

Implementation of APPGM-SDG Solutions Initiatives and Impact Evaluations in Sarawak's South Region

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Abstract

As public awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 has grown, the Malaysian Parliament formed the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on the Sustainable Development Goals (APPGM-SDG). As part of a bipartisan effort to enhance the implementation of SDG targets in Malaysian parliamentary seats, one of the goals of this research is to investigate the SDG implications of beneficiary solution initiatives. A team is tasked with assembling a report that combines the impact evaluation of SDG initiatives in the Sarawak South Region. Through document analysis, focus groups, and site visits, the regional research team investigated, from December 2023 to February 2024, how the knowledge, skills, networks, and systems of these projects as well as psychology affect the beneficiaries of the solution projects. The paper also addresses the efficiency with which solution providers manage and execute projects, the impact on the beneficiaries, the alignment and mapping of the solution providers' and impact evaluation with the SDG goals and APPGM-SDG modules, and the identification of obstacles and recommended solutions. The study also includes the qualitative and quantitative analysis that the assessors conducted using standardised questionnaires to measure the following six (6) crucial factors: deep, clear, wide, high, SDG and gender. The primary conclusion is that the goal of all solution initiatives is to eradicate poverty. It is intended that this paper's discussion of the difficulties would better assist project implementers' and policymakers in making decisions, designing programmes, and writing policy papers, especially when it comes to the economic, social, and environmental domains with specific SDG deliverables and target audiences in mind. With the aim to improve communication between stakeholders and provide more substantial prospects for society after project execution, the research suggests more visitations approaches.

1. Introduction

United Nations had asserted that the foundation for building a brighter, more sustainable future for all is found in the Sustainable Development Goals 2030. It covers a common roadmap for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, both now and in the future, is provided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was

accepted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which represent an urgent call to action for all nations—developed and developing—in a global partnership, are at the centre of it. They understand that eradicating poverty and other forms of deprivation requires concerted efforts to combat climate change, protect our seas and forests, and enhance health and education, and lower inequality in addition to promoting economic growth.

For the SDGs and their associated thematic issues, such as water, energy, climate, oceans, urbanisation, transport, science and technology, the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), partnerships, and Small Island Developing States, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs' Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) provides significant support and capacity-building. The DSDG is crucial to the assessment of the 2030 Agenda's system-wide implementation inside the UN as well as to advocacy and outreach initiatives for the SDGs. A strong commitment from all stakeholders to implement the global goals must result from widespread ownership of the SDGs in order for the 2030 Agenda to become a reality. The goal of DSDG is to support this interaction.

Hence, Malaysia is no exception as stated in the 11th and the 12th Malaysia Plans. The 11th Malaysia Plan's Mid-Term Review incorporates the government's pledges to the sustainable development agenda (11MP). In this sense, the 11MP's plans and activities and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have been matched (SDG Indicators Malaysia, 2018). Malaysia has established a multi-stakeholder, participatory governance structure helmed by National SDGs Council chaired by the Prime Minister to plan and monitor the SDGs implementation of the country. The 12th Malaysia Plan's national development priorities remain in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's SDGs (12th Malaysia Plan, 2021). The entire country approach must be adopted with the purpose to accomplish the SDGs. Localising SDGs measures were stepped up in accordance with the "leaving no one behind" philosophy, and a stronger emphasis will be placed on communication, education, and public awareness (CEPA) to improve local understanding and SDG implementation.

In so doing, with the Malaysian Economic Planning Unit leading the nation's sustainable development initiatives, Malaysia has tirelessly worked to meet its goals for sustainable education development. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is becoming more and more popular because of its exceptional capacity to enable students to become self-sufficient in the workplace, setting it apart from other programmes that depend on certain job opportunities in the public, private, or corporate domains (Akhtar, 2024).

Henceforward, the aim of TVET programs is to provide students with the skills, knowledge and right attitudes or competencies they need to succeed in their chosen career or future job (Salleh et al., 2016; Puteh et al., 2011) but also a higher level of generic skills (Salleh et al., 2023). This not only results in competent individuals but also promotes the entrepreneurial mind-set of individuals to make a living with the knowledge and skills they acquired (Puteh et al., 2023).

