3-5.

Table 3-5: The situation of working youth, Concepcion, 2006

Inhibiting factors	Facilitating factors	Recommended actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misfit or mismatched to existing jobs • Satisfied with the present job (complacency) • Lack of competency • Lack of capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of reading materials • Training to suit job required skills of job opportunities • Networking with appropriate agencies • Conduct of job fairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and seminars on youth employment

Source: Proceedings: Multi-stakeholder Youth-focused Employment Planning Forum in Concepcion 2007, prepared by J. Sescon

3.3.4 Youth who are unemployed job-seekers

Since the proportion is small, very little was said about young unemployed job-seekers in the survey but this does not mean disregarding their issues and concerns as well as their potential as job seekers. Furthermore, there is also the suggestion that since overall unemployment levels are very high, many young people have simply given up looking for work and, given the opportunity, could be attracted back into the workforce.

The survey indicated sampled youth in this category are the educated youth who do not need to work; these are the ‘choosy educated’ who tend to stay at home and rely on family support. Meanwhile, according to the survey, they receive an average monthly allowance of PhP1,020 from their parents or relatives and are inclined to spend their allowance on snacks, food, drinks, and mobile phones.

A further analysis on why the youth in this segment are continually jobless was also undertaken by the local youth employment multi-stakeholders with the results indicated in Table 3-6.

Table 3-6: The situation of disadvantaged and unemployed youth, 2006

Inhibiting factors	Facilitating factors	Recommended actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of eligibility • Incompetence • Absence of and lack of computer skills • Financial • Lack of managerial skills • Qualifications • Gender discrimination • Underage • Low self-esteem • Cultural barrier • Poverty • Lack of work experience • Unsupportive parents • Age/experience • Social upbringing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and seminars • Accessibility to quality learning and exposure to actual development training • Exposure to entrepreneurial activities • Inculcation of values • Personality development course • Put up training centers • OJT/Practicum • Advocacy orientation • Managerial training • Computer literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking and job information centers • Set-up a multipurpose youth cooperative • Job fairs • Career guidance • IEC materials • Conduct modular entrepreneur and business management trainings • Develop OJT for existing skills/competencies • Develop skills training for industry demand • Implement KAB in secondary curriculum as results of local pilot point to its positive effect to pilot students • Computer facilities for schools

Source: Proceedings: Multi-stakeholder Youth-focused Employment Planning Forum in Concepcion 2007, prepared by J. Sescon

3.4 LGU follow-up on initial employment plans

Following the multi-stakeholder workshops facilitated by ILO in Concepcion (February 2007) and elsewhere, a capacity building programme for local planning coordinators and employment focal persons was deemed needed to provide the LGUs with additional capacitation resources to follow-up on initial employment plans prepared by multi-stakeholders.

Even before engaging in ILO's Youth Employment Project, the LGU of Concepcion had already adopted the practice of taking advantage of available external learning opportunities. This participation allowed them to adapt and apply frameworks, tools, and empirical lessons useful for assessing, planning, and effecting local economic growth, employment, and income creation.

In relation to ILO offered learning events and capacity building programmes, elected and non-elective officials participated in the following three events:

- a forum for tackling issues and promoting approaches, tools, and good practices on local economic development;
- programmes to train and certify local facilitators and trainers on entrepreneurship, including KAB, GYB idea, SYB, and GET (Gender and Entrepreneurship) AHEAD; and
- a seminar-workshop for tooling local planners and employment focal persons on local youth employment strategy planning and mainstreaming in local development plans, budgets, regular programmes, and services.

The planning seminar-workshop, organized by ILO (April 2007) was directed at enhancing the capacity of non-elected and regularly employed local planners and employment focal persons able to coordinate and bring forward the agreed youth and general employment creation action points. A second objective was to further engage relevant stakeholders in economic and employment creation

beyond the ILO-PYEP project life and with the inevitable change of local government leadership that follows elections.

During the local employment forum, stakeholders identified numerous business and employment opportunities in their localities which were later narrowed down to few good opportunities on both the demand side (employment creation) and the supply side (youth employability). It was envisaged that such an approach maximized the chance for the LGU and its partners to develop suitable programmes and resources without being overwhelmed. At the same time, they recognized there were still major constraints on both sides that needed to be further sorted out and progressively acted upon.

As a follow-up activity, the ILO organized a technical workshop for planners and employment focal persons from all eight LGU pilots for youth employment which was conducted on April 16–17, 2007 at the premises of ILO Manila. LGU participants were asked to frankly inventorize and assess their capacity to coordinate, create and sustain youth-focused LED processes in terms of their capacities to:

- mobilize youth employment stakeholders;
- identify and actualize employment creation potential; and
- foster youth employability in their area.

The assessment process¹⁸ covered ten different but connected workshops dealing with: (i) local sources of growth and employment; (ii) youth employability; (iii a) identification of employment support needs of firms; (iii b) identification of employment support needs of youth; (iv a) identification of strategic options for firms; (iv b) identification of strategic options for youth; (v) indicators of successful youth employment programming; (vi a) identification of employment support services for firms; (vi b) identification of employment support services for youth; (vii) mobilizing for action—mapping of stakeholders; (viii) mobilizing for action—defining the role(s) of LGUs; (ix) integration into LED plans; and (x) monitoring.

The assessment exercise was meant to make LGUs and their partners more aware and sensitive to local opportunities and constraints; to clearly highlight the need to identify more strategic options and select key areas of priority against which to apply limited budgets and resources to maximum effect and to structure priorities into a strategic youth employment strategy ready for integration into local development plans (in anticipation that budgets, programmes, and human and institutional resources can be programmed).

Concepcion, like the other PYEP participating LGUs had been assessed as having relatively well-developed capacities *to mobilize upwards* engaging and influencing provincial, regional and/or national government agencies in local initiatives as well as *to mobilize downwards* to engage and influence barangay captains, council members and officials other barangay level players. This capacity was evident during the local employment planning exercise of February 2007 and in previous initiatives using participatory and convergence approaches to problem solving. The strong interest and influence of the local chief executive, his/her planner and employment focal persons and the overall support of the LGU workforce contributed to this successful outcome.

Likewise, guided by the assessment questions and intervening questions from the process facilitator and fellow workshop participants, the municipal planning and development coordinator, the municipal information officer, and the Iloilo provincial planning officer as a team assessed the LGU of

¹⁸ Refer to the more detailed ILO-CIDA-PYEP developed process guidelines by Camilo Casals for further information and available from ILO Manila.

Concepcion as being able to commit local stakeholders to action, muster the support of external resource agencies and foster youth employability. This capacity is clearly evident with the progressive implementation of its Municipal Education Reform Programmes and Annual Investment Plans tapping both locally generated and externally sourced funds in order to provide: (i) various forms of livelihood support to organized farmers and fisherfolk associations and cooperatives; (ii) micro-financing for community-based enterprise development projects; and (iii) skills-cum-production training for both the informal and formal economic sub-sectors in the community.

Finally, the same representatives from Concepcion likewise assessed the LGU with respect to capacities to identify and actualize employment creation potential, as being able to do so but only on a limited scale—in micro and small enterprises. It has yet to validate earlier assessed economic and job growth prospects for action within the short, medium, and long-term frameworks.

