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Localizing Global Goals: Assessing the Awareness and Integration of the Sustainable Development Goals Among BLGU Officials in Iligan City, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) are pivotal to the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because they translate global commitments into local planning, programming, and service delivery. This study examined how awareness shapes the integration of the SDGs among Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) officials in Iligan City, Philippines. Quantitative research design was employed particularly descriptive-correlational, with survey data analyzed through descriptive statistics, Spearman's rank-order correlation, and Kruskal-Wallis H tests. The study conducted a survey of 528 BLGU respondents from 44 barangays in Iligan City.

Findings show that although most respondents (86.70%) reported general awareness of the SDGs, the overall level of understanding remains moderate ($M=3.07$), indicating only basic familiarity rather than deep conceptual knowledge. Awareness is highest for SDGs related to social services, particularly SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 1 (No Poverty). In contrast, lower awareness was observed for environmentally-related and cross-sectoral goals such as SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

When it comes to integration, SDG integration in BLGU is largely partially integrated (74.62%), with most barangays incorporating SDG principles only to a limited extent in their plans, programs, and policies. Correlation results also show weak but significant positive relationships between SDG awareness and integration, suggesting that awareness supports integration but is insufficient on its own. The study concludes that SDG localization in Iligan City is still in a transitional stage characterized by moderate awareness and moderate institutionalization, requiring stronger capacity-building, leadership engagement, and cross-sector collaboration.

KEYWORDS

sustainable development goals; SDG localization; local governance; New Institutionalism; barangay governance; Iligan City; institutional awareness

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development has become a central governance priority in the twenty-first century as societies confront interconnected challenges such as climate change, inequality, environmental degradation, public health risks, and rapid urbanization. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 positioned the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a universal framework guiding inclusive, integrated, and future-oriented development. However, the realization of the SDGs depends not only on global commitments but on their effective localization—the process by which global goals are translated into local policies, programs, and governance practices.

In the SDG literature, localization is widely recognized as a governance process that requires alignment between global frameworks and local realities. Local and regional governments play a critical role in this process, as they are responsible for planning, resource allocation, service delivery, and stakeholder coordination. Existing studies highlight that effective SDG localization depends on factors such as policy coherence, institutional coordination, stakeholder participation, and the availability of reliable data systems. At the same time, limited awareness and understanding of the SDGs among local actors can hinder their translation into operational strategies, resulting in fragmented or symbolic implementation rather than substantive integration.

In the Philippine context, the significance of localization is reinforced by the decentralization framework established under the Local Government Code of 1991. Local Government Units (LGUs) and Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) serve as frontline governance institutions responsible for addressing local development needs. Barangays, in particular, function as the closest interface between government and citizens, making them critical actors in advancing sustainable development at the community level. For SDGs to be effectively mainstreamed, barangay officials must possess not only basic awareness but also a functional understanding of how these goals relate to their governance responsibilities in areas such as health, education, environmental management, and community development.

Iligan City provides a relevant empirical context for examining SDG awareness in decentralized governance. Comprising 44 barangays with both urban and rural characteristics, the city reflects diverse socio-economic and environmental conditions. The distribution of respondents across urban (54.36%) and rural (45.64%) barangays further highlights this diversity. Given the city's simultaneous engagement with issues of poverty reduction, infrastructure development, environmental sustainability, and institutional coordination, the level of SDG awareness among local officials has direct implications for policy coherence and implementation effectiveness.

Despite the growing emphasis on SDG localization, there remains a gap in empirical research focusing on the level of awareness among grassroots governance actors, particularly at the barangay level. While existing studies often prioritize policy alignment and institutional mechanisms, fewer examine how local officials understand and interpret the SDG framework as a basis for decision-making. This gap is significant because awareness functions as a foundational element of governance readiness; without sufficient understanding, the integration of SDGs into local planning and implementation processes remains limited.

This study addresses this gap by examining the level of SDG awareness among LGU and BLGU officials in Iligan City and analyzing its implications for local governance. By treating awareness as a measurable construct, the study provides empirical insight into the extent to which global development frameworks are recognized and potentially operationalized at the local level. The findings aim to inform strategies for strengthening SDG mainstreaming through capacity development, improved communication, and enhanced integration into local governance systems.

OBJECTIVES

The study aims to evaluate how well barangay local government unit (BLGU) officials in Iligan City understand and apply the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and how this awareness influences their integration into local governance. It seeks to profile the respondents, measure their level of SDG awareness, identify which goals are most and least recognized, and assess how these are incorporated into policies, plans, and programs. The study also examines how SDGs are prioritized in local initiatives, analyzes the relationship between awareness and integration, and explores the challenges BLGUs face in implementation. Additionally, it investigates whether officials' roles affect their level of awareness and integration, and ultimately provides recommendations to strengthen SDG localization in the city.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach to capture the breadth of SDG awareness across the different barangays. This approach generated descriptive patterns of awareness across a relatively large number of barangay respondents.

The survey covered 528 BLGU respondents drawn from Iligan City's 44 barangays. The source manuscript states that stratified random sampling was used to secure representation across barangays and respondent roles. In substantive terms, this sampling strategy was intended to capture variation in awareness across distinct administrative settings and organizational positions, thereby reducing the risk that the results would reflect only one cluster of officials. The final sample included Barangay Kagawads, Barangay Administrative Staff, Punong Barangays, IPMRs, and Community-Based Organization Representatives, with urban and rural barangays both represented. Because barangay governance is internally differentiated, this composition allowed the analysis to capture variations in awareness among officials who occupy legislative, executive, and administrative roles.

The survey instrument, as reflected in the tables reported in the results and discussions section, contained multiple item formats aligned with the descriptive objectives of the study. First, it included profile variables on respondent position, office affiliation, years of experience, and barangay classification. Second, it included a binary awareness item asking whether respondents were aware of the existence of the SDGs. Third, it used a checklist

format to identify which of the 17 SDGs respondents recognized. Fourth, it measured self-reported extent of awareness through an ordinal response scale ranging from “Not at all aware” to “Extremely aware.” Finally, the instrument generated item-level awareness ratings for each of the 17 goals, which were summarized through mean scores and descriptive interpretations. Because the instrument combined categorical, checklist, and ordinal awareness items, the study appropriately emphasized descriptive analysis rather than a single composite index.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and ranking. The analysis distinguished between recognition-level awareness and depth of awareness so that “being aware of the SDGs” would not be conflated with broader comprehension of the entire framework.