Henceforth, one of the initiatives is via TVET. It emerges as pivotal components for nurturing a workforce equipped with skills essential for the contemporary job landscape, aiming to alleviate poverty levels, as outlined in SDG's Goal 1. Utmost important is TVET aims to uplift their economic and social well-being, generate independent income, and continually develop their skills and knowledge for work. Concurrently, TVET also stands as a crucial platform for attaining sustainable development, with an emphasis on achieving the Quality Education goal outlined in SDG (Goal 4). In addition, Akhtar (2024) emphasized that TVET education plays a major role in creating a skilled labour force, which is in line with Malaysia's goal of becoming a developed country.

1.1 Solutions Projects in Sarawak's South Region

A group of five members was assigned in November 2023; the duty of creating a regional report that included an evaluation of the effects of 20 SDG activities in the Sarawak South Region with 14 projects based on Document Reviews and another six projects based on Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Site Visits (SVs). All the 20 projects are in six parliamentary constituencies. The majority of the evaluated solution proposals came from 2022. The way the SDGs were implemented differed, and these projects focused on SDGs that primarily impacted women, youth, and members of the B40 communities. In these six parliamentary constituencies, the Sarawak South Region team assessed twenty proposals. In doing so, some terms in this literature need to be explained. The term "Solution Providers" (SP) designates a service provider who oversees projects from inception to completion on behalf of the beneficiaries; "Beneficiaries" are the individuals who gain from the initiatives that SP implements. The same set of people was referred to as "beneficiaries" and "participants" interchangeably in this article.

Determining the unique aims of the twenty projects in accordance with the SDGs' objectives is essential before assessing the effects of the APPGM-SDG Solutions Projects executed in the area. Thus, based on the locations, parliamentary constituencies for the six FGDs/SVs were determined. Thirteen (13) SDGs were found to be closely associated with twenty (20) projects which are mentioned in the following paragraphs.

Based on the 20 projects evaluated by Sarawak's South Region, the second highest SDG chose in 14 out of 20 projects concentrated at SDG goal 1; which is to end poverty in all its manifestations globally which aims to guarantee that all people, especially the most vulnerable and underprivileged, have equal access to economic

resources, basic services, ownership of property and land, natural resources, and cutting-edge technologies. Poverty exacerbates inequality since it prevents both social cohesion and economic growth.

Subsequently is the second goal of SDG is to eradicate hunger by addressing humanitarian issue, there has to be immediate focus on and concerted international efforts to address the ongoing spike in hunger and food insecurity, which is being driven by a complex interplay of variables.

Next is SDG goal 3 for people around the world to have access to essential healthcare services. It is imperative to address discrepancies so as to close this gap and guarantee equitable access to healthcare. This is followed with Goal 4 of SDG on quality education. Achieving many other SDGs will depend on education, thus, to escape the cycle of poverty.

Succeeding is SDG 5 as the third highest chosen SDG in 11 projects for Sarawak South's region. In addition to being a basic human right, gender equality is also a precondition for a world that is affluent, peaceful, and sustainable. To remove structural obstacles in the way of accomplishing Goal 5, political leadership, financial commitments, and thorough legislative changes are required. Gender equality is an overarching goal that needs to be prioritised in national budgets, policies, and institutions.

Goal 8 is about promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all which was chosen by 15 projects out of 20 projects for Sarawak South region. To ensure sustainable and inclusive economic growth, more work must be done to improve access to financial services, decrease informal employment and labour market inequality (especially with regard to the gender pay gap), and increase employment opportunities, particularly for young people.