As mentioned earlier, the Concepcion LGU identified and prioritized growth within the agriculture-fishery and tourism sectors, and within the framework of sustainable economic development using value-added processing. This approach was seen as offering the best prospects of creating additional jobs and income for the town within the short and medium term. A realistic partnership with the private sector and rationalization of fragmented youth oriented programmes of local and national government, among others, was suggested to them.

In particular, it was felt that further momentum could be created by demonstrating one successful project. In this regard, it was agreed among stakeholders to jump-start a youth-focused employment creation demonstration project based on results of the youth survey and subsequent multi-stakeholders workshop.

3.5 Implementing a demo-project

The chosen project was entitled “LGU and Youth Employment Generation Capacity on Tourism Development”.

The multi-stakeholder youth focused employment planning forum both validated and added to locally established data on the circumstances and constraints of the youth segment of the community in completing schooling years, being employable and obtaining gainful employed. It also addressed the circumstances and constraints involved in starting a business, maintaining a competitive edge and job generation.

The town has existing handicraft and or skilled constituents in pandan weaving, fish processing, bamboo/shell craft. A new tourism and information building intended to house the proposed project and facilities (souvenir shop and internet café) was inaugurated in 2007.

The foregoing strategic intervention on youth unemployment was considered timely. This intervention was locally designed as an initiative to promote local ecotourism. It was based on the premise that the human and institutional resources needed would be available.

This project was intended to benefit 20 unemployed youth, duly screened and selected, from the different barangays of the town and provide on-the job-capacity building for five LGU staff who would acquire (through structured learning opportunities) the necessary attitude, exposure and skills to start, grow and sustain in a business-like manner the operations of an LGU tourism services facility. Once the tourism facility was in full operation, the project was contemplated to indirectly benefit—in terms of product market support—around 400 trained local micro-entrepreneurs.

In a locality like Concepcion where enterprises are minimal and business support organizations are virtually non-existent, the task of developing a private sector enterprise required a stronger role and initiative from the local government. In short, it entailed an LGU-driven local economic and enterprise development process.

The entire project was jointly anchored by key people acting as local youth employment focused LED facilitators including the Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator, Municipal Information and Training Officer-Designate, and the Municipal Tourism Officer-Designate.

The ILO-PYEP supported aspect of the project was initially implemented in June–July 2007 after the inauguration of newly-elected municipal government officials. This initiative is discussed in detail in the next section of this report.

4 The Concepcion ILO-PYEP Demonstration Project

The objective of the locally designed and implemented demonstration project was to use the natural advantages of the town in the area of ecotourism to enhance LGU capacities to service the unemployed and the out-of-school-youth of the municipality of Concepcion by:

- providing knowledge, skills, and instilling the ‘right attitude’ in tourism marketing;
- providing financial, technological, and material support in the course of its implementation; and
- using implementing strategies of design and execution of a tour management workshop and conduct of skills and product upgrading.

4.1 Project components, implementing plan, and expected outcomes

The components of the project involved the conduct and follow through of activities centered on tourism services promotion as well as performing skills training for upgrading the quality of existing products in town with items of greater value-added and intend for higher-end retail marketing.

4.1.1 The tourism services providers management seminar and workshop series

A week-long ILO-PYEP supported workshop for a total of 25 selected participants—20 unemployed youth and five LGU staff was planned and undertaken. The training adopted a modular approach which included modules on Interpretative/Specialized Guiding, a Collateral Material Write Shop, Souvenir Shop Management, and ICT Training and Management. The municipal government targeted key activities for the TSP seminar and workshop series implemented in the order shown in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1: The TSP seminar-workshop event series

Training dates	Key activities
May 28-June 8, 2007	Selection and inventory of primary and secondary participants
June 13-15, 2007	Interview and finalization of primary and secondary participants
June 18-23, 2007	Tour management workshop
June 29, 2007	Familiarization tour for media and tour operators
June 29, 2007	Inauguration of souvenir shop and internet café

Source: Concepcion Project Files: “LGU and Youth Employment Generation Capacity on Tourism Development”

From the ILO capacitation fund, assistance of PhP315,000 (around US\$7,000) was provided to support the project. The LGU allocated 61.9 per cent of this amount for the interpretative and specialized guiding and collateral material write-shop and familiarization tour, 15.9 per cent for the souvenir shop establishment and 22.2 per cent for setting up of internet services.

The project aimed to impart knowledge, skills and 'attitude' to benefit 20 tourism service providers and five LGU staff. These were considered to be the primary beneficiaries. Training lessons applied by the primary beneficiaries were expected to further benefit the secondary beneficiaries who are the artisans and skilled workers of existing entrepreneurs and handicrafts establishments.

The targeted secondary beneficiaries included 100 micro and small entrepreneurs trained under the completed ILO-IPEC project and 300 (estimated) members of the Federation of Women's Associations and other community-based peoples organizations engaged in varied income generating activities.

The collateral materials and ICT facilities that the LGU mobilized were intended to improve the e-marketing of the town and its products, increase public internet service users and provide a showcase to prospective domestic and international tourists at minimal cost.¹⁹

4.1.2 The handicraft skills and product upgrading

A municipal counterpart training programme was arranged for secondary beneficiaries. These were the existing entrepreneurs and artisans in shell/bamboo craft, stone carving, pandan weaving, cloth printing, etc. trained and organized under national government and non-government programmes. Their products were intended for the souvenir shop housed in the same LGU tourism building.

The ILO-PYEP project supported this component by providing technical services related to product selection, market studies, and market development brokering (advisory, linkaging, and initial negotiation) services through an ILO consultant Alexis Ledesma. This ILO consultant initially met with the then town mayor who requested the services for Concepcion and thereafter communicated and coordinated with the municipal planning and development coordinator and the former community relations officer and now an incumbent municipal sangguniang official.

The Concepcion handicraft industry was identified as a job and income growth sector both prior to and during the local youth employment planning workshop held in February 2007. Alexis Ledesma, an established entrepreneur, entrepreneurship educator, and one who is well-connected into the high end markets for handicrafts and able to speak the local language of the town was the ideal consultant to provide the requested services. The objective of the engagement was to find ways of expanding the handicraft industry to yield better economic results for the community.

Among the business concepts explored for upgrading and expansion were the following:

- Native bags made from pandan leaves that were being sold in the local market along with *banigs* (native mats) made from the same material. The bags were being produced using materials readily available in the town and designed, created, and sold by local women.
- Bamboo based products that come from an island barangay of Concepcion were primarily used for the production of crab traps for selling in the local market.
- Dried squid from Estancia, Iloilo for packaging and selling within Iloilo.
- Virgin coconut oil and naturally fermented vinegar using locally planted materials.

¹⁹ See <http://www.concepcion.gov.ph/>

4.2 Results from project implemented activities

4.2.1 Pre-project and training activities

Organizing the Project Management Team

A local Project Management Team (PMT) was formed. Members include the Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator, Municipal Local Government Operations Officer and Finance Officer, Tourism Officer, and Information and Training Administrator.

A *Sangguniang Bayan* member provided supervision and advice. They held office in the LGU funded local tourism promotion and information center and regularly met to plan, consult with barangay stakeholders and monitor delivery on the project.

