SEDP-SIMBAG SA PAG-ASENSO, INC.
(A Microfinance NGO)

Bringing Back Center Meetings

2025 Microfinance Operations Summit
June 10-11, 2025

Sheraton Manila Bay

ABOUT US

Established in 1994, the SEDP–Simbag sa Pag-Asenso Inc. (A Microfinance NGO), also known as Simbag Microfinance is a development-oriented institution under the Diocese of Legazpi.

Started as a program of the Social Action Center and spanned-off as a separate entity and was registered in SEC in 2004.

This year, Simbag is on its 31st year of operation.

Where we are now?

- Present in 6 Provinces of the Bicol Region & in Northern Samar
- 10 branches covering 35 Satellite Parish Outreaches
- Serving 98,389 clients as of May 2025
- Portfolio 876Mn as of May 2025
- PAR Rate 4%

#KitaAnSimbag

31 years of simbag

OUR VISION

A dynamic and pro-active development institution of the Diocese of Legazpi committed to the total advancement of the entrepreneurial poor.

OUR MISSION

The SEDP - Simbag sa Pag-Asenso, Inc. commits to deliver financial & non-financial services with training and formation to micro-entrepreneurial families towards improved socio-economic condition, political empowerment and enhanced spiritual well-being.

How Meetings Are Conducted

Schedule
Center Meetings are conducted Weekly

Venue
Chapel, Barangay Hall, Members' residence, Center House

Duration
Meeting time allocation is 1 hour from Mondays to Thursdays

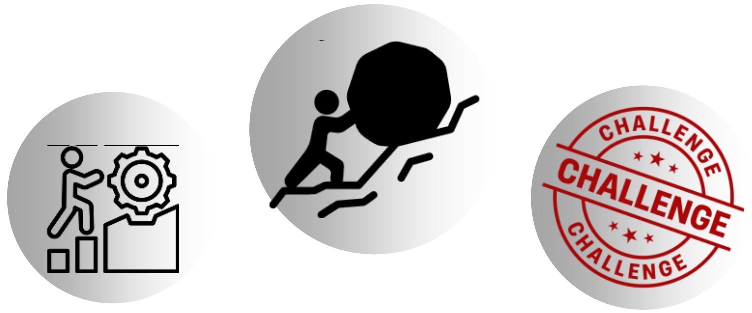
Flow
15 minutes community prayer; 45 minutes- collection, loan & savings transaction

In-Charge/Actors
CDW
Center Chief
Center Secretary
Center Treasurer
Formation Coord
Training Coord
Education Coord

Advantages of Meetings

- Maintaining high repayment rate
- Building social and skills development
- Ensuring transparency on loans & savings transactions
- Facilitating discussion on products and policy updates
- Providing venue for members' interaction and bonding
- Strengthening Christian Faith & Values
- Facilitating delivery of other services- (Health Educ, FinLit, DRRM)
- Encouraging peer support
- Encouraging church and community participation
- Monitoring individual and group performance as basis requirement for Value Added Services

Issues and Challenges



Prolonged Center Meetings

Prolonged meetings are caused by delayed payments of some members. The group are held accountable of their co- members

Demand for Incentives from Center Officers

Center Officers demand for incentive because of their participation and roles during center meetings specifically to some center officers receiving monetary incentives in other MFIs.

Pandemic Effect/Declining Attendance Rate

The decline in attendance performance impacted the provision of Value-Added Services that requires higher attendance rate for members and centers

Demand for "Pay & Go System"

The members prioritizes convenience over community participation- due to household and business demand for time and as experience/policy in other MFIs

Increasing Number of "Dormant & Idle" Members (29%)

The conflict in some members' activities consider attendance to center meetings as burden and preferred not to apply for loan and rather retain membership in insurance services.

LESSONS LEARNED

Center meeting is not just operational necessities—it is a strategic community-building and transformation opportunity. Recognizing and addressing the challenges behind each benefit will allow Simbag to design more impactful meeting structures.

External factors can financially strain operations

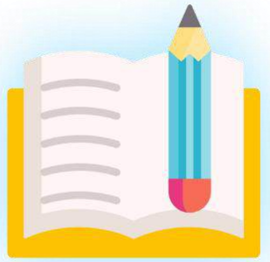
- There's a need for advocacy, partnerships, and active engagement

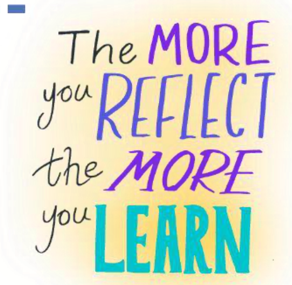
Demand for Incentives from Center Officers

- Members value their roles and expect recognition. There's a need to develop a clear, fair, and incentive system other than the existing provision on Value Added Services

Pandemic Effect / Declining Attendance Rate

- External crises significantly affect attendance and program delivery. There's a need to adopt flexible and hybrid approaches





"Pay and Go" System Demand

- Some members prioritize convenience over center participation.
- Attendance requirements may not always match members' availability.
- This shows the need for more flexible attendance policies and alternative participation mechanism.

Dormant & Idle Members (29%)

- Members who stay only for insurance services but no longer borrow loans may feel disengaged and totally resign from Simbag and replacement is costly.
- There's a need to segment members according to interest and design targeted re-engagement or alternative options.

Next Steps

Simbag Microfinance recently conducted a study on its lending methodology, center meeting structure, incentives for center officers, and related policies in response to recurring issues and concerns—many of which are closely aligned with the agenda of this Microfinance Operations Summit.

Simbag remains open to exploring new opportunities that will strengthen its connection with members and enhance their overall experience.

Moving forward, Simbag Management will endorse to result of the study and seek approval of the BOT:

- **Piloting of a graduation model for lending scheme, center meeting structure and meeting flow.**
- **Changing the center officers' structure, roles and responsibilities**
- **Flexible policies on attendance and alternative participation models without sacrificing the group/center cohesion**
- **Continues provision of incentives that aligns with the Simbag mission-recognition, training opportunities**

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Thank You

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