Subsequently is Goal 9 which is to develop innovative solutions, encourage sustainable industrialization, and create resilient infrastructure. Next is Goal 10, committed to reduce inequality based on income, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, class, ethnicity and religion within and among countries. Goal 11 on the other hand, concentrates on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Goal 12 is about ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, which is key to sustain the livelihoods of current and future generations. Climate action (SDG 13) is also one of the 17 goals set by the United Nations, which is to combat climate change and its impacts. Whilst Goal 14 of SDG is the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources is the focus. Seas and oceans in good health are vital to human life and the survival of the planet.

Finally there were eight projects in Sarawak South Region chose SDG 17 in the proposal which is reviving the global cooperation for sustainable development. The Global 2030 Agenda urges both developed and developing nations to take action with the aim to guarantee that no one is left behind. Collaborations between the public and commercial sectors as well as civil society are necessary. Henceforth, so as to ensure that no one is left behind in the journey towards development, the SDG goals can only be achieved with a strong commitment to international engagement and cooperation. This is evident from the outcomes of 18 projects completed in Sarawak South based on the SDG objectives. The outcomes are summarized as follows:

1. To train beneficiaries about upcycled products such as plastic waste converted into products.
2. To assist B40 youth, single mothers and women to participate in small businesses from home.
3. The economic uplift of villagers with bakery income generation program; producing frozen foodstuff (curry puff, pizza and roti *canai bersambal*) and craft making.
4. To train participants to address hygienic food processing.
5. To offer an income generation goal for 10 families B40 by providing the community with seeds/seedlings in integrated vanilla cultivation; chilli fertigation.
6. To provide training on basic entrepreneurship and business management
7. To focus on upscaling local food producers and suppliers in terms of quality of food, standard of packaging and marketing.
8. To give knowledge of business and marketing, product photography and videography techniques for social media and online marketing strategies.
9. To assist senior teachers (head of subject) and staff in utilising ICT in their teaching to aid them in conducting classroom assessments.
10. To set up Community Learning Centre (CLC) necessary for certain constituency areas to be utilised by the villagers.
11. To offer financial, digital literacy and business with pricing strategies knowledge to the small traders in this rural locality and with modern technology finance literacy align with IR4.0.
12. To impart knowledge on entrepreneurship module and assistance in business registration, the introduction to government financial services such as FAMA and TEKUN.

2. Methodology

The fieldwork in Sarawak South involved 20 projects with 14 projects based on Document Reviews, Individual Reports and another six projects based on FGD and SVs. Two sets of reports were expected of the evaluators: (i) 20 individual reports and with three to four reports per evaluator, and (ii) one consolidated report, called the regional report. Through the using of Impact Identification papers, the evaluators were able to relate the information found in the proposal or final reports to identify the impact evaluation based on the following domains: personal, skills, network, system, SDG target, and gender dimension. Furthermore, the evaluators recognised and enumerated the problems the SP ran into. In obtaining a more thorough grasp of the beneficiaries' domains and difficulties, the evaluators subsequently scheduled six FGDs in Petra Jaya, Bandar Kuching, Kota Samarahan, Serian, Batang Sadong, Batang Lupar and Betong. This process is called "impact verification". The initiatives were selected based on the SP coordinator's reaction and their availability. In the end, the assessors' recruited participants for the FGDs from six projects.

Working on a time constraint, we had to consider the parliamentary constituencies that are reachable especially by land. Based on dates, parliamentary constituencies for the six FGDs/SVs were implemented between the dates of 8 December 2023 till 12 January 2024. The FGD were led by one lead evaluator, who took notes and led the conversation and four other members, as listeners. The guidelines established by the organisers were adhered to during the discussion. Additionally, audio recordings of the talks were made. The data from the FGD will then, if appropriate, be incorporated by the evaluators into the impact identification documents that were previously drafted.

Taking the study by Syahirah, et al. (2023) and in understanding the impact evaluation, this study uses the MetaIntegral (2020) framework, which is adopted and adapted, to assess the effectiveness of the skill-based training programmes.