Establishing the nomination guidelines for training participants

The PMT decided each sector would be entitled to a nominee guided by the following: the *Punong Barangay* nominee could be either male or female; the SK chairperson would be male only, while the Women's Federation nominee would be female. This was the means selected to achieve gender balance. This meant a total of three representatives would be chosen per barangay with 75 nominees in total. Additional qualifications set for all representatives included the following:

- nominees should be bona fide residents of Concepcion, Iloilo;
- nominees must be between 15 and 30 years of age;
- nominees must have a pleasing personality and good communication skills;
- nominees must be trainable, physically and mentally fit and able to adapt to any given situation;
- nominees must be willing to work under any circumstances and also be prepared to render 'volunteer' work for one year after completing their training; and
- nominees with relevant education or training background were preferred.

The LGU-PMT announced the opening for application to the Tourism Services Providers (TSP) training and distribution training application forms through a municipal circular to all barangays. This was complemented with a series of PMT meetings with representatives of the barangay, Youth Council, and Federation of Women's Association.

Short-listing of candidates and finalizing selection of TSP trainees

The PMT received a total of 52 applications. Thirty four applicants were short listed by the PMT. Each candidate was then interviewed as a result of which the final 20 applicants were selected for the TSP seminar/workshop.

In making the final selection, the management team had a number of additional criteria in mind given the demands of pioneering the establishment of a local tourism office. These included such things as education, work and training, volunteer work availability, geographical accessibility to local tourism office (but bearing in mind the needs to provide for those coming from island barangays as well as life-skill and leadership qualities.

A points system was used to rank the final applicants and the local selection panel head requested that the panel be left to make its own decisions without interference from political groups.

The 20 applicants who were finally selected became the primary beneficiaries of the project. These primary youth beneficiaries were:

- all unemployed prior to acceptance;
- fourteen females and six males; and
- twelve single and eight married.

A majority had academic backgrounds in the interrelated fields of Tourism, Hotel and Restaurant Management, Food and Beverage Preparation and Servicing. The rest were graduates of environmental management, social work, arts, theology, psychology, and civil engineering.

4.2.2 Training activities for youth on tourism services providers

The TSP training programme was divided into two parts. Part 1 included a workshop-seminar held over three days between July 1–3, 2007. Part 2 took the form of a mock tour held on July 21 and 22. The Tourism Officer, Mario Lazarito served as the training director. Members of the project management team including a woman entrepreneur constituted as resource persons for the training. All the 20 selected training participants attended. The scope of activities and the objectives of each are outlined in Table 4-2 to Table 4-5.

Table 4-2: Training workshop—Part 1, Day 1 activities

(Workshop-seminar linking self-awareness, teaming, leadership, organization, community and local development, and expected role of the participants in tourism promotion)

Day	Training component	Topics and exercises	Objective and process
July 1	Workshop-Seminar	Expectation setting	In relation to co-trainees, trainer, training, and project outcome.
		Project and training overview	In relation to project goals, training design, and expectations from trainees and their role in tourism promotion and local development.
		Development and organization concepts	Participants were divided into four groups with two focusing on generating concepts/understanding of development and two others on organization development. Outputs were reported by each group; synthesis made using a local development perspective and trainees introduced to the realities of community development.
		Self-awareness, human dignity, and personhood	Participants were asked to leave the venue, find items that would best describe them, these were shared with the group; the features of chosen items and how they related to their person was discussed. Synthesis of the sharing was tied to the Johari Window approach—a psychological tool for improving self-awareness and introducing the participants to concepts on human relations.
		Teambuilding and leadership exercise	Participants were involved in a tower building exercise entailing: (a) selling of personal items in exchange for play money to be used in bidding for materials; (b) the bidding of tower materials; and (c) construction of the tower. At the end, there was discussion on the lessons learned from the activity.
		Effective communication, interpersonal communication and its practical use	Participants were provided with lecture and exercises on this topic.
		Values and values clarification	Participants were provided with lecture and exercises on values and values clarification.

Source: Concepcion Project Report submitted to ILO: LGU and Youth Employment Generation Capacity on Tourism Development

Table 4-3: Training workshop—Part 1, Day 2 activities

(Field research for building participants' local tourism relevant observations, data gathering, materials development, and communication skills)

Day	Training component	Topics and exercises	Objective and process
July 2	Field research	Fieldwork at Rancho Gloria Environment Resort	<p>The objective was to develop/sharpen observational skills, data gathering, material development, communication, and the human relations skills of participants.</p> <p>These acquired skills were to be used subsequently to market, guide and educate tourists/excursionists/study groups on the site as an ecotourism destination.</p> <p>Participants were divided into three groups to cover the following areas of study: (a) from the town proper to Rancho Gloria; (b) from the entrance area of the resort to the San Lorenzo Ruiz Lake and Bird Sanctuary; and (c) amenities, facilities, activities, and future plans of the resort.</p>
		Briefing on Grassroots Entrepreneurs for Ecotourism (GREET) Programme	<p>Participants were provided a briefing on the Grassroots Entrepreneurs for Ecotourism (GREET) Livelihood Grants Programme of the Department of Tourism and “Philippine Ecotourism and Western Visayas Eco-Sites” by the Tourism Operations Officer II of the Department of Tourism.</p> <p>The objective was to familiarize participants with existing national government programmes for LGUs in implementing viable community-based tourism projects.</p>
		Field work at Concepcion Ecotourism Sites	<p>Participants were divided into four groups each group to cover four of the 16 island barangays of Concepcion included in the ecotour of the Municipality of Concepcion, namely: Pan de Azucar, Malangabang, Agho, and Bulubadiangan Islands. Each group conducted community interviews and gathered materials and photographs to be used for the discussion, showroom materials, and collateral material making.</p>

Source: Concepcion Project Report submitted to ILO: LGU and Youth Employment Generation Capacity on Tourism Development and additional interviews from the LGU MPDC and Information Officer

Table 4-4: Training workshop—Part 1, Day 3 activities

Day	Training component	Topics and exercises	Objective and process
July 3	Field research	Field work across towns in Iloilo Province	On the third day, after breakfast, participants undertook a one-day provincial research field trip to the towns between Concepcion and Iloilo City. Eighteen participants were dispatched to the Municipalities of Ajuy, Barotac Viejo, Banate, Anilao, Barotac Nuevo, Dumangas, Zarraga, Leganes, and Iloilo City. The objective of the field trip was to research the history, local products, and places of interest in the vicinity of Concepcion as a means of furthering tourism promotion and promotional materials.
		Municipal tourism programme, community-based ecotourism, and personality development	Participants returned in the early evening. After a group dinner, there was discussion of the municipal tourism programme, community-based ecotourism (CBET) and personality Development led by the Project Director, Mr Lazarito.
		Management team and participants meeting	Before concluding the session, participants met again in groups to prepare for the Mock Tour which was scheduled for July 21–22.

Source: Concepcion Project Report submitted to ILO: LGU and Youth Employment Generation Capacity on Tourism Development and additional interviews from the LGU MPDC and Information Officer

Table 4-5: Training workshop—Part 2, the mock tour

Day	Training component	Topics and exercises	Objective and process
July 21–22	The mock tour	Field work	Be able to apply prior knowledge and skills acquired from the previous field work, in another setting: by conducting site observations, site interviews, and documentation.
		Briefings from different local tourism related authorities	Learn good local policies and practices across various aspects of developing and managing tourism-related facilities, products, and services.
		Development of scripts, write-ups in relation to field work, and briefings	Prepare tour guide scripts, collecting sample information materials about varied aspects and distinct features of the tourist site/aspect, prepare own tour guiding scripts, and simulate being a tour guide to check on skills acquired by the participants during their last field work.
		Team building activities	Provide an opportunity for the youth participants to discover about each other's personalities, work and life aspirations, sensitize each other to personal and interpersonal thresholds, foster camaraderie and teaming spirit anticipated to sustain their pioneering work in making the tourism services office fully functional and viable.

