

# **INVENTORY OF LOCAL POLICIES IN RELATION TO CHILD TRAFFICKING, COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN, CHILD LABOR AND ECONOMIC EXCLUSION OF YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS**

**FINAL RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED BY  
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**TO THE PAMBANSANG KOALISYON NG KABABAIHAN SA KANAYUNAN (PKKK)  
AS PART OF THE GIRLS ADVOCACY ALLIANCE (GAA) PROJECT  
DECEMBER 11, 2017**



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# **CHAPTER I**

## **RESEARCH, BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES**

## THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN : GLOBAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT<sup>1</sup>

### Child Poverty and Child Protection

The eradication of poverty in all its forms everywhere is the first goal identified in the sustainable development goals (UN, 2015). Globally, it is estimated that 836 million people still live in extreme poverty and about one in five persons in developing countries lives on less than \$1.25 per day (UN, 2015). The alarming fact is that children are just one third of the global population and yet they represent half of the poor. Some 387 million, or 19.5% of the children in the world are reported to be living in extreme poverty compared to just 9.2% of adults (UNICEF, 2016).

In the Philippines, poverty and inequality are phenomena that tend to persist because of factors in the social, political, economic and historical contexts of the country (Yu, 2013 as cited by Roche, 2017). Among the most vulnerable sectors in Philippine society is the children sector. Children comprise 43.3 percent or 38.2 million - almost half - of the country's population. Based on a study conducted by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) on the poverty and well-being of children in the Philippines in 2009, there is an estimated 40.8 percent or 14.9 million Filipino children who live in poverty (cited in the CPCP 2012-2017). To further illustrate child poverty, the Philippine Statistical Authority (PSA) and the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), as mentioned by Steven Roche (2017) made a report that contained data on multiple indicators of child poverty in the Philippines.

As of 2009, approximately 13.4 million or 36 percent of children below 18 were "income poor". Income poor children are children of families that did not meet their minimum basic needs and had an income that fell below the poverty threshold of USD 355 or approximately Php17,000 per person (PSA and UNICEF, 2015 as cited by Roche, 2017). It was found out that poverty incidence among children was higher in the rural areas having three out of four children as income poor and 5.9 children living below the poverty line. Still part of the findings showed that one out of five children between the age of zero and five is underweight (PSA and UNICEF, 2015, as cited by Roche, 2017). The other indicators were access to electricity and safe sources of water; children living in informal settlements, which is in effect a form of shelter deprivation and an indicator of insecure tenancy; lack of infrastructure and basic services; and an environment of overlapping deprivations and social problems, all of which comprised the landscape of child poverty in the Philippines.

This poverty situation of children has impacted on children's education as well, with a reported 1.46 million primary school aged children who are out of school, the highest number worldwide (PSA and UNICEF as cited by Roche, 2017). "Poverty denies children their fundamental human rights. Severe or extreme poverty can cause children permanent damage – both physically and mentally – stunt and distort their development and destroy opportunities of fulfillment, including the roles they are expected to play successively as they get older in family, community and society" (Gordon et al, 2003).

Beyond these poverty situations of Filipino children based on income, basic needs, health, education and access to basic infrastructures like electricity and water, a significant number of children are at risk of, vulnerable to and are victims of different forms of violence, abuse and exploitation. They are

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1 Written by Florence F. Pasos

the ones who are primarily affected by poverty and its concomitant problems and therefore need special protection. A study on the global situation of children identified five (5) pillars of child well-being, namely: nutrition, health, child protection, education and social protection (PIDS, 2009). Child protection against violence, abuse and exploitation therefore are equally important issues to give attention to because they significantly affect the child's well being.

### **Violence Against Children and the Children in Need of Special Protection (CNSP)**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines violence against children as “all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.” Violence against children, according to a study conducted by UNICEF and the Council for the Welfare of Children (2016) is a global problem that is experienced by many countries. Across the world, children are at risk of and are exposed to violence at different levels of their existence and relationships: in the home, school, community, institutions, workplace and other settings. The forms of violence include “physical, emotional, sexual exploitation and abuse as well as neglect” (UNICEF/CWC, 2016). “New/emerging forms of violence include online exploitation, where easy access to internet and the hidden nature of crimes committed in cyberspace leave children particularly vulnerable” (UNICEF/CWC, 2016).