Further analyses were conducted to explore additional dimensions of SDG awareness and integration beyond the primary descriptive findings. Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to examine the relationship between SDG awareness and the extent of SDG integration, while the Kruskal-Wallis H Test was used to determine whether significant differences exist across respondents' position categories in terms of both SDG awareness and SDG integration. These non-parametric tests were selected for two reasons. First, the dependent variables are measured on ordinal scales, which do not meet the interval-level requirement of parametric tests such as Pearson correlation or one-way ANOVA. Second, the Shapiro-Wilk test confirmed non-normal distributions across multiple subgroups and individual SDG scores (all $p < .05$), further ruling out the use of parametric alternatives. SDG awareness was measured through respondents' self-rated familiarity with each of the 17 SDGs on a five-point ordinal scale: Not at All Aware (1), Slightly Aware (2), Moderately Aware (3), Very Aware (4), and Extremely Aware (5). Five items were used per SDG, and the mean of these five items was computed to produce a single awareness score per SDG per respondent. An overall composite awareness score (Overall Awareness) was further computed as the mean of all 17 SDG awareness scores. The extent of SDG integration was measured through a single questionnaire item asking respondents to assess how fully the SDGs have been integrated into their barangay's policies and programs, rated on a three-point ordinal scale: Not Integrated at All (1), Partially Integrated (2), and Fully Integrated (3). For analyses involving SDG integration by position, Dunn's post-hoc test with Bonferroni correction was conducted following a significant Kruskal-Wallis result to identify which specific position pairs differed significantly (adjusted $\alpha = .017$ for three comparisons).

The study did not report a response rate, detailed instrument-development history. Because the instrument was primarily descriptive and composed of mixed-format awareness items rather than a unidimensional attitudinal scale, the present paper emphasizes content alignment with the SDG framework, and role-based relevance.

Participation was voluntary, and the nature of the study required sensitivity to role-based responses from public officials. The analysis is reported at an aggregate level and is interpreted as an institutional pattern rather than an evaluation of specific individual performance. This is particularly important in decentralized governance studies, where respondents may occupy politically visible positions and where interpretations should

remain oriented toward systems improvement rather than individual deficit framing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the socio-demographic profile of the respondents from Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) in Iligan City. The table below illustrates the distribution of respondents based on their positions, affiliated offices, years of experience, and barangay classification. These variables provide contextual insights into the diversity, roles, and backgrounds of participants, which are critical for interpreting their awareness and understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Profile of BLGU Respondents

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage
Position/Role	Barangay Administrative Staff	150	28.41%
Position/Role	Barangay Kagawad	321	60.80%
Position/Role	Punong Barangay	44	8.33%
Position/Role	IPMR	2	0.38%
Position/Role	CBOR	11	2.08%
Department/Office	Office of the Punong Barangay	153	28.98%
Department/Office	Sangguniang Barangay	317	60.04%
Department/Office	Barangay Development Council	14	2.65%
Department/Office	Punong Barangay	44	8.33%
Years of Experience	< 1 year	40	7.58%
Years of Experience	1 to 9 years	352	66.67%
Years of Experience	10 to 19 years	95	17.99%
Years of Experience	20 to 29 years	28	5.30%
Years of Experience	30 to 39 years	10	1.89%
Years of Experience	40 years and above	3	0.57%
Barangay Classification	Urban	287	54.36%
Barangay Classification	Rural	241	45.64%

The respondent distribution shows that Barangay Kagawads comprised the majority (60.80%), reflecting their central role in barangay legislation and local decision-making. Their strong representation underscores their potential influence in integrating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into local policies. However, this influence is contingent upon sufficient understanding of sustainability principles, as prior studies suggest that limited or superficial awareness may constrain effective policy alignment with global development frameworks. Barangay Administrative Staff accounted for 28.41% of respondents and play a critical role in operationalizing SDG-related initiatives. Their involvement in program coordination, documentation, and compliance positions them as key actors in embedding sustainability into routine governance processes. Their relatively higher exposure to training further enhances their capacity to support SDG mainstreaming at the local level. Punong Barangays, representing 8.33% of the sample, serve as executive leaders responsible for planning and resource allocation. Although fewer in number, their strategic role in decision-making makes them highly influential in advancing or constraining SDG integration within barangay governance.

In contrast, the representation of Indigenous Peoples' Mandatory Representatives (0.38%) and Community-Based Organization Representatives (2.08%) was minimal. This limited participation raises concerns regarding inclusivity and stakeholder engagement, which are fundamental principles of the SDG framework. It suggests potential gaps in participatory governance mechanisms at the barangay level.

Overall, the sample is largely composed of formal governance actors, providing a strong basis for assessing institutional awareness of the SDGs. However, the low representation of community and sectoral groups highlights the need for more inclusive and differentiated capacity-building efforts to ensure broader participation in sustainable development initiatives.

Awareness of the SDGs

Table 2. Awareness of the SDGs

Are you aware of the existence of the SDGs?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	458	86.70
No	70	13.30
TOTAL	528	100.00

The results indicate a relatively high level of general awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among barangay officials in Iligan City, with 86.70% of respondents affirming that they are aware of the SDGs. This suggests that the global development agenda has successfully penetrated the consciousness of local governance structures to a significant extent. Such findings are consistent with prior studies emphasizing the growing visibility of the SDGs in local policy discourse, particularly in urban centers with more

institutional exposure to national and international development frameworks (UNDP, 2016; UCLG, 2020).

Nevertheless, the 13.30% of respondents who reported no awareness of the SDGs represent a non-negligible gap. This lack of awareness may be attributed to several factors, including limited access to formal training, weak information dissemination mechanisms at the barangay level, or competing governance priorities that overshadow sustainability concerns. The presence of uninformed officials, especially in positions of influence, may impede efforts to localize the SDGs effectively. As argued by Hege and Brimont (2018), awareness is the first step in the “localization ladder” and without it, deeper engagement such as planning, implementation, and monitoring becomes superficial or inconsistent.

Moreover, while the binary nature of the survey question captures existence-level awareness, it does not measure conceptual understanding or functional knowledge—two dimensions that are equally critical for meaningful localization. Scholars emphasize that awareness alone is insufficient for sustainable governance; what matters is how well local officials comprehend the interconnectedness of the goals and translate them into policy and action (Bexell & Jönsson, 2021). This underscores the importance of complementing awareness-raising initiatives with contextualized capacity-building programs that go beyond slogans and acronyms to practical application in development planning, budgeting, and monitoring.

In the context of Iligan City, where barangay officials play a direct role in community-level decision-making, enhancing both awareness and understanding of the SDGs is essential to ensure inclusive, equitable, and locally-relevant development interventions. This requires sustained partnerships between national agencies, local governments, and academic institutions, as well as the incorporation of the SDGs in regular training, orientation programs, and local development councils.

The findings reinforce the notion that while the SDGs have made inroads into local governance discourse, bridging the gap between global awareness and local action remains an urgent task. Failure to address the awareness divide could result in uneven implementation and the marginalization of barangays that are least informed yet most vulnerable to development challenges.