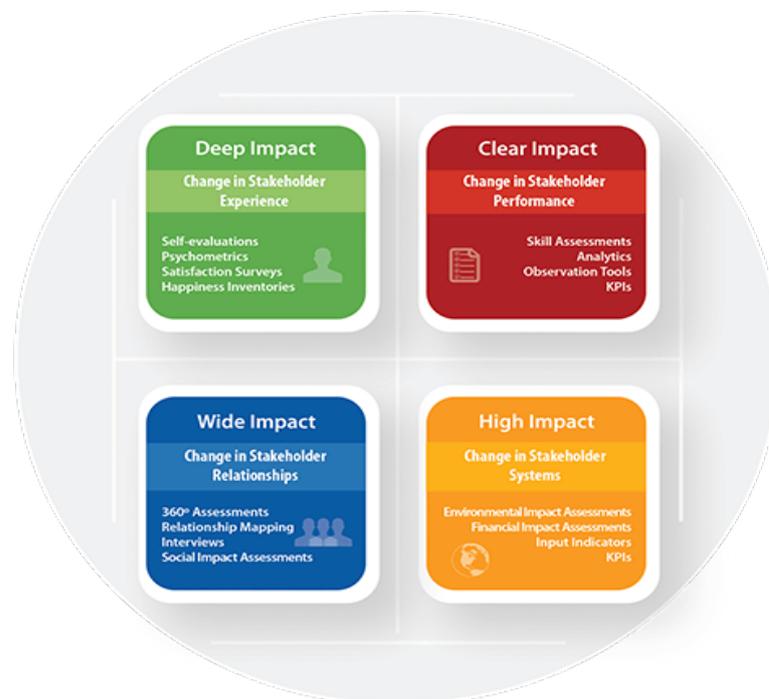


Fig. 1 *Meta integral be impact (2020)*

There are four dimensions of effect in this multilayer framework: deep, clear, high, and wide. First, the degree of change in humanistic components is referred to as "deep impact". This is evident in how the stakeholders' emotional, behavioural, and cognitive states have changed. This category includes changes in behaviour, motivating impact, and knowledge upgrade as examples of impacts. The improvement in three capitals—knowledge, spirituality, and psychology—is a sign of deep influence. In the present study, evaluators assign a score based on the identification of a minimum of one component related to motivation and shift in perspective among the participants. Second, the beneficiaries' acquired skills are referred to as having a demonstrable impact. Examples are the improvisation of baking and microgreens planting. In so doing, baking and microgreens planting is also in line with SDG's Goal 8 which is about promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.

Thirdly, an improvement to the practice system is shown by the high impact. Take the system for managing classroom assessments, for instance. The timetable workshop version 2023 has helped the teachers to understand, simplify, summarize, and speed up data entry in the preparation of timetables and data entry procedures into the system. Thus, it helps to reduce the burden on the teachers to prepare the timetable for the school. In addition, the Classroom Assessment Analysis Workshop had improved teachers reporting skills for assessing students' PBD. Besides, this program can ensure assessment data is managed systematically; teachers can easily detect the potential and development of students. Hereafter, it is related to SDG's Education on Target 4.8 which is to build and upgrade education facilities that are child disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

Henceforth, by identifying at least one new system that is passed to the beneficiaries as a result of the project, evaluators in the context of this research rate the high impact. Lastly, wide impact describes the advancement of beneficiary collaboration and participation. Social and cultural engagement might be used as a gauge for this effect.

3. Discussion and Analysis

3.1 Impact Evaluations

The evaluation process of solution providers (in Sabah) is a critical tool to help assess the impact of local projects (Hasan, et al. 2023). It can be useful to determine what achievements have been made or what still needs to be improved, as well as to determine whether the initiatives are accomplishing their aims. Essentially, when the programme has been implemented, the assessment should be carried out to ascertain whether the improvements are maintained and advantageous to the supplier as well as the participants.