The comprehensive program on child protection (2012-2016) under the Department of Justice (DOJ) identified several sectors of children who are in need of special protection. They are the working children or child laborers, who are estimated to be at 5.5 million with 2.9 million working in hazardous conditions (NSO/PSA, 2011); the children in conflict with the law with 18,277 recorded cases from 2006 to 2011; children living in the streets with 246,000; child victims of violence, physical and sexual abuse with an estimated 8,000 cases; children affected by armed conflict and displacement totaling 50,000 displaced annually; children affected by disasters with 190,000 displaced annually; children left behind by Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) parents; children with disabilities estimated at 192,000; trafficked children; children with HIV/AIDS; children victims of commercial sexual exploitation who are estimated at 60,000 to 100,000; children and young people in drugs and substance abuse estimated to be at 3.4 million; unregistered children estimated at 2.6 million; and children belonging to minorities and groups with a total of 5.7 million.

These children require special attention and protection because of their situations that compromise their safety, morals and affect their health and education, among others. They are robbed of their childhood and “suffer lifelong developmental challenges, as a result of violence” (UNICEF/CWC, 2016). Among the effects of violence on children are mental and physical health disorders that include anxiety, depression, cardiovascular disease and health-risk behaviors “including smoking, alcoholism, drug abuse and engagement in high risk sexual activity” (UNICEF/CWC, 2016). This could be devastating to the child in a sense that it creates lasting psychological effects apart from the physical pain and suffering. The victims may become perpetrators of violence themselves because of their experiences. This threaten society and waste resources of social services, if not properly addressed (UNICEF/CWC, 2016).

### **Child Labor, Child Trafficking, and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)**

Child labor, trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) are three interrelated issues of children. As mentioned earlier, there are 5.5 million working children, ages 5-17 years in the country of which almost 3 million are in hazardous work based on a national survey conducted by the

Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) in 2011. This showed a 35% increase from 4.1 million in 2001. The number of children in hazardous work showed a 25% increase from 2.4 million in 2001. Child labor is defined by law as “any form of work or economic activity performed by a child that subjects him or her to exploitation, or is harmful to health and safety, physical and mental or psychosocial development” (RA 2003). The International Labor Organization (ILO) defines child labor as “work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity”. “Over sixty percent (62.4%) of working children were found in agriculture and 30% were found in the service sector. Based on the 2011 survey, “more boys were engaged in agriculture while more girls were involved in services. In terms of geographic location, the highest number of child labor was found in Central Luzon (10.6%), Bicol Region (10.2%), Western Visayas (8.5%), Northern Mindanao (8.2%), and Central Visayas (7.3%)” (CPCP, 2012-2016). The worst forms of child labor, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO), are children working underwater, at dangerous heights, in unhealthy environment, for long hours and even during the night, as well as exposing them to physical, emotional and sexual abuse. The National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) has identified six (6) concrete worst forms of child labor in the Philippines, namely, children working in sugarcane plantations, in pyrotechnics, in deep sea fishing, in domestic work, in mining and in prostitution or commercial sexual exploitation (ABK, 2011).

With regard to trafficking, a study conducted by the End Child Prostitution and Trafficking (ECPAT) showed that children who become victims of trafficking are “predominantly girls whose ages range from 14 to 17 years old”. They are usually lured by offers of jobs in households, restaurants, factories, and entertainment agencies only to end up as sex slaves”. As reported by ECPAT, “there were cases of children who were trafficked both for sexual purposes and for labor – storekeepers at daytime and sexual slaves at night time.” “Cross- border trafficking is also a growing phenomenon involving children. Many of the children being recruited from different parts of the Philippines are transported to other countries. Japan, Malaysia, Korea and Saudi Arabia, among others, have been identified as off-shore destinations of child trafficking victims from the Philippines” (CPCP 2012-2016).

CSEC, according to a study conducted by the Partners in Research and Community Organization (PARTCO) as commissioned by UNICEF in 1999, is a by-product of political, economic, and socio-cultural dynamics. According to the study, “the dominance of one group over another, by reason of age, sex or socio-economic class, has contributed to the growth of CSEC”. It further said that poverty remains to be the major reason for CSEC, resulting into other cases like “outmigration, breakdown of family and community values” including the influence of materialism and consumerism. With the rapid technological advancement and the presence of social media, a new and more convenient way of engaging children in sexual transactions known as cybersex and online child abuse is emerging. The influx of foreign travelers to the Philippines, including child sex predators because of its tourism campaign cause more children to be lured into prostitution. Out of the Philippine population of 102 million, some 40% are using the internet (terresdeshommes.nl).