Level of Awareness and Rank of Awareness of the SDGs

Table 3. Level and Rank of Awareness of the SDGs

LEVEL OF AWARENESS	Average	Interpretation	Rank (1 as the highest)
SDG 1: No Poverty	3.14	Moderately Aware	7
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	3.20	Moderately Aware	5
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being	3.29	Moderately Aware	3
SDG 4: Quality Education	3.39	Moderately Aware	1
SDG 5: Gender Equality	3.22	Moderately Aware	4
SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	3.16	Moderately Aware	6
SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	2.87	Moderately Aware	16
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	2.97	Moderately Aware	10
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure	2.96	Moderately Aware	11
SDG 10: Reduced Inequality	2.93	Moderately Aware	13
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	2.88	Moderately Aware	17
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	2.80	Moderately Aware	15
SDG 13: Climate Action	3.10	Moderately Aware	8
SDG 14: Life Below Water	2.93	Moderately Aware	13
SDG 15: Life on Land	2.99	Moderately Aware	9
SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	3.37	Moderately Aware	2
SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	2.93	Moderately Aware	13
OVERALL	3.07	Moderately Aware	

The findings reveal a moderate overall level of awareness (mean = 3.07) of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among the barangay-level respondents. The results are relatively consistent across the goals, indicating a general familiarity with the SDGs rather than in-depth knowledge. This moderate awareness may reflect the increasing presence of SDG discourse in national policies and training programs, yet also signals that grassroots-level engagement remains at a foundational stage (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2016; Local2030, 2020).

SDG 4: Quality Education (mean = 3.39) was rated highest, followed closely by SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (mean = 3.37) and SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being (mean = 3.29). These goals are closely aligned with the mandates of local governance, particularly in areas such as education access, health services, and community safety. As local governments are frequently the first responders in delivering public services, these higher scores may reflect firsthand exposure to issues directly linked to these SDGs (UCLG, 2021; UNESCO, 2017).

Conversely, the lowest awareness levels were recorded for SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production (mean = 2.80), SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities (mean = 2.88), and SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy (mean = 2.87). The relative unfamiliarity with these goals suggests a lack of localized discourse around environmental sustainability, urban planning, and energy access—areas traditionally framed within national or sectoral planning rather than barangay-level engagement (Hege & Brimont, 2018; Bexell & Jönsson, 2021). Furthermore, SDG 17, which promotes partnerships and multi-stakeholder collaboration, also ranked low, indicating possible gaps in collaborative governance knowledge at the barangay level.

This uniform yet moderate level of awareness suggests that while the SDGs are somewhat known, they are not yet fully embedded in the everyday practices of local governance. The lack of high awareness in any of the goals implies the need for structured and differentiated training approaches—ones that not only introduce the goals but also contextualize them within local priorities and service delivery roles. As emphasized by the UN Global Compact (2020), moving from awareness to meaningful action requires deep engagement, tailored messaging, and participatory planning at the community level.

From a policy standpoint, these findings highlight critical entry points for SDG localization. Targeted awareness campaigns, capacity development programs, and integration of SDG content into barangay development planning and budget formulation processes can catalyze deeper institutionalization. Furthermore, adopting a community-driven lens can help bridge the gap between abstract global targets and concrete local actions (NEDA, 2022; OECD, 2020).

In sum, while the moderate level of awareness across all SDGs reflects promising initial engagement, the findings affirm the need for intensified, goal-specific, and locally grounded strategies to enhance the internalization and operationalization of the 2030 Agenda at the barangay level.

Awareness of Specific Sustainable Development Goals

Table 4. Awareness of Specific Sustainable Development Goals

Which of the following SDGs are you aware of?	Frequency (<i>N</i> =528)	Percentage	Rank (1 as the highest)
SDG 1: No Poverty	271	48.67	3
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	240	45.45	5
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being	281	53.22	2
SDG 4: Quality Education	300	56.82	1
SDG 5: Gender Equality	241	45.64	4
SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	163	30.87	7
SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	90	17.05	11
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	146	27.65	8
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure	124	23.48	9
SDG 10: Reduced Inequality	75	14.20	13
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	89	16.86	12
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	57	10.80	15
SDG 13: Climate Action	120	22.73	10
SDG 14: Life Below Water	51	9.66	16
SDG 15: Life on Land	47	8.90	17
SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	181	34.28	6
SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	63	11.93	14
I am not aware of any	62	11.74	-

The results reveal a differentiated pattern of SDG awareness among barangay officials in Iligan City, with stronger recognition of goals closely aligned with routine governance functions. SDG 4: Quality Education (56.82%) and SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being (53.22%) were the most recognized, followed by SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 2: Zero Hunger, and SDG 5: Gender Equality, indicating familiarity with social and service-oriented priorities. In contrast, awareness was notably lower for SDG 12, SDG 14, and SDG 15,

suggesting limited engagement with environmental sustainability concerns, as well as for cross-cutting goals such as SDG 13 and SDG 17. The finding that only 11.74% of respondents reported no awareness of specific SDGs, compared to a slightly higher proportion initially unfamiliar with the framework, suggests the presence of partial or implicit knowledge. This pattern indicates that while awareness is relatively stronger in areas tied to everyday governance, gaps persist in environmental and integrative goals, highlighting the need for more targeted and context-specific capacity-building initiatives.

Extent of Awareness of the SDGs

Table 5. Extent of awareness of the SDGs

How are you aware of the SDGs?	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all Aware	70	13.26
Slightly Aware	170	32.20
Moderately Aware	188	35.61
Very Aware	87	16.48
Extremely Aware	13	2.46
TOTAL	528	100

The findings in Table 5 illustrate a diverse distribution in the self-reported extent of awareness regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among barangay-level officials and staff in Iligan City. While a combined majority of respondents reported being moderately aware (35.61%) or slightly aware (32.20%), only 16.48% considered themselves "very aware," and a mere 2.46% reported being "extremely aware." In contrast, 13.26% of the respondents acknowledged having no awareness at all of the SDGs.

This pattern reflects a significant challenge for local SDG mainstreaming, as the largest cohort possesses only partial familiarity with the goals—an indicator that awareness initiatives may not have fully permeated all governance levels. Previous studies have emphasized that limited awareness among local officials can impede the localization and implementation of global sustainability targets (Hege & Brimont, 2018; UNDP, 2016). This moderate awareness may stem from sporadic or uneven access to training, lack of tailored communication strategies, or insufficient integration of the SDGs into local governance mechanisms (OECD, 2020).

The low proportion of respondents who are "very" or "extremely" aware (combined 18.94%) raises concerns about the depth of knowledge necessary to translate global goals into actionable local programs. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2016), deep understanding—beyond basic familiarity—is critical for aligning local plans, budgets, and community engagements with the SDG framework. Moreover, the lack of in-depth awareness can hinder collaborative governance and community mobilization, which are essential for bottom-up implementation of the 2030 Agenda (UCLG, 2021).

This gap also presents an opportunity for institutional interventions. Strategic communication, capacity-building programs, and participatory planning workshops can bridge this awareness deficit. As Bexell and Jönsson

(2021) argue, empowering local actors through sustained education and inclusion in SDG discourse enhances their ability to align governance priorities with sustainability goals. Furthermore, capacity-building must be contextualized—anchored on local issues, languages, and cultural practices—to foster genuine engagement and uptake (Local2030, 2020; NEDA, 2022).

While moderate awareness of the SDGs among Iligan’s barangay officials indicates a foundational understanding, the data reveals a substantial need to scale up knowledge-enhancement initiatives. Fostering deeper, more widespread SDG comprehension is imperative not only for compliance with national policy mandates but also for ensuring that local actions contribute meaningfully to global sustainability outcomes.