Source: Concepcion Project Report submitted to ILO: LGU and Youth Employment Generation Capacity on Tourism Development and additional interviews from the LGU MPDC and Information Officer

4.2.3 Entrepreneurship training using GYB/SYB

The same trainees also undertook the GYB/SYB training conducted by the two local ILO trained GYB/SYB trainers and using established micro entrepreneurs as role models so that as a group they could operate the LGU tourism services in a business-like manner. From starting as volunteers, they are expected eventually to create income for themselves.

The group's business is constituted of four service operating units which evolved one after another starting from accepting tour guiding contracts to catering contracts, to developing and marketing souvenir items and finally (2007) with the computers in place, operating an internet facility and local tourism website as part of its ICT services.

4.2.4 The training outputs and outcomes

The 20 selected youth actively participated in all components of the training programme.

After the training, they were able to define their respective role in operating an LGU tourism services office as a business undertaking, form their vision, mission and goals, develop mix of tour packages and additional materials to promote the different destinations in Concepcion, attend to and enable some of them to develop new and enhance products and services.

After a year of volunteer work, 14 of the 20 trainees (according to the LGU Information and Training Administrator) were able to find new jobs in Iloilo City and elsewhere taking with them acquired mindsets, discipline and skills useful for their respective jobs.

Six of the trainees chose for the moment to remain with the LGU tourism services office delivering on the mandate of the office and at the same time generating income for themselves. Youth training for tourism services is set to continue.

4.3 Products upgrading and skills training activities and outputs

4.3.1 Conducting consultation activities between ILO consultant

Consultations between a marketing specialist engaged by ILO for the project and the LGU (mainly with the former local chief executive as well as those engaged in local planning and employment) provided the means to assess the viability of potential business ideas identified earlier in the multi-stakeholder discussions.²⁰ The ideas generated were screened using the following three criteria:

- Potential for growth: the short, medium, and long term potential of the concept for the business enterprise was assessed.
- Differentiation capacity: it was recognized that sustainable business enterprises are typically those that offer something to the market that is new and clearly differentiated from existing market options.
- General feasibility: an evaluation was made as to the difficulty of realizing e a business, creating a product or service, as well as launching and maintaining this in the target consumer area.

4.3.2 Choosing the product for upgrading and marketing

Upon further discussion and considering the criteria specified, the LGU decided to focus on supporting the business of redesigning, marketing, and distribution of the *pandan* bags already being made in Concepcion.

The creation and sale of these bags were led completely by the women of Concepcion. The undertaking remains a micro-enterprise with regards to participating individuals. These individuals are primarily homemakers with husbands employed in manual jobs in agricultural-type industries.

²⁰ As reported by Alexis Ledesma, 2007 and updated 2008.

The proposal presented by the consultant for the LGU's consideration was intended to take the natural materials already being used, add higher value components, redesign the bags to match trends in the high-fashion Metro Manila market, and eventually market and sell these to female clients, initially in Metro Manila.

The chief constraint identified was that while the bags being created were very high quality, the designs were not considered suitable for the higher-end and sophisticated market of Manila. The designs were very traditional and had not evolved to match modern trends. Furthermore, the women of Concepcion did not have the network to distribute these bags beyond the market in which they traditionally sell their product. They had a very small market and distribution reach.

4.3.3 Benchmarking chosen product with established brands in external markets

There are three Filipino bag manufacturers that have established brands that have become market leaders in the high-end fashion market. These are *Celestina* (by Tina Maristela Ocampo), *Bea Valdes* (by Bea Valdes), and *Aranaz* (by Amina Aranaz). Each of these has a distinct look and feel according to the market specialist which has allowed the brand to succeed in the market.

The reach of all these three bag lines has had a tremendous impact on both the local and international markets. They have put the Philippines on a par with the international counterparts in the fashion world.

Of the three brands of bags, the closest competitor among the proposed designs is Aranaz because it is offered at more affordable prices and has a mall-based distribution channel.

Box 6 provides interesting feedback based on an interview with the proprietor/designer of the Amina Aranaz brand which informed the approach adopted for the Concepcion product upgrading project.

4.3.4 Selecting bag design-and-market-partners of Concepcion

Two partners were proposed by the market specialist to lead the design, marketing and distribution of these Concepcion-made bags. John Paras and Stacey Rodriguez are well entrenched in the Manila fashion scene and both had the expertise and the network to launch and sustain this business. These two individuals committed to work with the women of Concepcion as business partners. The consultant provided a comprehensive networking profile of the two individuals to the LGU for approval.

The discussion that followed was to determine the mechanics of the business partnership mindful that this should be equally beneficial to the women of Concepcion and the two individuals.

4.3.5 Developing an upgrade of bag design for prototyping and production

The next step involved the development of the product and was planned by the LGU of Concepcion with the consultant for the year 2008. Tasks undertaken included:

- finalizing the designs for the bags using similar materials as before but mixing in higher-end materials to increase the perceived value of the product to the consumer;
- producing prototype bags made in Manila but using materials similar to those in Concepcion;
- sending the prototypes to Concepcion for replication by local bag makers as a test case; and
- completing the prototypes that the Concepcion women had created and that met the standard set by the two Manila designers.

Once these steps had been completed a timeline could be constructed detailing the marketing and distribution plan for the bags. However, the creation of this timeline was held off until the full cost of the production cycle could be determined as this would have a direct and major impact on the retail price, marketing, and the distribution aspects of the business.

Problems were encountered in implementing planned tasks with identified Metro Manila market business partners. Nonetheless the designs for the bags prepared by the non-local market partners were used through the local NGO partner *Taytay sa Kauswagan*²¹ to train 20 women micro-entrepreneurs to produce upgraded bags for local and external marketing.

4.3.6 Identifying the sales and distribution channels for the upgraded product

The final aspect of the demo-project for this component lay in identifying the sales and distribution channels for the upgraded product.

Locally, the tourism services office of Concepcion which also serves as a souvenir shop was chosen as the main distribution channel. This is where all other developed products of local micro entrepreneurs from across the different barangays who were trained under previous completed partnership projects of the town are supported with marketing and other services.

Externally, Aranaz—in the new small section of Rockwell's Power Plant mall, in Makati City was proposed as a potential Manila distribution channel. This shop showcases various Filipino RTW designers and also has limited stocks of custom haute couture pieces. Placing the bags alongside such fashion products would ensure exposure of the Concepcion product to the highest end of the fashion market.

Starting in a small section, where stalls are accommodated, this area has since grown into a much larger section with a regular clientele. Given the nature of the target market, this was considered to be a good place to begin selling these products. To save on the capital and rent, selling on a consignment basis was considered to be the best way to enter the high end section of the Power Plant Mall.