Trafficking, prostitution, pornography and drugs cases are difficult to track and the actual or exact figures are hard to determine because these issues are not only “culturally and politically sensitive but are the results of illegal and clandestine operations of organized syndicates that make business out of children and young people locally, nationally and globally” (CPCP 2012-2016).

## **Girl Children**

Cutting across the Children in Need of Special Protection (CNSP) or vulnerable sectors of children are the girl children, whose rights are the same with the rest of the children, but there are many times

left behind because of “factors ranging from legal gaps, weak implementation of existing laws and cultural and social barriers” (Cabiles, Ibarra and Carreon). Gender related issues and discriminatory practices based on ethnicity, economic status, religion, disability, and other specific circumstances cause girl children to be marginalized (Cabiles, et al.). Amidst these marginalization and discrimination against girl children, there is an emerging compounding issue, the lack of attention given to girl children when it comes to planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of programs and services for children. Click (2015) identified nine (9) issues confronting girl children worldwide: access to education, employment opportunities, reproductive health and rights, maternal health, gender-based violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation, water and sanitation, and gender equality. Gender based violence was found to be significant based on its prevalence. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in three women experience physical or sexual violence throughout their lives. Ranging from rape, domestic abuse, sexual exploitation and trafficking to other types, gender-based violence affects their well-being and denies women and girl children the opportunity to live their lives to the fullest (Click, 2015).

## **GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY RESPONSES**

### **Child-Focused Program Plans and Frameworks**

The Philippines has an abundance of laws and policy resources when it comes to child protection and child rights (Madrid, Ramiro, Hernandez, Go, Basilio, PGH-CPU). Similarly, there is a wide array of national and local programs and inter-agency structures to implement laws protecting children (Madrid et al.). The Comprehensive Program on Child Protection (CPCP) covering the period 2012-2016 was led by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and concretized the 2nd National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) child protection plan that aimed to build a protective and caring environment for Filipino children who were at risk, disadvantaged and vulnerable to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. The CPCP was based on the provisions of RA 7610, the major Philippine law on child protection. The DOJ leads the National Child Protection Committee (NCPC), assisted by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) (CPCP, 2012). Although the program has to be updated starting 2017 to be in line with the 3rd NPAC 2017-2022, with the CWC and National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) as primary coordinating agencies, the presence of such program is an assurance by the Philippines government that Filipino children will be continuously protected from abuse, violence and exploitation.

The Philippine Program Against Child Labor (PPACL) is under the leadership of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and aimed for a child labor free Philippines by 2016 based on ILO Convention 182 (worst forms of child labor), ILO Convention 138 (minimum age for work) and RA 9231 (child labor law). The NCLC composed of government and non-government entities, also lodged at the DOLE, spearheaded the realization of the program through mainstreaming child labor related programs and services in their respective agencies’ programming. This program also needs to be evaluated and updated.

The Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography (IACACP) was created by virtue of the Anti-Child Pornography Law of 2009 (RA 9775). The IACACP has a response plan on online child pornography. The Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) was established by virtue of the Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act of 2003 (RA 9008) for the effective formulation of a comprehensive and integrated program to prevent and suppress trafficking in persons. The Philippines also has an Inter-Agency Council on Violence Against Women and Children based on the provisions of the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act of 2004 (RA 9262). Based on this law, every municipality shall establish a Women and Children’s Desk (WCD) to manage cases of violence involving women and their children. The Juvenile Justice Welfare Council (JJWC) was created by virtue of the Juvenile

Justice Welfare Act of 2006 (RA 9344). This act mandates all local government units to come up with programs and services under the principle of restorative justice for Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) through the establishment of *Bahay Pag-Asa*, a rehabilitation center for CICL.

There are other inter-agency councils, corresponding programs and plans that aim to respond to various child abuse, violence and exploitation issues in the country that concern children in need of special protection.

## **Child Rights Protection in the Philippines**

The Philippines' intention to protect the rights of Filipino children is enshrined in several legislative frameworks making it a country with an enabling legislative environment for the promotion and implementation of children's rights.

