

Critical Review of Selected Government and Non-Government Programs for Street Children in Davao City

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Abstract

The study focuses on the review of the various programs and projects for street children in Davao City undertaken by selected government and non-government organizations. It analyzes the programs and categorized them as economic and livelihood, education, and environment. The author went on to examine the problems encountered by the selected GO and NGOs in the course of the implementation of these programs. The analysis on the programs and projects and the problems encountered were based on the responses provided by the staff members of these organizations and subsequently validated from the interview conducted with the children-client of the organizations. The information gathered on the programs and the problems encountered then served as basis in outlining potential programs and projects that the Rizal Memorial Colleges (RMC) Community Extension Services (CES) may pursue for street children.

Keywords: *government and non-government organizations, programs and projects, street children, source of funds, Community Extension Services (CES)*

Introduction

In nearly all big cities around the world, the phenomenon of street children is one of the contemporary social issues. During past several decades, there is an increase in the volume of street children phenomenon around the world (Afshani, et.al., 2013).

Millions of children throughout the world live on the street. These children are among the most deprived; they usually have no access to health care or education and some of them have been victims of violence even before taking to the street. Street children are seen by many as worthless, and many countries have used violent and punitive measures to remove them (Scnalon, et. al, 1998).

By reason of the vulnerability of these groups of children, several governments and non-government organizations have designed and implemented programs and projects directed to alleviate the plight of the less-fortunate children. For instance, the UNICEF announced in its website that a total of \$1.15 billion has been earmarked by the World Bank Group, UNICEF, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Government of Norway over the next three years to fund programs and projects for children and women.

In the Philippines, one of the more familiar group of vulnerable children remains to be the street children. The estimated number of street children based on 1998 data as reported in the streetchildren-philippines website is at 1.5 million. The number could actually increase as the population of the Philippines increases.

Programs for street children in the Philippines are also being implemented by both government and non-government organizations. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) for instance is in the forefront of providing services to street children. NGOs such as Save the Children, Childhope-Asia Philippines (CHAP), Child Justice League, Inc. (CJL). Even academic institutions like Ateneo Human Rights Centre-Child Rights Unit (AHRC-AKAP) are also implementing programs that help street children.

Rizal Memorial Colleges (RMC) is one of the academic institutions in Davao City that creates programs for street children through its Community Extension Services (CES). However, it also acknowledges that there is a need to design programs and projects that are proven to be effective based on the experiences of other organizations providing services to street children.

It is in this regard that a benchmarking study that will look at the various experiences, problems in implementation, and other key information is in order. Thus, this study.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed at looking into the activities/programs of the government and non-government organizations in Davao City as basis of Rizal Memorial Colleges in designing a community extension services that will benefit the street children in the city. More specifically, the following sub-problems were considered:

1. What are the programs that focused on the benefits of the street children of the selected government and non-government organizations in Davao City and the respective sources of funds?
2. What are the problems encountered by the selected government and non-government organizations in the implementation of programs for street children?
3. What are the possible programs and projects that can be adopted by RMC CES that will address concerns for street children?

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

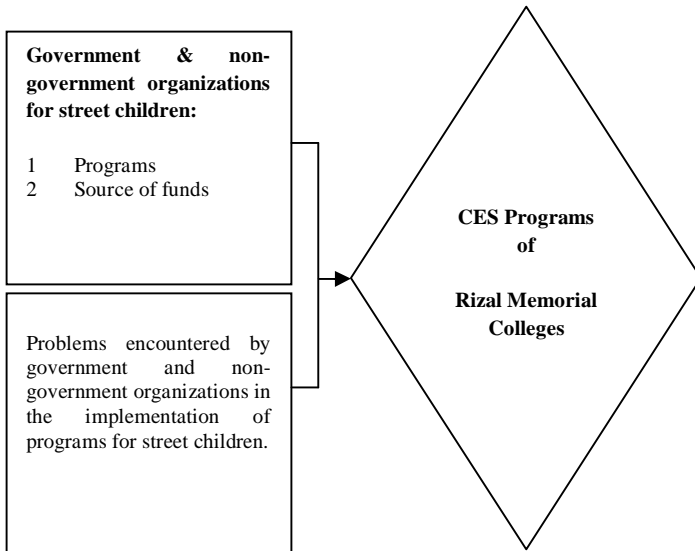
The study is inspired by the propositions of Lillemyr et.al cited by Taylor and Woods, (2005) that “each child is a unique human being with societal rights.” By this statement, it is clear that approaching individual issues and concerns of children must be designed to address the uniqueness of each individual child.