The Concepcion product was not intended to be locked in exclusively to one retailer in the lucrative Metro Manila market. The consultant and identified business partners were also looking to consign product to another retailer trading as *LUCA*. This brand showcases affordable yet extremely classy and glamorous accessories for women which would be a perfect match for these bags. The owner of

Box 6: Distinctive features of the AA product

"Because our bags are very limited, I have to create new styles to keep up with the store demands. The export markets go for the basic straw bags meant for the beach and summer weather. Locally, we have a wider, more fashion forward and intricate range," she says. Currently her bestsellers are evening bags with mother of pearl details and bags made with woven wooden beads.

International exposure: The Aranaz bags have supplied the international market even before they started looking into opening it locally. It began as an export business. Distribution channel: besides exporting, the brand has a loyal local clientele over the past few years.

Domestic exposure: "Our first store opened in 2004 but we have been selling bags to the local market since 1998," she says. "It all started when my brother, MM, wanted to earn extra money and decided to sell our mom's export overruns in school. It did so well that we joined a Christmas bazaar at Manila Pen. Again, we were surprised at how well we sold. My mom and I created a range of bags exclusively for the local market."

Product Pricing: AA bags are priced in the range PhP10,000–15,000.

Growth prospects: From the very first boutique in City Golf Plaza, which opened in 2004, Aranaz has now grown into a multi-million venture, with continuous exports to Japan and the US, as well as maintaining lucrative local outlets at the Power Plant Mall in Rockwell and in Greenbelt 5, Makati.

Source: Interview with Amina Aranaz, conducted by Alexis Ledesma in 2007

LUCA indicated a serious interest in the Concepcion product and trial shipments were set to begin as soon as prototypes were ready and could be presented to the owner for formal approval.

4.3.7 The product and skills upgrading outputs and outcomes

As a postscript to this section by March 2008, Taytay sa Kauswagan had been selected by the LGU as the local private sector collaborator for the project tasked to identify local trainers and train the women micro entrepreneurs of Barangay Nipa in the agreed handicraft bags design.

As a background, Taytay sa Kauswagan is an NGO with a significant presence in the Visayan region concerned with organizing values formation, skills training, and micro-financing work for enhancing the productive, enterprising and income generation capacities of the working poor especially those in the informal economies.

For its past performance, it has been providing communities in the province and region with technical and fund support to community identified products as income enhancement activities—e.g. fish and aquatic resources processing during fishing season and handicraft production as an off-fishing season income generator.

The local NGO had to work closely with the identified business partners from Manila from design, to prototyping, to initial production stages, and through to the actual marketing of the products. Unfortunately for various reason this partnership arrangement did not proceed beyond the design stage.

In the absence of further actions from the business partners arising from the global crises that made one of the partners too busy to work further on the project and with another shifting to a different career, Taytay sa Kauswagan nonetheless pursued, with some modification, the planned production and marketing of the *pandan* bags and has delivered very encouraging results. This is discussed in the next section.

4.3.8 Feedback from the project's direct and indirect beneficiaries

From youth trainees on tourism services training outcomes

Follow-up interviews with the youth beneficiaries were guided by the following five questions: (i) How was the programme communicated to you?; (ii) How were you engaged into the project?; (iii) How was your learning experience?; (iv) What kept you interested?; and (v) How do you intend to sustain the services?

These questions generated encouraging and interesting responses of which the following examples are typical (translated verbatim into English):

“I was interviewed and I got interested to take care of our town’s natural resources and promote employment and tourism. The project provides employment and proper use of natural resources. It broadened my awareness on the need to protect our resources because it is an important source of livelihood. We will continue our involvement and help train more youths”.

“When I was interviewed, I found out about the project, I got interested because it seems interesting and a new experience. I see it helps in promoting community and tourism. I am happy because I am able to contribute to the community. Through us, we will be able to help the locals realize the need to protect and preserve hidden resources. The training is a bit hectic but we are able to learn a lot from it. The training had three phases. All

interesting but my favourite was ‘Generate Your Own Business’ and ‘Start Your Own Business’ especially business planning”.

“Our experience is good, because we are given the chance to work and we know we will be able to use it for other livelihood opportunities and enable us to earn income for our future. It is hard though that we have limited budget, but still we are happy because we are trained and slowly we get to have mini service-engagements”.

“My plan was just to apply as volunteer rather than do nothing but realized that this can be more than just volunteer work as I have found myself a job that I am enjoy doing and I am sure we will succeed and benefit from it and many others with all the efforts that we put in here” .

“The Programme enabled us to be involved in tour guiding in Boracay and create friendships and camaraderie with other trainees. Before, some of us were not really close, but now because of the trying and happy moments we spent together in Boracay. It was the first time for most of us to go to the island”.

“The trainees are able to understand how real development is channelled and undertaken and acquire new perspectives on how to develop means of livelihood for themselves.”

“Now, I am able to grow my own business (food catering) linked to tourism services”.

“Our tourism services will eventually be marketed via the web. And yes, there are four segments and ICT is one of them... In our experience with the programme we are confident that this will lead us to a long-term business”.

From the LGU, Barangay Nipa, and external market partners

According to the LGU and Barangay Nipa focal persons, 20 women entrepreneurs who are all members of a cooperative were trained by the LGU’s community-based entrepreneurship partner—the Taytay sa Kauswagan—to produce *pandan* bags using the designs prepared by external market partners.

Of the 20 trained, only 12 are considered fulltime bag-makers and eight are part-time depending on the season of the year. This group considers bag production as only a supplementary or additional source of income.

Beginning 2008, the bags produced were displayed and sold through the local tourism services office, and through the intervention of Taytay sa Kauswagan, the group was able to get a permanent display area at the Robinson Mall in Iloilo City. Furthermore, the DTI has included the bags of Concepcion in its regularly organized one-town-one-product (OTOP) exhibits for its products.

Other than the bags, the local women entrepreneurs are also producing placemats and all these have demonstrated increasing job orders from TSK and DTI arranged markets. Being currently it its peak season (November 2009) the community again has increasing job orders from regular and new markets, both in the province and in Metro Manila.

Bags produced are bought from the cooperative at PhP280-360 per bag depending on the design and size. These sales have actually increase local incomes through the cooperative by 30 to 50 per cent.

Indeed, according to the community focal persons from Barangay Nipa, the cooperative, the members involved in the bag production, their families and community have all benefited in terms of expanding production capacities, being linked up to new markets for local products produced, and expanding sources and increasing levels of incomes.

From the LGU project management team on demo-project outcomes

The intention of the demonstration projects was to address the low work and life aspiration of the youth of Concepcion (ILO: TNS youth survey) by specifically providing support for creation of training, employment, and income opportunities for youth in the tourism sector and for the creation of new market opportunities for existing and intended products of local micro-entrepreneurs trained under previously implemented government, non-government, and international development agencies. These outcomes are gradually being achieved bringing benefits to youth, women, and micro-enterprise sectors.

Fourteen of the 20 trained youths who have completed at least one year of volunteer service are now employed in good paying jobs in tourism related service sectors in Iloilo City and outside of the province. Six of the trainees are still in active local service, with increasing capacity to promote the town as an eco-tour destination, supporting, and managing tourism related services for better earning capacities.

A new batch of youth trainees were formed and trained in 2008 under the same programme organized for local youth in 2007. In that year, 15 youth were trained for jobs in same tourism related services sector. More trainees are expected to be trained periodically to address the human resources, enterprise development, LGU revenue building for development needs of the local economy

The training undertaken for the new batch was made possible using a portion of the PhP5.6 M funds representing the insurance claims of the town's coastal communities affected by the oil spill tragedy in 2006.²² These funds were intended to support the establishment of local eco-tourism resort facility that goes with the development of dive spots in the locality. This is expected to create new jobs and income opportunities as the foregoing will trigger the need for dive guides, dive shop, selling of dive gears, and other supplies.