Therefore, in assessing the impact of the APPGM-SDG, six main factors are being evaluated. "Deep" describes a shift in the experiences of beneficiaries that includes the analysis of self-evaluations, psychometrics, satisfaction surveys and mood inventories. Using skill tests, analytical tools, observational instruments, and key performance indicators, "Clear" evaluates changes in beneficiaries' performance. Other than this, "Wide" influences how beneficiaries' relationships will evolve. It makes use of social impact assessments, connection mapping, interviews, and 360-degree assessments. Lastly, there is "High", which uses input indicators, key performance indicators, financial impact assessments, and environmental impact assessments to track the development of beneficiaries' systems.

SDG and gender were two further factors that the evaluators had to ascertain for the impact evaluation. "SDG" stands for the beneficiaries' understanding of the goals, metrics, and SDG. The "Gender" component assesses the percentage of female committee members, beneficiaries, and other de-identified data points. The evaluators determined a few evident consequences of each component in the projects they examined based on the qualitative analysis; FGDs are a type of qualitative research method and data gathering approach where a professional, outside moderator leads a carefully chosen group of people in a detailed discussion about a particular topic or issue. This approach aims to elicit the attitudes and views, knowledge and experiences, and practices that participants have shared during their interactions with various individuals.

Henceforward, the positive impact of SDGs' projects in terms of deep (knowledge), is identified as ensuring self-empowerment, personal development, contentment, strong commitment and evidence of youth, single mothers and women's participation. In terms of skills, the tasks imparted new abilities and information such as new knowledge and skills are acquired through social media and the new methods of farming. On top of that, the beneficiaries' ability to be an entrepreneur would likely be strengthened by the practical effects of the new skills they have learned on their work and revenue generating.

Further, by considering wide (network), beneficiaries have created a new social support group. This facilitated significant internal and external linkages by the new relationships they established between mentors, government departments, communities, and recipients. Prominent cooperative endeavours, such as cooperative vendor booths at events, demonstrate the vibrant participation and reciprocal assistance within the established network. Next, is the new developed system (high/system) were also developed which includes developing the SOP using the information and expertise they have gained by participating in previous initiatives. On top of that, global issues through regional endeavours are also established. That is, the project's compliance with the SDGs highlights its wider influence on social and environmental dimensions, demonstrating a responsible attempt to tackle global issues through regional endeavours.

Finally, gender's aspect is determined through equal participation and collaboration. Here, it denotes a substantial consideration of gender-related factors throughout the project. For example, the acknowledgment of gender considerations in the stages of project design, execution, and evaluation. In other words, the project's dedication to tackling gender-related issues enhances its overall efficacy and impact while promoting diversity and inclusivity within the curriculum.

Evidently, beneficiaries are happy to be part of the projects; which showed positive impacts on the personal development among the beneficiaries. These include increase in self-esteem, confidence level, self-awareness and

emotional transformation. By acquiring new knowledge and skills through social media, new abilities and information were enhanced. This is further facilitated by internal and external linkages /networking with the establishment of relationships with mentors and communities.

This dimension pertains to the beneficiaries' ability to create revenue through the application of newly acquired abilities, and it is closely linked to the observable outcomes of the project. Hence, there is a commitment to going above and beyond token recognition with the intention of making significant and practical contributions to sustainable development. The project's adherence to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) underscores its broader impact on social and environmental aspects, exhibiting a conscientious effort to address global concerns through regional initiatives. It is worthy to note that by addressing gender-related issues, the initiative increases its overall impact and efficacy and encourages diversity and inclusivity in the projects.

With the intention of completing the evaluation, a quantitative analysis is also carried out. A standard form is filled and award numerical ratings ranging from one (1) to five (5) to six (6) fundamental variables, including deep, wide, clear, high, SDG and gender. The Return on Value (ROV) evaluation was conducted based on analysis of main documents including: (1) Proposal; (2) Monthly report; (3) Final report including video and photos, and (4) Site Visit including FGD. The range of mean value and its interpretation are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of mean score of ROV for all projects