As early as 1935, the bill of rights of every Filipino citizen has been articulated in the country's constitution. To date, the 1987 Philippine Constitution contains a comprehensive bill of rights for all Filipinos that is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, a document that affirms every individual his/her rights everywhere. The rights of children in particular are firmly established in the Family Code and the Child and Youth Welfare Code or Presidential Decree (PD 603) of 1974, which "codifies laws on the rights of children and the corresponding sanctions for violations" (The Filipino Child, 2010).

With the Philippines' ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, the government deliberately reinforced its legislative and policy resources for children's rights. The country also became a signatory to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Optional Protocols on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography in 2002. The Civil Code, Revised Penal Code and the Labor Code contain also provisions towards child rights protection (CWC, 2009). The Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), the Philippines' lead agency that is tasked to coordinate the formulation, implementation, and enforcement of all policies, programs, and projects related to the survival, development, protection, and participation of children (The Filipino Child, 2010), cited in its report during the 20th anniversary of the CRC in the Philippines that the situation of children generally improved for the past 20 years particularly in the areas of health and nutrition. However, it lags behind in development and protection rights (CRC@20 CWC, November 20, 2009). The UNCRC in its observations in 2008 described the Philippines as "struggling to enforce laws that protect children" (CWC, 2012). The same conclusion can be found in the reviews made on the State of the Children Report of the CWC (CWC, 2012). In spite of substantial policies and programs developed to achieve the goals and targets for children challenges remain present. The challenges cited were the geographical nature of the country having 7,100 islands that makes service delivery difficult, the rapid population growth, increasing poverty and its concomitant social problems, and disasters that caused programs, services and budgets to be spread too thinly. (CWC, 2009)

## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (Child 21)

In 2000, the Philippine Strategic Framework for Children, also called “*Child 21*”, was drafted as a holistic approach to addressing the problems of Filipino children towards year 2025. The strategic framework aims to synchronize efforts of the family, community and the local and national government towards the fulfillment and protection of the rights of children (Child 21, 2000) . Child 21 envisions every child to be happy, curious, healthy, confident and developing his/her full potential by year 2025. Child 21 articulates that by 2025, Filipino children would have been:

- Born healthy and well with an inherent right to life, endowed with human dignity;
- Happy, loved and nurtured by a strong, stable and God-loving family;
- Living in a peaceful, progressive, gender-fair and child-friendly society;
- Growing safe in a healthy environment and ecology;
- Free and protected by a responsible and enabling government;
- Reaching his/her full potential with the right opportunities and accessible resources;
- Imbued with Filipino values steeped in his/her indigenous cultural heritage;
- Assertive of his/her rights as well as those of others; and
- Actively participating in decision-making and governance, in harmony
- and in solidarity with others in sustaining the Filipino nation.

### Child-Friendly Movement (CFM)

To facilitate the realization of Child 21, the Philippines launched its Child-Friendly Movement (CFM) in cooperation with United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). The main goal of CFM is to mainstream child rights in local development planning and to create a child-friendly policy environment at the local level which is the institutional level closest to the realities of communities and families. Subsequently, incentive mechanisms have been established by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) in collaboration with the Council for the Welfare of Children to encourage Local Government Unit (LGU) to be child friendly. Among these is the Presidential Award for Most Child friendly Cities and Municipalities that recognizes LGUs that are able to fulfill the indicators set under several categories:

The planning and policy formulation under which the four gifts for children are assessed, namely: Local Development Plan for Children (LDPC), Local Investment Plan for Children (LIPC), Situational Analysis for Children/Local State of Children/Updated Local Data on Children and Children’s Code or Local Code/Ordinances for children;

Resource allocation and utilization with the LGU providing funds, manpower, technology, etc., for children’s concerns from its own funds and also other funds and resources for children generated from external sources in particular civil society (local and international NGOs, business, civic organizations, professional and faith-based groups) through LGU efforts and from the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK).

Service delivery that entails programs, projects, activities and interventions geared towards the improvement of the condition of children. This has the highest percentage apportioned to the following items: Health and Nutrition; Education; and Special Protection;

Institution and capacity building that involves organizing and/or strengthening of local structures and special bodies (Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC), Local School Board (LSB), Local Health Board, Local Nutrition Committee, etc.) to respond to all relevant and urgent issues and concerns of children in their locality. It also includes significant activities undertaken to build and increase the capacity of individual stakeholders and decision makers (e.g., parents, service providers,

local partners, LSBs).