Integration of the SDGs into the BLGU policies and programs

Table 6. Extent of SDG Integration in BLGU policies and programs

To what extent do you think the SDGs are integrated into the policies and programs of the BLGUs?	Frequency	Percentage
Not integrated at all	49	9.28
Partially integrated	356	67.42
Fully Integrated	123	23.30
TOTAL	528	100.00

The survey results indicate that the integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the policies and programs Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) is predominantly partial. This finding, with 67.42% of respondents indicating partial integration, suggests that while elements of the SDGs are being incorporated, full implementation remains a significant challenge. A smaller, yet notable, portion of respondents, 23.30%, report full integration, demonstrating that some BLGUs have successfully embedded sustainable development principles into their operations. Conversely, a small but concerning 9.28% of respondents report no integration at all, highlighting a gap in awareness or implementation within certain local units. This varied level of adoption across BLGUs underscores the need for continued efforts in advocacy and capacity-building. These efforts should focus on achieving comprehensive SDG alignment in governance and planning, ensuring that all local government units are equipped to fully integrate sustainable development principles into their policies and programs. The predominantly partial integration signals that while some progress has been made, there is still substantial room for improvement in achieving full SDG implementation at the local level.

Table 7. SDGs integration into development plans and programs of the BLGUs

Have the SDGs been formally incorporated into the development plans and programs of the BLGUs?	Frequency	Percentage
Not integrated at all	35	6.63
Partially integrated	394	74.62
Yes, fully integrated	99	18.75
TOTAL	528	100.00

The survey data reveals that the integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the development plans and programs of the Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) is predominantly partial. A significant majority of respondents, 74.62%, indicated that the SDGs are "Partially integrated," suggesting that while some elements of the SDGs are being considered, full implementation is yet to be achieved. Following this, 18.75% of respondents reported that the SDGs are "Yes, fully integrated," indicating that a substantial portion of the respondents perceive a complete incorporation of sustainable development principles into local initiatives. Conversely, a small minority, 6.63%, stated that the SDGs are "Not integrated at all," highlighting a potential gap in SDG adoption within certain BLGUs. This distribution underscores the need for continued efforts to enhance SDG integration, particularly in areas where implementation is perceived as partial, to ensure a more consistent and comprehensive approach to sustainable development within the local governance framework of Iligan City and its barangays.

Table 8. BLGUs' Prioritization of specific SDGs in development plans and initiatives

Are there specific SDGs that the BLGUs prioritize in their development plans and initiatives?	Frequency	Percentage
No	83	15.72
Not Sure	204	38.64
Yes	241	45.64
TOTAL	528	100.00

The survey data presents a nuanced picture of SDG prioritization within Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs). While nearly half of the respondents indicated that their BLGUs prioritize specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in their development plans, a significant portion expressed uncertainty regarding their barangay's alignment with these goals. This uncertainty underscores a potential lack of awareness or communication concerning SDG integration at the local level. Furthermore, a smaller but

notable group of respondents reported that SDGs are not explicitly integrated into their local development strategies. These findings highlight the need for clearer policies and enhanced engagement to ensure that all BLGUs are actively incorporating the SDGs into their planning and initiatives. The discrepancy between those who perceive prioritization and those who are uncertain or report non-integration points to a critical need for improved transparency and communication to foster a more consistent and informed approach to sustainable development within local governance.

Table 9. Specific SDGs prioritized in the development plans and programs of BLGUs

Which specific SDGs have been prioritized or emphasized in the development plans and programs of the BLGUs?	Frequency	Base	Percentage
SDG 1: No Poverty	218	528	41.29
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	213	528	40.34
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being	288	528	54.55
SDG 4: Quality Education	266	528	50.38
SDG 5: Gender Equality	211	528	39.96
SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	154	528	29.17
SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	79	528	14.96
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	155	528	29.36
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure	134	528	25.38
SDG 10: Reduced Inequality	60	528	11.36
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	93	528	17.61
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	48	528	9.09
SDG 13: Climate Action	73	528	13.83
SDG 14: Life Below Water	41	528	7.77
SDG 15: Life on Land	151	528	28.60
SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	102	528	19.32
SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	31	528	5.87
None of the above	14	528	2.65

The survey data reveals a clear prioritization of specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the development plans and programs of the Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) in Iligan City. Notably, SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being emerged as the most emphasized goal, cited by 54.55% of respondents, indicating a strong focus on health-related initiatives. Following closely, SDG 4: Quality Education was also highly prioritized, with 50.38% of respondents indicating its prominence in local development plans. Additionally, SDGs addressing basic human needs, such as SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 2: Zero Hunger, and SDG 5: Gender Equality, were also significantly emphasized, with percentages ranging from 39.96% to 41.29%. SDGs related to infrastructure, environment, and institutions, including SDG 8: Decent Work

and Economic Growth, SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 15: Life on Land, SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, and SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, were also considered, though to a lesser extent. Conversely, SDGs related to energy, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities, responsible consumption, climate action, life below water, and partnerships were the least prioritized, each cited by less than 20% of respondents. A small percentage of respondents indicated that none of the SDGs were prioritized. This distribution highlights a concentration on social development goals, particularly health and education, within Iligan City and its barangays, while also indicating potential areas for improvement in the integration of other SDGs into local development planning.

Table 10. Correlation Between Level of Awareness and Integration of SDGs into the development plans and programs of BLGUs using Spearman's Correlation Test

Level of Awareness		Correlation (ρ)	p-value
On the integration of SDGs into the development plans and programs of the BLGUs	Extent of SDG Integration in BLGU policies and programs	0.214**	0.000
	Respondents' familiarity with the SDGs and their relevance to local development planning in Iligan City and barangay LGUs	0.334**	0.000
	SDGs monitoring and evaluation within the BLGUs to track progress and impact	0.195**	0.000
	Opportunities or initiatives implemented to enhance the integration of the SDGs into local development planning in Iligan City and BLGUs	0.143**	0.001

The Spearman's rank-order correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive associations between the **level of awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and four key variables related to SDG integration in local governance within the Barangay LGUs.

A **moderate positive correlation** was found between awareness and **respondents' familiarity with the SDGs and their relevance to local development planning** ($\rho = 0.334$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that higher awareness is associated with greater conceptual understanding of the SDGs and their application within the local governance context.

A weak but statistically significant positive correlation was observed between awareness and the extent of SDG integration in BLGU policies and programs ($\rho = 0.214$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that increased awareness may contribute to the incorporation of SDG principles into formal local policy frameworks, although other institutional or contextual factors likely also play an important role.

Similarly, a weak positive correlation emerged between awareness and SDG monitoring and evaluation efforts within the BLGUs ($\rho = 0.195$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that knowledge of the SDGs may contribute to improved tracking of progress and outcomes. Lastly, the presence of initiatives aimed at enhancing SDG integration was also positively correlated with awareness, albeit at a lower magnitude ($\rho = 0.143$).

Overall, these results indicate that while awareness of the SDGs does not fully determine the depth of their integration in local systems, it is positively associated with greater familiarity, planning relevance, and institutional responsiveness. To strengthen SDG implementation, awareness-raising efforts should likely be complemented by capacity-building, strategic planning, and governance reforms that reinforce institutional uptake and sustainability.