No.	Project code	Deep	Clear	Wide	High	SDG	Gender
1	A008	3	3	1	1	1	2
2	A020	5	5	4	4	4	5
3	A034	4	5	4	4	4	4
4	A068	5	4	3	2	4	5
5	A086	4	5	4	3	4	5
6	A117	4	5	4	4	3	5
7	A121	3	3	1	1	1	2
8	A127	5	5	4	2	4	5
9	A130	1	1	1	1	1	1
10	A137	5	4	3	1	4	5
11	A139	5	5	4	3	4	4
12	A146	1	1	1	1	1	1
13	A158	4	5	3	4	4	4
14	A162	5	4	4	4	4	5
15	A181	3	3	1	1	1	2
16	A184	3	4	3	2	4	5
17	A185	4	5	5	1	4	5
18	A186	1	1	1	1	1	1
19	A187	3	4	3	3	3	5
20	A188	4	5	4	4	4	4
Total Score		72	83	59	48	61	75
ROV Mean Score		3.6	4.15	2.95	2.4	3.05	3.75

Numerous positive outcomes have been demonstrated by the effectively implemented programmes, including increased participation of both male and female beneficiaries, ease of acquiring new knowledge and skills, creation of social support networks, and improvement of new developed systems. By participating in activities like agriculture, pastry making and, cooking, beneficiaries — especially those from low-income households—learn about financial empowerment and skills. This promotes economic empowerment, especially for women who are responsible for the well-being of their families. The initiatives gave women access to networking, leisure, and personal growth possibilities. The projects' beneficiaries acquire modern skills and learn how to market products on social media, which sparks intense interest in the possibility of further iterations of the programme. This is in line with the Leave No One Behind (LNOB principle).

It is also essential to highlight the LNOB principle (Rahman, et al. 2023a), which are the differences between various groups of people are getting wider on a lot of important elements of human development (UNICEF, 2021). The United Nations (UN) Member States have committed to ending discrimination, reducing inequality, and eradicating poverty under the “Leave no one behind” (LNOB) initiative. At the core of the SDGs is a principle that gives priority to the most marginalised and vulnerable elements of society. UNICEF is expressly mandated by the

UN General Assembly to support the defence of children's rights, assist in addressing their basic needs, and increase opportunities for them to realise their full potential.

Therefore it could be seen that, when world leaders gathered in 2015 to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs, they made a historic commitment to protect everyone's rights and well-being on a healthy, vibrant planet. The 2030 Agenda continues to be the global road map for eradicating poverty, safeguarding the environment, and addressing inequality. The cornerstone of the 2030 Agenda, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aims to ensure that no one is left behind by providing the most realistic and efficient means of addressing the root causes of violent conflict, violations of human rights, climate change, and environmental degradation. The realisation that social progress, environmental preservation, and economic growth must all be incorporated into sustainable development is reflected in the SDGs. And, more importantly, with the help of impact evaluation, the APPGM-SDG can identify what works and what does not and provide evidence to support or refute claims about the effectiveness of a program or intervention (Rahman, et al. 2023b).

3.2 Issues that Arose During the Assessment Process

These are some challenges faced during the execution of the SDG projects. The discussions on the issues are based on the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Site Visits.

3.2.1 Solution Providers (SP)

There were three problems related to the Solution Providers (SP). Firstly is in terms of lack of cooperation; few of the SPs did not provide feedback, or took a long time to provide feedback, or just ignored matters concerning the possibility, the dates and time and the number of participants for the FGDs and SVs, causing a delay in the assessment process. This is evident for projects of A184 and A020. The fact that the SP (A184) does not effectively oversee the project is one of the primary obstacles to its implementation. The beneficiaries stated in the FGD that the SP had only twice visited the field: first in July during the first project phase meeting with all participants, and again when accompanying an APPGM from Kuala Lumpur on a visit to the plant project site.

The second problem was that the SP gave out incorrectly chilli seeds, which made the project's implementation considerably more challenging. Originally, they were going to grow Thai chillies, but instead, they were given alternative chilli seeds. Once it was harvested, the chilli was sold to the Farmers Association for RM8 per kilogramme at a very low cost on the market. This is a result of the cultivated chilli's lower market price when compared to the kind they ought to be growing.