The study also considers the thoughts of Santrock, (2005), who stated that “children should be protected from all forms of maltreatment by parents and others: in cases of abuse and neglect, the government is obligated to undertake preventive and treatment programs.” Santrock, further, stressed that “children have the right to receive special protection and assistance from the government when deprived of family support and to be provided with alternative care.”

Adopting the foregoing submissions, the study pursues an analysis of the theories in the light of the need to develop responsive and effective programs and projects for every Filipino street child mindful of the peculiar characteristics of each one. This is done as an acceptance to the truism that children indeed have the right to be protected and that it is the society’s responsibility to ensure that these rights are protected.

According to Starck (2000), duties of protection are duties of the state to protect certain legal interests of its citizens. They cover the interests of life, health, freedom and property and also protect some other interests and certain constitutionally recognised institutions. State duties of protection must be considered in connection with fundamental rights.

The analysis made by John Wade, Superintendent of Schools in New York, that problems about street children and juvenile delinquency is due to several causes is also relevant. Among the causes he identified are as follows: 1) homes with absentee parents who work; 2) broken homes; 3) failure of parents to make the home the center of child's interest away from school; 4) poor housing facilities; 5) insufficient medical care; and 6) failure of parents to give religious instruction.



Methodology

The study is a qualitative assessment of the programs and projects of selected GO and NGOs in Davao City supporting street children.

According to Bustreo, et. al. (2003), the private sector exerts a significant and critical influence on child health outcomes in developing countries, including the health of poor children. Thus, there is a need likewise to consider the

perspective of provision of services from the standpoint of the government, as well as, the private sector.

The study has previously identified government and non-government organizations operating in Davao City which will be the subject of an assessment of their programs and projects for street children. The identified organizations are selected randomly based on a list of GO and NGOs known for their programs for children. The government organization included in this study is the Bahay Pasilungan- Pag-asa Home for the Girls. The NGOs considered are Tulayko Association, Inc., Tambayan Center for Children's Rights, Inc., and San Lorenzo Ruiz Foundation.

In gathering the data, the staff members of the selected government and non-government organizations were interviewed about their programs which are directed towards helping the street children, particularly in Davao City. To validate the answers of the office staff, a separate interview was conducted to the 30 children under their care. Questions asked were from the questionnaires which were translated into vernacular for better understanding of the respondent children.

The programs and projects implemented by the selected organizations are then categorized based on the following: a) economic and livelihood; b) education; and c) environment.

After the identification of programs, staff members were also asked to identify problems encountered in the implementation of programs and projects. The responses were then categorized in terms of the following: a) behavior of the children; b) lack of manpower; c) lack of cooperation among the staff; and d) funding.

Finally, staff members were also asked to identify the various sources of funds for their respective programs and projects. The sources of funds are categorized as follows: a) local government only; b) local and national government; c) local, national, and foreign government; and d) foreign government only.

The responses are then processed to serve as basis in arriving at recommendation for RMC's Community Extension Services (CES) program for street children.

Results and Discussions

Table 1 shows the advocacy programs of the government and non-government organizations that focused on helping street children. The findings revealed that the selected government and non-government organizations had nine (9) programs geared at developing the potentials of the children.

Of the nine programs, five (5) are for livelihood; two (2) deal on environmental awareness; and the other two (2) are on scholarships and giving free school supplies.

The Tulayko Association, Inc. has conducted an overall of five programs focusing on livelihood and education programs. More specifically, three programs for livelihood like piggery, tableya (cacao)-making and accessories-making and two education programs by giving scholarships and free school supplies to the street children.