Perceived barriers and challenges in implementing and aligning with the SDGs at BLGU levels and how they address it

Table 11. Barriers or challenges encountered with the SDGs at the BLGU levels

What are the barriers or challenges you have encountered in implementing and aligning with the SDGs BLGU levels?	Frequency	Base	Percentage
Lack of awareness or understanding of the SDGs among local government officials and staff	331	528	62.69
Limited financial resources and budget constraints to support SDG-related initiatives	315	528	59.66
Insufficient technical capacity and expertise within the BLGUs to integrate the SDGs	152	528	28.79
Difficulty in adapting the global SDG framework to the local context and priorities	134	528	25.38
Lack of coordination and alignment between national and local development plans	173	528	32.77
Resistance to change or reluctance to adopt new approaches and strategies	86	528	16.29
Inadequate data collection and monitoring systems to track SDG progress	65	528	12.31
Resistance to change or lack of political will	69	528	13.07
Others			
<i>Political coloring</i>	2	528	0.38
<i>Discipline, City Ordinance must be implemented</i>	1	528	0.19
<i>No answer</i>	5	528	0.95

The survey data reveals a significant challenge in implementing and aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) levels, primarily due to a "Lack of awareness or understanding of the SDGs among local government officials and staff," cited by 62.69% of respondents. This highlights a critical need for comprehensive training and education initiatives. "Limited financial resources and budget constraints to support SDG-related initiatives" is another major barrier, reported by 59.66% of respondents, indicating a substantial financial hurdle in SDG implementation. "Lack of coordination and alignment between national and local development plans" is also a significant concern, with 32.77% of respondents identifying this issue, suggesting a need for better integration of national and local agendas. "Insufficient technical capacity and expertise within the LGU and BLGUs to integrate the SDGs" and "Difficulty in adapting the global SDG framework to the local context and priorities" were also noted, indicating challenges related to technical skills and contextual relevance. "Resistance to change or reluctance to adopt new approaches and strategies" and "Resistance to change or lack of political will" were also cited, though to a lesser extent, highlighting potential cultural and political barriers. "Inadequate data collection and monitoring systems to track SDG progress" was the least frequently cited barrier among the predefined options. Additionally, a few respondents identified "Political coloring" and the need for "Discipline and City Ordinance implementation" as other challenges. The overall pattern underscores the need for targeted interventions to address knowledge gaps, financial constraints, coordination issues, and technical capacity to effectively implement and align with the SDGs at the local level.

Table 12. Impact of barriers and challenges on SDG implementation and alignment of at the BLGU levels.

To what extent have these barriers or challenges hindered the effective implementation and alignment of the SDGs at the BLGU levels?	Frequency	Percentage
Significantly hindered	125	23.67
Moderately hindered	237	44.89
Slightly hindered	160	30.30
Not hindered at all	6	1.14
TOTAL	528	100.00

Referring to the extent in which the barriers or challenges have hindered the effective implementation and alignment of the SDGs at the BLGU levels, the highest frequency corresponds to 'Moderately hindered' with 237 responses or 44.89%. The second highest is 'Slightly hindered' (160 or 30.30%), followed by 'Significantly hindered' (125 or 23.67%) and 'Not hindered at all' (6 or 1.14%).

Table 13. Strategies and measures to overcome the challenges and barriers identified

What strategies or measures have the BLGUs implemented to overcome these barriers and challenges in implementing and aligning with the SDGs?	Frequency	Base	Percentage
Capacity-building and training programs for local government officials	283	528	53.60
Stakeholder engagement and consultation processes	152	528	28.79
Mobilization of additional financial resources and funding	199	528	37.69
Strengthening of data collection and monitoring systems	121	528	22.92
Collaboration with national government agencies, international organizations, or civil society groups	181	528	34.28
Adaptation of the global SDG framework to the local context	66	528	12.50
Others			
<i>Barangay Session</i>	2	528	0.38
<i>CLGU assistance to BLGUs</i>	1	528	0.19
<i>No idea</i>	1	528	0.19
<i>Lack of observation and policy integration</i>	2	528	0.38
<i>No answer</i>	1	528	0.19

The results show the strategies or measures that the BLGUs have executed to overcome the barriers and challenges in the implementation and alignment of the SDGs, with 528 respondents each opting for at least one out of seven options. The most common response is 'Capacity-building and training programs for local government officials', with 282 respondents or 53.41%, that is more than half of the sample. Subsequently, 'Mobilization of additional financial resources and funding' received 199 responses (37.69%),

'Collaboration with national government agencies, international organizations, or civil society groups', was given 181 responses (34.28%), 'Stakeholder engagement and consultation processes' obtained 151 responses (28.60%), 'Strengthening of data collection and monitoring systems' has garnered 121 responses (22.92%) and 'Adaptation of the global SDG framework to the local context' acquired 66 responses (12.50%). Aside from this, some respondents answered 'Others' specifying measures such as barangay session (2 respondents or 0.38%), CLGU assistance to BLGUs (1 respondent or 0.19%), lack of observation and policy integration (2 respondents or 0.38%) and lack of awareness (1 respondent or 0.19%). Nevertheless, one respondent (0.19%) had no answer.

Table 14. Effectiveness of strategies or measures in addressing barriers of SDG implementation and alignment at the BLGU levels

How effective have these strategies or measures been in addressing the barriers and challenges to implementing and aligning with the SDGs at the BLGU levels?	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all effective	33	6.25
Somewhat effective	205	38.83
Effective	223	42.23
Very Effective	67	12.69
TOTAL	528	100.00

As to the effectiveness of the strategies or measures in addressing the barriers and challenges to implementing and aligning with the SDGs at the BLGU levels, the results unveiled that the most common response is 'Effective' (223 or 42.23%), followed closely by 'Somewhat effective' (205 or 38.83%). Meanwhile, 67 respondents (12.69%) consider these strategies "Very effective," while 33 respondents (6.25%) perceive them as "Not at all effective."

Mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the integration of the SDGs

Table 15. SDGs monitoring and evaluation within the BLGUs to track progress and impact

How are the SDGs monitored and evaluated within the BLGUs to track progress and impact?	Frequency	Base	Percentage
Regular reporting mechanisms	263	528	49.81
Data collection and analysis	227	528	42.99
Stakeholder consultations and feedback	151	528	28.60
Performance indicators and targets	88	528	16.67
External assessments or audits	27	528	5.11
Others			
<i>Strengthening monitoring, evaluation, and accountability mechanisms for SDG implementation</i>	1	528	0.19
<i>Lack of integrated systems and processes</i>	1	528	0.19
<i>Absence of SDG implementation monitoring in the barangays.</i>	2	528	0.38
<i>No answer</i>	1	528	0.19

The survey data reveals a reliance on regular reporting and data analysis as primary mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) implementation within the Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs). "Regular reporting mechanisms" emerged as the most frequently cited method, selected by 49.81% of respondents, indicating a strong preference for structured, periodic reporting to track SDG progress. "Data collection and analysis" also plays a significant role, with 42.99% of respondents utilizing this method, highlighting the importance of empirical evidence in assessing impact. "Stakeholder consultations and feedback" were considered important by 28.60% of respondents, emphasizing the value of community involvement in the monitoring process. "Performance indicators and targets," while used by 16.67% of respondents, indicate a need for greater emphasis on measurable metrics. "External assessments or audits" were the least utilized, at 5.11%, suggesting they may be seen as supplementary tools. Additionally, a few respondents identified other factors, including the need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, the lack of integrated systems, and the absence of monitoring in barangays, though these were minimally reported. The overall pattern suggests a focus on internal reporting and data analysis for SDG monitoring, with opportunities to enhance the use of performance indicators, stakeholder feedback, and external assessments to ensure more comprehensive and effective tracking of progress.