Child participation which refers to activities undertaken by the LGUs and local partners to include children's valuable and active participation in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of child-centered activities in the community and giving due recognition and appreciation of children's voices in the decision making process. This is not limited to the existence of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), but it also includes other children's organizations initiated by schools, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Peoples' Organizations (POs), communities, churches, civil organizations, etc., that are actively collaborating and working closely with the LGUs and partner organizations.

Community participation and resource mobilization which refers to activities undertaken by the LGU to encourage and elicit the sustained support and active participation of the community and other sectors (media, church, academe, business, NGOs/POs) as active and committed partners in the mobilization of resources, participatory implementation of programs and services including monitoring and evaluation, and in advocating for policies for children.

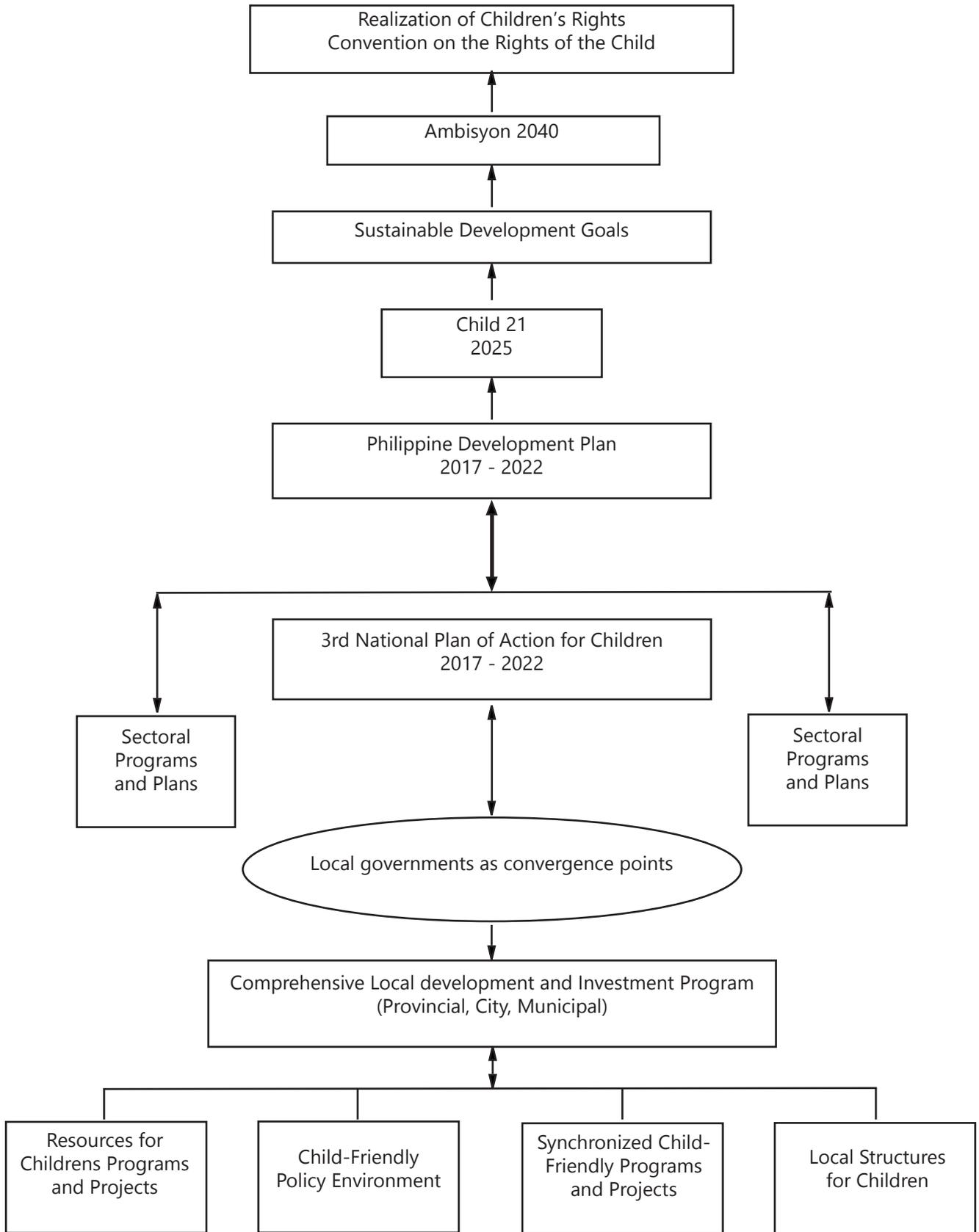
Another award, the Seal of Child friendly Local Governance, recognizes and rewards LGUs with positive results for children and institutes a mandatory audit system for measuring local governance performance in the delivery of positive results for children.