The LGU has the support of the DENR as a facility mapping partner. It has awarded to a municipality bidder the contract to provide all the supplies needed for the establishment of the eco-tour facility and actual facilities construction shall be undertaken by the local government administration.

5 Lessons learned and way forward for Concepcion LGU

Despite the recurrent challenges, much improvement has already occurred in the Municipality of Concepcion over the last decade and especially as a result of the focus given to youth employability and development of a sustainability plan (Table 5-1) which has provided a 'roadmap' for keeping the LGU on track in meeting its targets.

²² Sun Star, Iloilo, *op cit*

Table 5-1: PYEP Concepcion sustainability plan (August 2007 to July 2008)

Activities	Specific	Key activity output	Target date
1. Policy formulation	Updating of Municipal Investment Plan	Updated Municipal Investment and Incentive Plan	October 2007
	Resolution urging the new LCE to make PYEP-Concepcion "A Priority LGU Programme"	Resolution making PYEP-Concepcion "A Priority LGU Programme" passed and approved	September 2007
	Formulation of Municipal Tourism Master Plan	Municipal Tourism Master Plan formulated and approved	October 2007
2. Business planning	Business Planning Training: GYB/SYB Model	Environmental scanning Technical and skills profiling of participants The business plan	July 12, 2007
3. Organization and structures	Creation of the PYEP Association of Concepcion	Election of officers Operation and Management Plan and structure	July 17, 2007
4. Regular services	TSP Services	Information assistance Tour guiding services Travel ticket sales (Air/ Boat/RoRo) Tourism product development Tourism related facility development assistance Tourism facility inspection Collateral material development, printing, and distribution Sales calls	August 2007 to August 2008 July 2007 On invitation
	Souvenir Shop Management	Souvenir sales Souvenir/trinket production Local product marketing Participation/attendance at exhibits and other marketing events	August 2007 to August 2008 On invitation
	ICT Management	Internet café management ICT training E-marketing of local products and skills (jobsite) Website enhancement	August 2007 to August 2008
5. Monitoring and evaluation	Regular monitoring by the Municipal Monitoring and Evaluation Committee	Monthly and quarterly reporting on business and management operations	On a monthly basis November 2007, February, May, and August 2008 for quarterly monitoring

Source: Concepcion Project Files: ILO: LGU and Youth Employment Generation Capacity on Tourism Development

5.1 Instituting LED strategies

The municipal government has taken advantage of locally relevant national government policies, programmes and projects, as well as support from various foundations and international organizations, in order to improve the economic and social development status of its local population groups. Different national government agencies and international agencies have cited the municipal government for its successful efforts.

Concepcion was one of the areas included in the three-year programme Kapit-bisig Laban sa Kahirapan—Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services-Kaunlaran at Kapangyarihan sa Barangay (KALAHI-CIDSS-KKB), a community-driven poverty reduction project administered by the DSWD. The LGU was able to organize 25 barangays to come-up with their own assessment, prioritization, and action plan to address issues constraining the development process in their communities. Each barangay was provided with World Bank funds to finance infrastructure projects to further the health, education, and productivity goals of the town.

The municipality was also an active and a model implementer of the SEA-K Programme. It initially benefited 10 barangays by effecting increased household income levels in fishing and farming communities that are likewise vulnerable to natural disasters. The programme diversified income sources through organizing and training community members, and eventually providing capital assistance for income-generating projects and micro-enterprise development, payment of loans was recorded at over 90 per cent in 2003, and the Concepcion Market Vendors' Kabayan Association was judged as the Best SEA-K Association in the Western Visayas Region by the DSWD.

The Poverty Free Zone (PFZ) was a project of the DOLE-BRW that aimed to reduce poverty through skills development for livelihood opportunities. The project was initially implemented in the island barangay of Dungon, one of the earlier identified depressed communities in the town of Concepcion. Groups were organized in the barangay for *pandan* weaving, bamboo craft, and bamboo furniture making. Currently, Dungon has embarked on efforts to find new and larger markets for the finished products of the organized indigent sectors. Its success however has been accompanied by the challenge in dealing with some barangay level officials seeking to interfere in the programme as well as preparing the requirements for entering higher-end markets for local crafts to enhance local incomes.

5.2 Scaling up—replicating success

After generating a number of small-scale successes through partnership-based development projects, the challenge for the LGU is now that of scaling-up; expanding and sustaining these successes, exposing local rural folk, including responsible LGU staff, to industries that have strong potential for development.

For instance, by exposing rural folk to the bamboo industries operating in Cebu and Bacolod, they may be challenged to persevere in developing and enhancing their own local bamboo and other crafts industries; this kind of exposure prevents locals from becoming complacent, the antithesis to local productivity enhancement goals of the town.

Clearly the role of the LGU here is to help formalize, support professionalization, link and mainstream local informal and smaller enterprises to the bigger markets, banking and financing institutions and technology sources; and advance steps towards fostering an enhanced local policy environment conducive to sustainable agri-fisheries resource based economic development.

So far the LGU has invested in the following efforts for scaling up:

- Reviewed and focused local efforts towards improving agro-fishery productivity using a framework that integrates population, health, and environment concerns.
- Linked organized local crafts groups to the Provincial LGU and NGLAs such as the DTI that has enabled them to participate in provincial trade fairs that resulted in new market orders.
- Negotiated with the Rural Bank to open a credit window for the organized working poor especially those marginalized women organized by SEA-K that led to the review of the bank's lending policies and a new credit window for the poor.
- Maintained sub-national and national linkages obtaining support for the development of agricultural infrastructure for scaling up local economic activities with a focus on pre-and post-harvest facilities e.g. multi-purpose drying pavements, small farm reservoirs, small diversion dams, and hand tractors, among others.
- Arranged to compensate for missing services such as artificial reef installation, seed and fertilizer assistance, distribution of chicken, swine, cattle, goat, and carabao to provide farmers and fisherfolks with alternative commodities.

However, despite perseverance, a number of problems have been encountered in the scaling up process. Commonly identified constraints to scaling up were:

- Internal wrangling among members and leaders of some peoples organizations leading to disbanding of organizations and activities.
- Lack of general academic preparation, technical, and entrepreneurial skills of many local population groups that hampered implementation and management of small businesses.
- Limited support infrastructure reinforced by local perception that investment is highly skewed in favour of urban centers.
- Lack of links to value-added market for communities.
- A local culture of dependency, i.e. preference of local populace for white collar jobs over blue collar jobs, preference of the populace to be employees rather than entrepreneurs.
- Political differences between local leaders and district as well as provincial leaders.
- Changes in the national and local political leadership that posed a threat to continuity and sustainability and the scaling up of earlier initiatives and successes.

Fortunately, the LGU was able to address these limitations by taking a forward looking approach that went beyond traditional sources of support and which transformed potential development constraints into challenges. Strategies and success factors that addressed these constraints so as to sustain and scale up tested workable local initiatives included:

- Networking and leveraging: This was the primary strategy of the LGU to address its own internal limitations especially limitations on budget, and access to projects and services from various institutions and agencies.
- Partnership with national and international development and donor agencies: This has been one of the main strength of the local government unit. Concepcion LGU has established direct

links and has engaged in projects with a number of world-renowned agencies such as Save the Children, Ford Foundation, German Technological Corporation as well as international and multilateral development and donor agencies such as the European Commission (EC), World Bank, UN agencies including the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and ILO.