Best practices and success stories in aligning with and implementing the SDGs at the BLGU level

Table 16. Opportunities or initiatives implemented to enhance SDG integration into local development planning in Iligan City and BLGUs

What opportunities or initiatives have been implemented to enhance the integration of the SDGs into local development planning in Iligan City and BLGUs?	Frequency	Base	Percentage
Capacity-building and training programs for local government officials	299	528	56.63
Stakeholder engagement and consultation processes	170	528	32.20
Alignment of local development plans and programs with the SDGs	148	528	28.03
Establishment of monitoring and evaluation frameworks for SDG implementation	91	528	17.23
Collaboration with national government agencies, international organizations, or civil society groups	153	528	28.98
Mobilization of financial resources and funding for SDG-related projects	64	528	12.12
Others			
<i>No opportunities and initiatives since there is a lack of policies and integration as to the implementation of SDGs</i>	2	528	0.38
<i>No answer</i>	1	528	0.19

The survey data reveals a strong emphasis on capacity-building and training programs as the primary initiative to enhance the integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into local development planning in Iligan City and its Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs). "Capacity-building and training programs for local government officials" was cited by 56.63% of respondents, highlighting a focused effort to equip local leaders with the necessary knowledge and skills for effective SDG incorporation. "Stakeholder engagement and consultation processes" also plays a significant role, with 32.20% of respondents emphasizing the importance of inclusive decision-making involving citizens, businesses, and community organizations. "Collaboration with national government agencies, international organizations, or civil society groups" was reported by 28.98% of respondents, indicating a strategic focus on partnerships to strengthen SDG implementation. "Alignment of local development plans and programs with the SDGs" and "Establishment of monitoring and evaluation frameworks for SDG implementation" were also noted, though at lower percentages, suggesting a recognition of the need for alignment and accountability in SDG efforts. "Mobilization of financial resources and funding for SDG-related projects" was the least cited initiative, indicating potential challenges in securing financial support. Additionally, one respondent reported a lack of opportunities due to policy and integration gaps, while another provided no answer. The overall pattern indicates a strong focus on capacity-building and stakeholder engagement as key strategies for enhancing SDG integration, with opportunities to strengthen financial mobilization and monitoring frameworks.

Relationship between Awareness and Integration of SDGs

To examine the relationship between SDG awareness and SDG integration, Spearman's rank-order correlation was used. Overall SDG awareness was computed as the mean of all 17 individual SDG awareness scores per respondent, producing a single composite score ranging from 1 to 5.

Table 17. Overall and Individual Spearman Rank-Order Correlations (SDG Awareness and SDG Integration)

SDG	Goal Title	rs	p-value	Sig.	Strength
SDG 1	No Poverty	0.246	< .001	***	Weak
SDG 2	Zero Hunger	0.217	< .001	***	Weak
SDG 3	Good Health & Well-being	0.241	< .001	***	Weak
SDG 4	Quality Education	0.218	< .001	***	Weak
SDG 5	Gender Equality	0.19	< .001	***	Negligible
SDG 6	Clean Water & Sanitation	0.192	< .001	***	Negligible
SDG 7	Affordable & Clean Energy	0.212	< .001	***	Weak
SDG 8	Decent Work & Economic Growth	0.207	< .001	***	Weak
SDG 9	Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure	0.204	< .001	***	Weak
SDG 10	Reduced Inequalities	0.23	< .001	***	Weak
SDG 11	Sustainable Cities & Communities	0.189	< .001	***	Negligible
SDG 12	Responsible Consumption & Production	0.141	0.001	**	Negligible
SDG 13	Climate Action	0.186	< .001	***	Negligible
SDG 14	Life Below Water	0.163	< .001	***	Negligible
SDG 15	Life on Land	0.17	< .001	***	Negligible
SDG 16	Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions	0.215	< .001	***	Weak
SDG 17	Partnerships for the Goals	0.154	< .001	***	Negligible
OVERALL	Aggregate Score	0.214	< .001	***	Weak

Note. ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed). Strength: < .20 = Negligible, .20–.39 = Weak. SDG awareness scores (SDG1ave–SDG17ave) are means of five Likert items per SDG (1–5 scale). SDG integration measured on a three-point scale (1 = Not Integrated, 2 = Partially Integrated, 3 = Fully Integrated).

The Spearman rank-order correlation between overall SDG awareness and the extent of SDG integration revealed a statistically significant positive association ($r_s = .214$, $p < .001$, $N = 528$). This means that barangay officials with higher overall SDG awareness tend to perceive higher levels of SDG integration into their barangay's policies and programs. The relationship is

statistically clear, but its strength falls within the weak range, indicating that awareness is one contributing factor to perceived integration, but not the only one.

This finding is expected, that is a barangay official who is more familiar with the SDG framework is more likely to recognize and acknowledge when SDG principles are being applied in their barangay's programs. However, the weak strength of the correlation also signals that SDG integration is shaped by other factors beyond individual awareness such as institutional support, budget availability, leadership direction, and the overall policy environment of the barangay. In other words, knowing about the SDGs is helpful for recognizing integration, but it does not guarantee that integration will actually occur.

When examined at the individual SDG level, awareness scores for all 17 goals showed statistically significant positive correlations with the extent of SDG integration, with coefficients ranging from $r_s = .141$ (SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, $p = .001$) to $r_s = .246$ (SDG 1 – No Poverty, $p < .001$). Nine SDGs fell within the weak positive range ($r_s = .20$ – $.39$), while eight SDGs produced negligible correlations ($r_s < .20$), though all remained statistically significant. The strongest awareness-integration links were found for SDG 1 – No Poverty ($r_s = .246$), SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being ($r_s = .241$), SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities ($r_s = .230$), SDG 4 – Quality Education ($r_s = .218$), and SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions ($r_s = .215$). These SDGs tend to align closely with the core mandates of barangay governance such as poverty reduction, health service delivery, education support, and community peace and order, suggesting that officials who are more aware of these goals are also more likely to recognize their integration into existing barangay programs. The weakest correlations were observed for SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production ($r_s = .141$), SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals ($r_s = .154$), and SDG 14 – Life Below Water ($r_s = .163$). These are among the least recognized SDGs, and their lower correlation values suggest that even when awareness exists for these goals, it does not guarantee that they will be seen as integrated into barangay programs. This is likely because these goals have not yet become a regular part of how barangays operate on a day-to-day basis.