## **THE NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR CHILDREN)**

The 2nd NPAC had served as the anchor of efforts and initiatives made on children until 2016 (NPAC 2011-2016). With the long-term vision of Ambisyon Natin 2040 (Our Vision and Ambition 2040) and capitalizing on the gains of the 2nd NPAC, the 3rd NPAC covering 2017-2022 "concretizes the strategies, policies and programs for children into an action plan to achieve and realize the vision for the Filipino children progressively by 2025" (NPAC, 2017). It takes into consideration existing policy frameworks and child-related sector plans and is anchored on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UNCRC, the Philippine Development Plan and the Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children or Child 21, 2000-2025 (NPAC, 2017).

The 3rd NPAC includes the development of a "child poverty alleviation plan" through the collaboration of the CWC and the NAPC and has a research agenda with budget as one of its concerns. "The 3rd NPAC policy framework, as shown in Figure 1, illustrates the significant contributions of national sector plans that include children and those that articulate policies, programs and strategies that directly address children's rights to quality of life, survival and development, protection, non-discrimination and participation" (3rd NPAC).

Figure 1: The 3rd NPAC Policy Framework



## THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS

An important strategy in the CPCP 2 implementation is localization – getting local government units (LGUs) to translate the CPCP into local plans of action particularly at city, municipal and barangay levels. The assumption is that LGUs have critical roles to play in child protection in light of devolution of social services and in view of the fact that LGUs are much closer to the people at the grassroots. Moreover, local chief executives (LCEs) have the potential of becoming lead champions for and defenders of children in their respective jurisdictions.

Local government units (LGU) play a key role in the promotion and protection of the rights of children. (CRC@20 CWC, 2009). LGUs serve as convergence points in the transformation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) from a legal framework into development interventions such as child-friendly policies, institutions and programs. The Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 directs local governments to come up with their comprehensive local development and physical framework plan and investment program at the provincial, city and municipal levels. This includes resources for children’s programs and projects, child-friendly policy environment, local structures for children and synchronized child-friendly programs and projects.

To help LGUs link national and global frameworks with local government mandate and realities in relation to children’s rights, a training guide was developed in 2004 through the leadership of UNICEF, CWC and NEDA (Mainstreaming Child Rights in Local Development Planning, 2004). The training has three phases, spans more than four (4) months and is two-pronged: pre-workshop and plan adoption. Various local stakeholders are the target participants of the training that include all local department heads, local legislators in charge of women and children, youth representative, children sector representative, barangay captain representative, employment coordinators, the Technical Education and Skills Training Authority (TESDA), NGOs, faith-based and other relevant organizations. The guide has been enriched by the experience of 48 provincial, 33 cities and 47 municipal LGUs that adopted the season guide with the help of CWC, UNICEF and NEDA (Mainstreaming Child Rights in Local Development Planning, 2004). A report has yet to be available in terms of how this guide has actually influenced LGU officials into mainstreaming child rights in their local planning and program implementation.

### **The Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC)**

Article 87 of PD 603 mandates all LGUs to organize the Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) in coordination with the CWC. The LCPC’s role in sustaining national efforts particularly the localization of Child 21 is crucial. It then becomes the mechanism to synchronize and integrate policies, programs and projects for children in its respective locality and in the process make the locality “child-friendly” (The Filipino Child, 2010). The DILG, the national agency mandated to monitor the organization and functionality of the LCPC, issued memorandum circulars (MC) enjoining all local chief executives (LCE) to organize or reorganize provincial, city, municipal and barangay councils for the protection of children and take the lead in implementing programs for children.