Thirdly, in terms of marketing, the SP did not offer an escape route. In addition, there are other difficulties like (i) Fungus diseases and the potential for contracting them; (ii) Problem of water resources; (iii) Wind-blown chilli plants and (iv) Decline in the number of participants as some leave the project midway through owing to personal reasons.

For A162, the challenges identified were (i) Unwillingness of teachers to participate in the program is due to the current workload; (ii) Far distance between schools and the District's Education Office; (iii) Instability of internet access in the schools; (iv) Not all teachers are trained on using the programme and this creates future problem if the teacher transfers or retires and (v) Overlapping in the schedules of school programs and activities that have been planned.

As for A117, it is likely that the farms' plants and geography did not suit the planting method that the SP is teaching. One participant in the FGD mentioned that he had trouble growing his vanilla plant. He then decided to use his own initiative to look up other vanilla planting techniques online and put the one he discovered into practice. Since then, vanilla plants have been developing consistently.

3.2.2 Beneficiaries

These are commitment and lack of cooperation. Our schedule in the morning involved two other schools (five beneficiaries) and the afternoon sessions were meant for the other two schools. With regards to commitment, during the FGDs, five beneficiaries from two schools in Batang Lupar could not be present in the afternoon, even though the beneficiaries for the FGDs are arranged by the SP; the beneficiaries had not been serious about the event. Prior to the FGDs, the Impact Evaluation team arranged a tele-conversation with the Solution Provider and explained how important the FGDs process is. However, the beneficiaries were still absent, and show the lack of commitment of the beneficiaries towards the project.

Another project involved the B40 women from a Kuching squatter community in A068. Time and resource limits were two of the difficulties. As a result, they lacked sufficient household amenities for practicing pastry baking. The lack of home amenities indicates the necessity for more social networks or public areas where recipients can carry on honing their abilities. When it came to time constraints, a sizable portion of the recipients worked Monday through Friday.

The challenges for A121 were (i) Discrepancy of initially reported number of 14 women but in actual fact were 20 women involved in the food processing and five males in the plastic upcycling project indicates a potential oversight; (ii) The resistance to formalization within some communities; (iii) Cultural and social factors can significantly impact individuals' willingness to register businesses. Identifying and understanding these factors are essential steps in developing strategies that align with cultural norms and social perceptions, fostering greater acceptance of formalization; (iv) The inability to continue the food processing project due to a lack of banana supply and the substantial volume of cooking oil required poses a substantial challenge; (v) The disinterest of beneficiaries in continuing the plastic waste upcycling project due to working commitments and the perceived difficulty of the upcycling process.

As for A117, the challenges identified are (i) With the aim to make up for the lack of natural pollinators and guarantee effective reproduction and yield in commercial vanilla cultivation, additional workers are required throughout the pollination process of vanilla planting; (ii) The problem of watering system due to the upcoming dry season; (iii) Vanilla cultivation can take five to seven years, or even longer, from planting to the first harvest; and (iv) Growers of vanilla are apprehensive about their financial status going forward due to the prolonged maturation period. Weather, pests, illnesses, and market fluctuations can all affect a crop's long-term viability and create unpredictable cash sources. Furthermore, the prolonged maturation period raises the resources needed for vanilla farming, requiring ongoing labour and time investments.

3.2.3 The Evaluators

Three primary challenges confronted the evaluators in the course of their work as evaluators. Firstly, to enable better participant input, improved communication techniques are first needed. The evaluators took some time to encourage for more participative beneficiaries. Assure them that the information they provide will remain private and that the discussion's content was the main focus of the assessment rather than who said what. This could facilitate their participation and increase their comfort level and willingness to freely express their thoughts on the projects. After achieving this, the beneficiaries gave their whole attention to the discussions. Secondly, to guarantee a more seamless review process, improved planning procedures are also required. The evaluators of field visits and FGDs could benefit from the assistance of a database containing the names, dates, times, and numbers of beneficiaries. And finally, confusion could be avoided among the evaluators if information attached in the project proposal is actually well executed after the FGD and SVs are conducted. This is to avoid any differences of information cascaded and misreported by the SP.