- Institutionalization of an ad hoc multi-disciplinary special project committee: This is composed of highly motivated and key people from the different departments in the LGU who are able to access and leverage service opportunities in the external environment.
- Capacity building for those who constituted the committee on preparing and delivering presentations and handling interviews by media and visiting non-locals: This enables them to communicate and publicize the town's successes and mobilize external support for its programmes.
- Maximizing local use of training opportunities: These are provided by various government and non-government agencies and projects to local staff within the LGU. HRMDO requires personnel receiving training to report and structure opportunities to share and disseminate their knowledge.
- Continuing promotion of transparency: The LGU promotes leadership by example and effective communication, both in aid of effective implementation of local ordinances, projects, programmes, and arrangements.
- Continuing to campaign for strict enforcement of local ordinances such as MPAs to support LGU programmes and municipal ordinances: An increase in revenue collection efficiency and request for the establishment of more MPAs are indications of support to municipal ordinances and projects.
- Community organizing, values formation, and continuous training: These remain critical elements of social preparation strategies for communities implementing projects as they empower them to become self-reliant, discerning, and resourceful in accessing technical training, tools, equipment, materials, and capital and management assistance. Also, exposure of communities to various livelihood opportunities and markets is encouraged.
- Keeping existing and encouraging new projects: These must be resource-based, including bamboo craft, furniture making, and *pandan* bag weaving.
- Being proactive in accessing support for projects: The LGU actively seeks opportunity and does not just wait for it to knock. However, where projects are offered voluntarily, these are assessed so that new opportunities can be opened-up.
- Being successful or exceeding expectations of partners in implementing previous and on-going projects: This attitude brings new, additional, or even unexpected opportunities.

5.3 Re-focusing—more and better jobs for all

The LGU took advantage of learning and practice opportunities with its engagement in the Canadian government funded ILO-PYEP project. This gave new learning opportunities and development breakthroughs for the LGU.

5.3.1 Participation in the ILO learning forums

Through participation in these forums, the LGU learned about the various available ILO approaches, tools, and models for fostering an environment conducive to capacitating people, for creating enterprises and jobs. These included the toolkits on LDDW, KAB, GYB, SYB, and GET AHEAD. The tools although mainly used to promote creation of jobs for youth were assessed as being useful for other population groups.

At this stage, Concepcion finds it has a great need to promote entrepreneurship especially among the young and structure support for enterprise survival and growth. Entrepreneurship using ILO tools have been discretely mainstreamed in projects and services of the LGU and in the curricular programme of two of the local high schools.

5.3.2 Participation in the youth status surveys

Through participation in the surveys, the LGU was able to benchmark the situation of local youth against their counterparts in other LGUs. Through this process the LGU was able to determine that generally local youth (except for the youth-in-school) have lower work and life aspirations than elsewhere. This finding created a new challenge for the LGU wanting to attract larger investors and support its local labour supply to enter higher end markets and create more skilled jobs.

The LGU and other stakeholders also learned the situation with regard to the different youth segments (youth-in-school, job-seeking unemployed youth, non-job-seeking unemployed youth, and self/wage employed youth). This included differences in reasons for their un/underemployment and which enabled responses to be crafted to meet specific needs and using service providers suited for each segment. Indeed the LGU recognizes there is no ‘one size fits all’ solution to youth unemployment and underemployment.

5.3.3 Multi-stakeholder participation in local planning forums

The planning forum enhanced the capacity of the municipal government to coordinate a one-day employment planning forum that engaged both demand and supply side players within the local economy including those from the barangay and provincial levels.

The local stakeholders went through an externally facilitated FGD process through which they were able to identify those factors that could facilitate or hinder the various youth segments from connecting to job and business opportunities and charted key ‘doable’ action points using established criteria to foster local employability for productive and gainful wage and entrepreneurial jobs.

The stakeholders found the information and planning tools simple, informative, focused, and action-oriented, capable of generating commitments to action from those among them and worth adapting for future employment planning for other towns in Iloilo Province.

5.4 Lessons from the follow-up

The follow-up technical meeting demonstrated the capacities of the local planners and employment focal persons to team up, review, and execute detailed assessment on action points earlier identified in the local employment planning forum, and confidently chart the roadmap towards implementing key action points and pushing and sustaining the progression and sustainability of its youth employment strategies that withstood the changes of political leadership and the eventual termination of the project.

5.5 Lessons from implementing the demo-project

In the process of analyzing the state of the local economy, youth employability and the operating capacities of support institutions for enterprises and youth within the LGC framework, the LGU was able to start pursuing and witnessing actualization of the job growth and income enhancement potential of the local ecotourism and agro-fishery sectors, the impact of these developments on the youth and stimulating creation of new and enhanced livelihoods and income generating activities performed by other population groups in the town.

The LGU discovered that the ILO youth-focused employment promotion frameworks, approaches and tools for assessment, planning and action were beneficial in pursuing and implementing new development projects whether these were locally initiated or externally driven. The new capacities—knowledge, skills, exposures, experiences, and lessons—all proved useful even after the ILO-CIDA-PYEP project had been completed.

5.5.1 Consolidating and sustaining initiatives

During a national LED forum in 2006, most of the LGU local chief executives present (such as the case in Concepcion) or represented, were about to complete their third and final term in office. There was a question as to how certain LED-oriented strategies could be made to work at a time where efforts that had been largely championed by an incumbent LGU leader which could be either sustained or disowned by a new leadership that perhaps wanted to totally change course and set their own path. The response to that question was that “*only time can tell*”.

Fast forward to 2008, and in the case of Concepcion and with the current local leadership team that took office the previous year, Mayor Elizabeth Salcedo declared that under her three-year term she would address, with the support of executive and legislative officials of the LGU and secondary support of the external partners, the following areas of concern.

1. Internally, improving on the LGU employees state of service performance through:
 - Installation of biometrics for timekeeping so that spouses or other relatives cannot punch in on behalf of others.
 - Supporting a housing programme for employees by allocating local government land, tapping an existing national government support fund as well as the services of Gawad Kalinga support groups.
 - Provision of uniforms for local government auxiliary police (formerly auxiliary coast guards that patrolled the coastal and marine areas of the town) to enhance self-respect, be publicly visible and generate respect from the community when enforcing traffic, apprehending violators, and imposing due penalties.

All these measures are designed to create a level of stability and harmony among LGU employees that can translate to better performance by improving work time, personality, local revenue generation, and tax collection and ultimately to improve the LGU public services capacity in line with the recognized purpose of LGU employees.