On the other hand, Tambayan for Children's Rights, Inc., is conducting broom-making for livelihood and two environmental awareness programs like tree planting and street cleaning. In the same way, the Bahay Pasilungan- Pag-asa Home for Girls is providing services like rag-making, tree planting and street cleaning. Nevertheless, the San Lorenzo Ruiz Foundation put more focused on education programs by providing scholarship and school supplies to qualified children.

Table 1:
Advocacy Programs of the Government and Non-Government
Offices

Government/Non-Government Office	Livelihood					Education/Economic		Environmental Awareness	
	Piggy	Tableya/Cacao-making	Accessories-making	Broom-making	Rag-making	Scholarship	Free School Supplies	Tree Planting	Street Cleaning
Tulayko Association, Inc.	x	x	x			x	x		
Tambayan Center for Children's Rights, Inc.				x				x	X
Bahay Pasilungan-Pag-asa Home for the Girls and San Lorenzo Ruiz Foundation					x			x	X
San Lorenzo Ruiz Foundation						x	x		

Table 2 shows the data gathered corresponding to the sources of funds of the organizations. The results reveal that Tulayko Association Inc. derives its funding for the projects exclusively from foreign government whereas the Tambayan for Children's Rights Inc. acquired their sources from both national and local government. On the other hand, the Bahay Pasilungan- Pag-asa Home for Girls and San Lorenzo Ruiz Foundation are relying solely on funding from local government.

Table 2:
Sources of Funds

Organizations	Local Government only	Local & National Government	Local, National & Foreign Government	Foreign Government
Tulayko Asso., Inc.				X
Tambayan Center for Children's Rights		x		
Bahay Pasingan-Pag-asa Home for the Girls	x			
San Lorenzo Ruiz Foundation	x			

Table 3 has shown that the four organizations experienced problems on the behavior of the children such as being not cooperative on their activities. Meanwhile, the lack of manpower is the common difficulty of San Lorenzo Ruiz Foundation and Tambayan Center for Children's Rights. Moreover, the lack of cooperation among staff members has become a problem of Tulayko Association Inc. and Tambayan Center for Children's Rights. Furthermore, all organizations experienced shortage of funds except Tulayko Association Inc. since they have stable foreign funding.

Table 3:
Problems Encountered by the Government and Non-Government Offices

Organizations	Behavior of the children	Lack of manpower	Lack of cooperation among staff members	Shortage of funds
Tulayko Asso. Inc.	x		x	
Tambayan Center for Children's Rights, Inc.	x	x	x	X
Bahay Pasilungan - Pag-asa Home for the Girls	x			X
San Lorenzo Ruiz Foundation	x	x		X

Having gathered the above information based on qualitative assessment, the following may be considered as programs and projects for street children that may be pursued by the RMC CES:

1. Since many of the organizations focused on livelihood and economic projects, as well as, education and literacy programs, RMC CES may direct its effort in terms of values formations to complement the existing efforts of other organizations. The value formation program will prepare street children to become responsible and productive citizens in the future.
2. If resources of the college will warrant, it will also be desirable to approach the problem of street children by strengthening capacity of parents to be able to perform their parental obligation. Economic and livelihood support for parents of street children shall be considered.
3. Given the mandate of the college in education, it is only fitting that the college shall consider extending scholarship grants and/or tuition subsidy to deserving street children.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Both government and non-government organizations are abound in terms of programs and projects for street children. The study showed that majority of the services provided to street children are economic and livelihood in nature.

In the course of the implementation of these programs, the study also gathered that the problems encountered by these organizations mostly pertain to dealing with the diverse behavior of street children. Majority also mentioned funding to be a major challenge for these organizations. The lack of funds may also be said to have resulted into problems of manpower or the lack of it.

It also appears that the organizations are mostly relying on local and national government sources for funding. Only one organization has support from foreign government. Such result underscores the need for these organizations to be more aggressive in terms of resource mobilization in order to sustain their operation.

With respect to the nature of the programs that RMC CES may pursue, it will be necessary that these have to be designed carefully mindful of the individual and collective concerns of the street children. The preparatory work on these program designs may be commenced soon.

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