4. Recommendations

Considering the positive impact observed in the FGDs' projects, it is recommended to advocate policy areas that support similar community-driven initiatives such as eradicating poverty, income generation and food security. The policies suggested are related to SDG's goal. Further analysis is needed to improve a similar project which could improve the socio-economic status of the beneficiaries as indicated in the classification for economy and social. However, beneficiaries should be benefitted for this policy advocacy and probability for new SP could be appointed in certain areas. After the evaluation, the evaluators felt that there are potential projects that can be continued due to the sustainability of the program. Thus, the impact of the project is positive in terms of several factors such as the usage of social media for more in-depth on the project they are at and doing their own networking strategy with potential clients. Further follow-up projects, refresher courses, and extended courses ought to be made available following the conclusion of the initial programmes. Ensuring the beneficiaries can sustain the activities beyond the completion of the initial project is crucial. After beneficiaries have gained more skills, the Members of Parliament may offer them employment options.

5. Conclusion

In summary, the evaluation work for the Sarawak South Region was completed without many issues. Most of the results were positive, according to the overall findings. The team from Sarawak South Region assessed 20 programmes and produced 20 impact identification documents, six of which contained data from site visits and focus group discussions. The districts/divisions of Petra Jaya (1 project), Bandar Kuching (2 projects), Kota Samarahan (4 projects), Serian (4 projects), Batang Sadong (3 projects), Batang Lupar (2 projects), and Betong (4 projects) were evaluated under Sarawak South Region of Malaysia.

On that note, the impact evaluation process is an important tool for assessing the effectiveness of programs and interventions, and for informing decision-making and policy (Hassan, et al. 2023). An impact evaluator hired by APPGM in advance can assist in determining what works and what does not, as well as offer proof to back up or contradict statements made regarding the efficacy of a programme or intervention. When projects start, early impact evaluation can also be used to find areas of policy that need to be improved and to guide the creation of new initiatives and programmes. This regional study focuses on the difficulties impact evaluators encounter when

carrying out their assessments and the many ways that solution providers affect beneficiaries in each of Sarawak constituencies.

The impact study completed for these projects lead to the conclusion that these initiatives are managed to benefit the local communities, particularly the male and female members, as well as the targeted B40 families. It seeks to improve their social and economic standing and provide them with a source of independent income. In addition to offering reasonable and workable strategies and action plans to the policymakers and decision-makers, it is envisaged that this study will be able to offer insights for future regulation on solution projects. Furthermore, so as to address the obstacles to attaining the SDGs related to knowledge, skills, and attitudes, TVET is essential. TVET is one of the key drivers of the nation's socioeconomic development and helps to boost economic growth in Malaysia, including the achievement of the SDGs. Evidently, it is also seen that the significance of TVET is without doubt become critical elements in developing a labour force with skills necessary for today's workforce that reduce poverty, as stated in SDG Goal 1. Therefore, there is a good chance that all the above initiatives will be carried out in the future with more ambitious goals. Future project selections may include evaluator's recommendations into account as well. And a definite blessing is APPGM's financial allocation used in a productive way possible for all projects conducted.

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Conflict of Interest

We declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the paper.

Author Contribution

*The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: **study conception and design:** Nadrawina Isnin, Noni Harianti Junaidi; **data collection:** Nadrawina Isnin, Noni Harianti Junaidi, Arenawati Sehat Omar, Noorfadhleen Mahmud, Rudy Ujang.; **analysis and interpretation of results:** Nadrawina Isnin, Noni Harianti Junaidi, Arenawati Sehat Omar, Noorfadhleen Mahmud, Rudy Ujang.; **draft manuscript preparation:** Nadrawina Isnin, Noni Harianti Junaidi, Arenawati Sehat Omar, Noorfadhleen Mahmud, Rudy Ujang.; All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.*

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