2. Externally, putting in place more and improved infrastructure, addressing needs of ordinary constituents (young and old alike):
 - Continuing maintenance and improvement support for education and health sectors.
 - Allocation of a local government property and development of a public cemetery since there is none in Concepcion.
 - Establishment of an income generating enhancement service facility in the form of a training center.
 - Putting up a one-stop-shop service facility for local job seekers, catering both to those seeking wage employment or self employment.
3. Engage local legislative and executive elected and career officials towards a single vision and direction. Key to these are:
 - To continue and sustain availability, accessibility, and responsiveness of LGU programmes and projects towards local economic development and employment promotion.
 - An agreement with the Sanggunian Bayan (SB) presided by Vice Mayor Arcosa to assign new SB member Romeo Lanciola as Chair of the Employment Committee. Previously, SB Lanciola was an LGU staff in-charge of community and livelihood development projects including the ILO-assisted projects. He won a seat as SB member for his town in the 2007 local level elections.
 - SB Member Lanciola, who is working closely with the Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator and who has a broad grasp on the background and developments of Concepcion projects and how to operationally sustain these.
4. Continue to work with national government partners. In this regard, key institutions and priorities according to Mayor Salcedo are:
 - DILG through the locally appointed Municipal Government Operations Officer in the area of capacity building for elected barangay officials especially the new ones.
 - Being apprised of their mandates and how to productively work with existing people's organizations within their respective political jurisdictions.
 - Continue linking with national government agencies through former Mayor Raul Bantias who has assumed a post created by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo as Presidential Assistant for the Western Visayas region. He is tasked to address special concerns of provinces in the region. He currently holds office at the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) regional office in Iloilo City.
5. Sustaining past administration youth employment efforts and distilling lessons from the youth employment survey, planning, demo-project implementation, and incorporating all these in the overall local governance, employment promotion, and decent work strategies of the LGU by:

- Adapting PYEP supported employment planning frameworks, tools, workshop outputs, experiences, lessons, and keep track on their attainment of targets set in the Youth Employment Sustainability Plan (with adjusted timing) in its overall employment and incomes creation efforts.
- Placing the PESO function under the Office of the Mayor and with the mayor assigning the Municipal Business Licensing Officer as the Officer-in-charge of developing the PESO services.
- Coordinating all employment, livelihood, and incomes generation projects and initiatives through its regular interdepartmental meetings, in keeping with its annual development plans and its *Vision 2010*.

6 References

6.1 Field interviews

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- Elizabeth T. Salcedo, Municipal Vice Mayor, 25 November 2005; Municipal Mayor, Concepcion October 2007
- John Arcosa, Sangguniang Bayan Councillor, Concepcion, 24 November 2005; Municipal Vice Mayor October 2007
- Agustin G. Garilva Jr, Sangguniang Bayan Councillor, 24 November 2005; Local Entrepreneur, October 2007
- Rene A. Sobremonte, Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator, 24-25 November 2005; October 2007
- Mario Lazarito, Municipal Tourism Officer-Designate, October 2007
- Eduardo Capio, Private Secretary, Office of the Mayor, 24 and 25 November 2005
- Emelinda Abian, Coastal Resource Management Specialist, 25 November 2005 and October 2007
- Romeo Lanciola, Community Affairs Development Officer, 25 November 2005 and as Sangguniang Bayan Councilor, October 2007
- Fatima Piolo, HRMD Officer, 25 November 2005 and February 2007
- Cecille Mesias, SEA-K President and Barangay Kagawad, 24 November 2005 and October 2007
- Ernesto A. Rufino, Tambaliza Small Fishermen Association President, 25 November 2005
- Juan Longno, NIPSC, Concepcion Campus Administrator, 25 November 2005 and in 2007 and Elena Bontia and Merlinda S. Celestial in October 2007

6.2 Focus group discussions

LGU officials involved in the implementation of local economic, employment, and income generating projects under the leadership of Mayor Raul Baniyas during his third and final term as mayor (2004-2007)

New members of the Municipal Sanggunian Board of Concepcion elected for 2007-2010 political term under the leadership of Mayor Elizabeth Salcedo

Rolando Tirol, National High School Principal, KAB teachers and students, Career Pathways pilot teachers and students, October 2007

Loong High School Principal, KAB teachers, and students, October 2007

Youth, trainers, facilitators, and other stakeholders involved in Tourism Services Providers Seminar Workshop Series, October 2007

6.3 LGU documents

Annual Development Plans: 2005 and 2006; Annual Investment Plans: 2005 and 2006; Three-year Development Plans (2004-2007); Budget and Staffing Plans, 2006, 2007, 2008

HRMDO Accomplishments (Matrix and PowerPoint) 2004, 2005, and 2006

Minimum Basic Needs Tool, Primer, KALAHI-CIDSS

Concepcion LGU: Municipal Tourism information brochure and marketing materials

6.4 ILO file documents

International Labour Organization: Initial Baseline Situationer (Concepcion), 2005, prepared by Antonio Pedro; Preliminary Report: LED Case Study Results, 2005 prepared by Maria A.A. Ortiz and Lionel Abril

ILO-TNS Youth Employment Survey Results prepared by Shiela Gonzales and Team; validation report prepared by Eugene Gonzales

Proceedings of Concepcion's Multi-stakeholder Youth-Focused Employment Planning Forum, February 1-2, 2007, Concepcion, Iloilo Province prepared by Joselito Sescon

Report of Follow-up Technical Workshop for LGU Planners and Employment Focal Persons, April 16-17, 2008 prepared by Camilo Casals

Project proposal and reports prepared by MPDC Rene Sobremonte, MTO Mario Lazarito and Janice Ianne Matulac

KAB reports by Ledesma, Bernardo, Calimon, and Tia-Arevalo

Product market brokering services report including photo files by Alexis Ledesma

Photo documents supplied by LGU of Concepcion (through Sobremonte, Lazarito, and Matulac) and by ILO (M.A.A Ortiz for LED and YE case studies)

6.5 Ocular visits of PO projects

Community Resource Management Project Site of TASFA: ocular visit and interviews

Sites of SEA-K supported micro-enterprises

Know about Business Pilot Schools and Classroom, ocular visits and interviews with school principal, teachers, and select students

6.6 Process observations

Concepcion's Multi-stakeholder Youth-Focused Employment Planning Forum, February 1-2, 2007, Concepcion, Iloilo Province

Follow-up Technical Workshops for LGU Planners and Employment Focal Persons, April 16-17, 2008

LGU Participation in DOLE National Strategy Workshop for Youth Development and Employment, September 2007

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Local economic development and youth employment in the Philippines: the case of Concepcion

The municipality of Concepcion, in the Province of Iloilo is a rural community of around 40,000 people with livelihood activities anchored in agriculture and fisheries. With a median age of 18 years, the town has a young population and the unemployment and underemployment rates are particularly high.

Despite its progressive stance on local economic development and especially those programmes that support livelihood, jobs, and income creation, the local government has had only limited success in encouraging new investment into the area. This is despite a number of initiatives that have been introduced and designed to upgrade local education through partnership programmes with national and international institutions. The town participated in the entrepreneurship initiatives piloted by the ILO and believes that with vast scenic and natural resources at its disposal, there is an untapped opportunity to develop eco-tourism in the area. Concepcion was one of the eight localities throughout the Philippines chosen to pilot the PYEP pilot programme. Aside from introducing the entrepreneurship components into two public high schools in the municipality, a demonstration project focusing on youth employability and employment generation in tourism development was undertaken and has produced lasting results.

Related to this, but independent from it, a second intervention was aimed at upgrading the existing local handicraft industry through improved design and distribution of souvenir products.

This case study reports on the initiatives taken by the LGU in Concepcion to promote local economic development and the ILO-CIDA interventions undertaken in support of programmes designed to improve the employability of the town's youth.

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