Relevance of the Position in Awareness and Integration of SDGs

To examine whether barangay official's designated position or role was associated with differences in SDG awareness, the Kruskal-Wallis H Test was conducted comparing three major position groups: Punong Barangay ($n = 44$), Barangay Kagawad ($n = 321$), and Barangay Administrative Staff ($n = 150$), while Community-Based Organizations ($n = 11$) and Indigenous Peoples' Mandatory Representations ($n = 2$) were excluded due to insufficient sample sizes. Prior to test selection, ANOVA assumptions were formally evaluated and found to be violated. The Kruskal-Wallis H Test was therefore selected as the appropriate non-parametric alternative, requiring no normality assumption and suitable for ordinal data across three or more independent groups. Overall mean implementation scores by position were: Punong Barangay ($M = 3.57$), Barangay Kagawad ($M = 3.27$), and Barangay Administrative Staff ($M = 3.21$).

Table 18. Relevance of Position in the SDG Awareness

SDG	Goal	H	p-value	Interpretation
SDG 2	Zero Hunger	3.972	0.137	Not Significant
SDG 3	Good Health	6.379	0.041*	Significant
SDG 4	Quality Education	7.869	0.02*	Significant
SDG 6	Clean Water	2.172	0.338	Not Significant
SDG 8	Decent Work	3.096	0.213	Not Significant
SDG 9	Industry & Infra	5.279	0.071	Not Significant
SDG 10	Reduced Inequalities	2.339	0.311	Not Significant
SDG 12	Responsible Consumption	4.404	0.111	Not Significant
SDG 14	Life Below Water	6.382	0.041*	Significant
SDG 16	Peace & Justice	11.261	0.004**	Significant

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. Only SDGs with at least one statistically significant result are shown. Kruskal-Wallis H Test, $df = 2$ (three groups).

At the overall level, the Kruskal-Wallis H Test did not find statistically significant differences across position groups for overall SDG awareness ($H = 4.320$, $p = .115$) or overall implementation ($H = 5.933$, $p = .052$). This means that when all 17 SDGs are considered together, no position group stands out noticeably from the others in terms of how much they know the SDGs. However, when each SDG was examined individually, several meaningful differences emerged.

For SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, awareness scores differed significantly by position ($H = 11.261$, $p = .004$), with Punong Barangay officials recording the highest scores. This is consistent with what would be expected since SDG 16 covers governance, rule of law, and institutional accountability, which are areas that fall directly under the authority and daily responsibilities of the Punong Barangay. It is understandable that those holding executive barangay authority would be more familiar with goals closely tied to their role.

A noteworthy pattern also emerged for SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being ($H = 6.379$, $p = .041$) and SDG 4 – Quality Education ($H = 7.869$, $p = .020$), where it was awareness that differed significantly by position. Punong Barangay officials appear to have greater exposure to national health and education programs, such as Pantawid Pamilya linkages and health center coordination, giving them a knowledge advantage over other positions. However, this awareness advantage does not carry over into differentiated implementation, because health and education programs are already broadly carried out across all barangay roles regardless of position.

Relevance of the Position in SDG Integration

To examine whether the extent of SDG integration differed across position groups, the Kruskal-Wallis H Test was conducted among three position groups: Punong Barangay ($n = 44$), Barangay Kagawad ($n = 321$), and Barangay Administrative Staff ($n = 150$). Community-Based Organizations ($n = 11$) and Indigenous Peoples' Mandatory Representations ($n = 2$) were excluded due to insufficient sample sizes. The Kruskal-Wallis H Test was selected given the ordinal nature of the dependent variable and the violation of normality. Following a significant result, post-hoc pairwise comparisons were conducted using Dunn's test with Bonferroni correction across three comparisons (adjusted $\alpha = .017$).

Table 19. Differences in Extent of SDG Integration by Position

Position	n	Not Integrated f (%)	Partially Integrated f (%)	Fully Integrated f (%)	M	Mean Rank
Punong Barangay	44	2 (4.5%)	24 (54.5%)	18 (40.9%)	2.364	309.205
Barangay Kagawad	321	31 (9.7%)	220 (68.5%)	70 (21.8%)	2.121	254.358
Barangay Admin. Staff	150	14 (9.3%)	106 (70.7%)	30 (20.0%)	2.107	250.773
Overall	515	47 (9.1%)	350 (68.0%)	118 (22.9%)	2.14	—
Kruskal-Wallis H Test			H = 8.548	df = 2	p = .014*	Sig.

Table 20. Dunn's Post-Hoc Pairwise Comparisons — Extent of SDG Integration (Bonferroni-corrected)

Comparison	Adj. p (Bonferroni)	Significant?	Interpretation
Punong Barangay vs. Barangay Kagawad	0.016	Yes *	PB > Kagawad
Punong Barangay vs. Admin. Staff	0.016	Yes *	PB > Admin Staff
Barangay Kagawad vs. Admin. Staff	1	No	No significant difference

Note. Dunn's test with Bonferroni correction. PB = Punong Barangay. *Adjusted $p < .05$.

The Kruskal-Wallis H Test revealed a statistically significant difference in the extent of SDG integration across the three position groups ($H = 8.548$, $df = 2$, $p = .014$). This means that how fully barangay officials perceive the SDGs to be integrated into their policies and programs is not the same across all

positions, that is the extent of integration varies depending on the role a person holds in the barangay.

Looking at the distribution of responses, a clear pattern is observed: Punong Barangay officials reported the highest rate of full integration, with 40.9% indicating that the SDGs are fully integrated into their barangay operations. This is notably higher compared to Barangay Kagawad (21.8%) and Barangay Administrative Staff (20.0%), where most respondents, 68.5% and 70.7% respectively, reported only partial integration. Across all three groups, the average response was Partially Integrated, indicating that full SDG is not yet the common experience at the barangay level.

Dunn's post-hoc test with Bonferroni correction further identified which specific position pairs drove the overall significant result. The Punong Barangay group differed significantly from both the Barangay Kagawad (Adj. $p = .016$) and Barangay Administrative Staff (Adj. $p = .016$), while no significant difference was found between Kagawad and Administrative Staff (Adj. $p = 1.000$). This tells us that the difference in SDG integration is specifically between the Punong Barangay and the two other groups, not between Kagawad and Administrative Staff, who report similar levels of integration.

This finding is consistent with what would be expected given the nature of each role. The Punong Barangay, as the chief executive of the barangay, has the most power to incorporate SDG principles into barangay plans, programs, and activities. They are the ones who approve the Annual Investment Plan, chair the Barangay Development Council, and coordinate directly with higher-level government agencies, all of which are entry points for SDG integration. On the other hand, Kagawad members and Administrative Staff have more limited roles and responsibilities, which may be why they see SDG integration as less complete in their daily work. The results suggest that SDG integration at the barangay level is mostly driven by those in leadership positions, and that Kagawad members and Administrative Staff may need more specific and targeted programs to help them incorporate SDG principles into their own roles and duties.