A study commissioned by the CWC in 2012 on the establishment and functionality of LCPCs stated that based on the report of the National Barangay Operations Office (NBOO) of the DILG, as of 2010, LCPCs have been established in 69% of provinces (55/80), 83% of cities (114/138), 80% of municipalities (1,195/1496) and 84% of barangays (35,163/42,025). However, when it comes to functionality of the

local councils, only 61% of provinces, 68% of cities, 56% of municipalities and only 43% of barangays have been found to be categorized as “mature” and “ideal” (CWC, 2012). The levels of functionality of the LCPC are: Basic - 20% score and below; Progressive - 21-50%; Mature-51-79% and; Ideal - 80-100% (DILG). The other key findings supported the above results. The study found out that there is a serious lack of awareness, clarity and confusion on the MCs and on child rights and LCPC, as well as the intent and relationships among budgets and MCs. Moreover, there are LCPCs that are not really operating as “councils” and with activities that are not mainstreamed in the local developments for children. The key players in the LCPCs also have the tendency to look into the issues of children from the perspective of charity instead of rights and development. Another factor that affects the functionality of the LCPC is the lack of capacity and support from Local Chief Executives (LCE) that cause the backslide of initiatives, aggravated by the fast turn over of leadership among LCEs. Also, a number of LGUs showed lower levels of functionality than were reported and they could not show results with impact on children. Some respondents in the study said that local councils at the barangay do not receive feedback on their status and ratings. The study also found out that in certain areas there seem to be a lack of understanding of the correctness and focus of child rights and child-responsive governance (CWC, 2012).

The study expressed high hopes, however, that there is still a chance for LGUs to have functional LCPCs as evidenced by the achievements of the 547 LGUs that vied for the Presidential Award for Child Friendly Municipalities and Cities, particularly the 307 regional awardees and 38 national winners and Hall of Famer LCPC/LGUs over the last 14 years.

## ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

The Philippines has a vibrant civil society that works hand in hand with government in various and multi-faceted child protection issues and programs across the country. According to Curato (2015) as cited by Roche (2017), the Philippines has the largest number of civil society groups in the world. The role of NGOs on different issues of children has been very relevant in that some NGOs have been instrumental in the passage of certain children's laws and the implementation of different programs for children focused on prevention, rehabilitation, protection and reintegration mostly anchored on the UNCRC. Among the vibrant networks of NGOs is the Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK) or National Rural Women's Coalition which is starting to work on the welfare and protection of children particularly girl children. Its mission revolves around advancing the rural women's movement, advocating rural women's property rights, access and control, providing analysis on the issues related to the rural women's agenda, among others.

The PKKK is one of many local organizations (among them ECPAT Philippines, Philippines Against Child Trafficking, Children's Legal Bureau, The Share a Child Movement, Exodus from Child Labor to Integration, Play, Socialization and Education, Fellowship for Organizing Endeavors, and Bidsiliw Foundation, Inc.) working with Plan International and Terres de Hommes in implementing the Girls' Advocacy Alliance (GAA) Project from 2016-2020,

The Project aims to achieve the following four outcomes:

- Capable CSOs influencing government, private sector, and the public to address issues of girls, boys and young women's exclusion in education, and their discrimination on the labor market, sexual exploitation, and trafficking.
- Increased public support for economic independence of young women and increased public objection against the (sexual, commercial, socio-emotional or physical) abuse by those in a position of authority vis-a-vis girls, against gender discrimination more generally and false gender- stereotyping.
- Private sector increasingly contributes to reducing human trafficking and complies with labor standards and gender equality at the workplace and invests funds in education of vulnerable girls and Vocational Technical Education for young women.
- National government harmonizes legislation to prevent and respond to child trafficking, unsafe migration, and commercial sexual exploitation of children and the economic exclusion of girls. Local government increases response and protection.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

From the foregoing discussion providing the context of this research, it can be concluded that despite the poverty situations experienced by Filipino children particularly children in need of special protection, there is an enabling policy environment in the Philippines, a strategic framework and doable action plans that allow for the protection of the rights of every Filipino child. The country is a signatory to different international treaties on human rights including children's rights and has subsequently passed relevant laws and established national programs and structures that are meant to facilitate the promotion and protection of the rights of children. These laws and policies need to be cascaded to the local levels, at the grassroots level, where the actual situations of children can be seen and directly responded to. The role of the local government units is key as a matter of mandate. It is then deemed necessary to take a closer look into the operations of LGUs and assess how they have been mainstreaming child rights in their planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of children's programs and services. Specifically, there is a need to check the incidence of child labor, child trafficking and CSEC and economic exclusion of young women and girls as priority issues based on their magnitude and interrelatedness, with focus on girl children, who are usually left behind and discriminated upon.