SUMMARY

The study examined the socio-demographic profile, awareness, and integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) in Iligan City. The findings show that the majority of respondents were Barangay Kagawads, followed by administrative staff and a smaller proportion of Punong Barangays, with minimal representation from community-based and indigenous groups. This distribution highlights the strong presence of elected and administrative officials in local governance, but also points to limited inclusivity of other stakeholders.

In terms of awareness, most respondents reported being aware of the SDGs; however, this awareness is generally moderate and lacks depth. While goals related to education, health, and governance were more widely recognized, those associated with environmental sustainability, energy, and infrastructure received lower levels of awareness. Overall, respondents demonstrated only slight to moderate familiarity with the SDGs, suggesting

that although the concept has reached the local level, it has not yet been fully internalized or translated into practical understanding and implementation.

The integration of SDGs into BLGU policies, plans, and programs was found to be largely partial. While some barangays have successfully incorporated SDG principles, the majority are still in the early stages of implementation. Development priorities are heavily focused on social goals such as health, education, poverty reduction, and gender equality, whereas environmental and partnership-oriented goals are less emphasized. This indicates an imbalance in how the SDGs are localized within barangay development planning.

The analysis further revealed a positive but relatively weak relationship between awareness and integration, indicating that higher awareness contributes to better incorporation of SDGs, but is not sufficient on its own to ensure full implementation. Several barriers continue to hinder effective alignment with the SDGs, including lack of awareness and understanding, limited financial resources, weak coordination between national and local plans, and insufficient technical capacity.

To address these challenges, BLGUs have primarily implemented capacity-building and training programs, along with efforts to mobilize resources, strengthen partnerships, and improve data systems. These strategies are generally perceived as effective, although gaps remain in monitoring and evaluation practices, particularly in the use of performance indicators and external assessments.

Lastly, while no significant overall differences were found across position groups in terms of awareness and integration, some variations emerged at the individual SDG level. Punong Barangays tend to exhibit higher levels of awareness and integration in certain areas due to their executive roles, while administrative staff show lower levels of involvement, reflecting differences in authority and responsibilities.

Overall, the findings suggest that although awareness of the SDGs is relatively widespread among BLGUs in Iligan City, it remains moderate and uneven, and integration into local governance is still incomplete. Strengthening capacity-building initiatives, enhancing coordination, and promoting inclusive participation are essential to achieving more effective and comprehensive localization of the SDGs.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is not a static administrative mandate but a dynamic governance ecosystem where the identity and capacity of leadership shape the direction and depth of policy outcomes. Grounded in the socio-demographic profile of Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) officials, the study reveals that while Barangay Kagawads and administrative staff effectively drive legislative and programmatic processes, the “leave no one behind” principle remains vulnerable due to the underrepresentation of indigenous and community-based voices. This imbalance influences both the inclusivity of governance and the prioritization of development agendas.

The findings further demonstrate that SDG awareness among local officials is generally moderate and uneven across the 17 goals. While social development goals such as education and health are more widely recognized, technical, environmental, and systemic transformation goals receive less attention. This creates an “awareness-action gap,” where general familiarity does not necessarily translate into deep understanding or effective localization. Consequently, a “partial integration trap” emerges, wherein a significant proportion of SDGs are acknowledged but not fully institutionalized in barangay development plans, with implementation efforts skewed toward visible and traditional sectors.

Using Spearman’s correlation, the study establishes that awareness plays a crucial role in shaping policy integration and governance practices. However, awareness alone is insufficient to drive comprehensive localization. Structural factors including leadership authority, institutional capacity, resource availability, and access to diverse information sources significantly influence the extent to which SDGs are operationalized. The reliance on government-centered information and limited stakeholder engagement further constrains the breadth and depth of implementation.

To overcome these limitations, the study highlights the need for a deliberate and sustained feedback loop of strategic interventions. Strengthening capacity-building programs, enhancing data-driven monitoring systems, and promoting inclusive, multi-stakeholder participation are essential to transforming partial efforts into full institutionalization. By fostering a self-correcting cycle of learning, adaptation, and implementation, BLGUs can progressively align local governance practices with the broader aspirations of the 2030 Agenda.

The success of SDG localization depends on this cyclical process: who governs shapes what is understood, and what is understood determines how effectively goals are achieved. By addressing gaps in awareness, inclusivity, and institutional capacity, local governments can move beyond compliance toward inclusive and sustainable development outcomes.

SDG Localization at the BLGU Level

The findings indicate a moderate level of SDG awareness among BLGU officials in Iligan City, with stronger familiarity in social goals (e.g., SDGs 1, 3, and 4) and limited understanding of environmental and systemic goals (e.g., SDGs 12, 14, and 17). This uneven awareness constrains the effective mainstreaming of the SDGs in local governance.

To address this, several interrelated strategies are proposed. First, institutionalizing sustained and role-specific capacity-building programs is essential to embed SDG principles—such as interconnectivity, equity, and inclusivity—into governance practices. Second, the development of a localized communication strategy using vernacular language and context-sensitive materials can enhance comprehension and public engagement. Third, integrating SDG frameworks into local planning instruments (e.g., BDPs and CDPs) ensures alignment across planning, budgeting, and monitoring processes through the use of SDG-based indicators. Fourth, strengthening multi-stakeholder participation by engaging civil society, academia,

Indigenous Peoples, and youth groups promotes inclusive and participatory governance. Finally, enhancing local data systems and analytics capacities supports evidence-based decision-making, particularly for complex goals such as climate action and institutional governance.

Overall, effective SDG mainstreaming requires transitioning from awareness to institutionalization through capacity development, policy integration, stakeholder engagement, and data-driven governance.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) localization through theoretical, policy, and methodological insights grounded in a quantitative approach. Theoretically, it advances understanding of SDG localization by emphasizing institutional awareness as a critical precursor to effective mainstreaming in decentralized governance systems. It reinforces the view that awareness is not merely an outcome of policy dissemination but a necessary condition that shapes the extent to which global development frameworks are translated into local action.

From a policy perspective, the study provides empirical baseline data on SDG awareness among LGU and BLGU officials in Iligan City. These findings serve as a practical reference for designing targeted capacity-building programs, strengthening localized communication strategies, and facilitating the integration of SDGs into local development planning instruments. By identifying specific areas of uneven awareness, the study supports the formulation of differentiated and evidence-based localization interventions.

Methodologically, the study contributes a quantitative framework for assessing SDG awareness at the barangay level, an administrative unit that remains underrepresented in SDG research. Through the use of structured survey instruments and statistical analysis, it offers a replicable approach for measuring local governance readiness and benchmarking SDG awareness in other decentralized contexts.

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Dr. Sison earned her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, major in Business Economics, and both her Master of Sustainable Development and Doctor of Philosophy in Sustainable Development Studies, with specialization in Economic Development. Her research interests encompass the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), sustainable local economic development, ecotourism and sustainable tourism, solid waste management and circular economy initiatives, Gender and Development (GAD), human rights and public policy, community resilience, governance, strategic foresight, and futures thinking. Her work emphasizes translating interdisciplinary research into innovative, evidence-based policy solutions that contribute to sustainable, inclusive, and resilient communities.

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