This research, conducted by faculty and alumni of the University of the Philippines (UP) College of Social Work and Community Development (CSWCD) under the auspices of PKKK, is mainly intended to provide the knowledge base for conducting advocacy activities at the local level in three cities in the province of Nueva Ecija (Cabanatuan City, Palayan City, and Science City of Muñoz), and one municipality in the province of Bataan (Mariveles). It aims to provide the following:

- Socio-economic profile of the case study areas is to provide the context of the children's issues being highlighted;
- Inventory of local ordinances or any other policy issuances on the protection of children at risk in the areas covered by the study;
- Incidence of child trafficking, child labor, commercial sexual exploitation of children, and economic exclusion of young women and girls in the above mentioned cities and municipality;
- Roles, perceptions, and initiatives of local stakeholders regarding the issues being highlighted;
- Implications and recommendations based on the findings.

The study involved the collection of documents and other records from local government units and other sources. It also utilized key informant interviews and focus group discussions with local government officials, representatives of civil society organizations (including those concerned with women, youth and children), parents, teachers, religious and other traditional leaders, child laborers and survivors of violence.

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## **CHAPTER II**

### **THE PROVINCIAL CONTEXT : NUEVA ECIJA'S CHILD FRIENDLY INITIATIVES**

## NUEVA ECIJA'S CHILD FRIENDLY INITIATIVES<sup>1</sup>

**N**ueva Ecija, with a population of 2,151,461, is a landlocked primarily agricultural province in Region III (Central Luzon) with capital located in Palayan City. It is known as the Rice Bowl of the Philippines, being the country's biggest rice producer. It is also the country's ninth richest province. It consists of five cities (Cabanatuan, San Jose, Palayan, Gapan, and Science City of Muñoz) and 27 municipalities divided into four congressional district with distinctive characteristics. The first district specializes in organic agriculture; the second is mountainous and has a number of protected forests; the third is more urbanized than the rest; and the fourth is famous for its cultural celebrations. The provincial government is headed by a governor (now Ms. Czarina Umali).

Aside from rice, Nueva Ecija's main crops include corn, onion, mango, calamansi, banana, garlic, and vegetables. Bongabon (known as the onion capital of the country), together with Laur and Rizal in the eastern part of the province, produce plenty of onion and garlic. Large poultry farms are located in San Isidro, while fishponds are found mostly in San Antonio, Sta. Rosa, and Cuyapo. Nueva Ecija is also known as the milk capital of the Philippines, with the Philippine Carabao Center located in the Science City of Muñoz.

Nueva Ecija has a highly literate population and prides itself for its "Four Knowledge Eagle Universities": Central Luzon State University (CLSU), Wesleyan University, Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, and Phinma Araullo University. CLSU is known for its academic excellence and has been included in the list of the top 100 most significant educational institutions in Asia.

Because much of Nueva Ecija is agricultural, children are found working in its farms and fields, under varying conditions. There are those who are in "child work," meaning that they do occasional light work with their parents' prodding so that they can learn to take responsibility, and their rights to health and education are not compromised. There is evidence, however, that child labor also exists, meaning that the children in farms and fields are exposed to exploitative, hazardous work constantly and for long hours, leading to the deprivation of their rights to health and education. (Amat, 2017).

In the urban centers, especially in domestic service, vending in streets and markets, in waste recycling, in bar and restaurant work which are all part of the vulnerable, informal economy, children coming from poverty –stricken as well as dysfunctional families can also be found. Nueva Ecija is now also encouraging tourism in certain areas endowed with natural beauty, festive celebrations, scientific and historical landmarks. With tourists coming from within and outside the country, commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking which can also victimize children, is expected to emerge. Cellphones, internet and video shops are also in widespread use, especially in urban areas, providing access to cyber pornography using children.

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1      Written by Rosalinda Pineda Ofreneo with the research assistance of Luningning Baguisa Quirante and Aida Cancio

## THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH WELFARE CODE OF NUEVA ECIJA

The Children and Youth Welfare Code of Nueva Ecija was launched in October 2007 at the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST) in Cabanatuan City in response to the issues cited above which even then were already being felt. It was authored by then Board member Raqueliza A. Agapito, the same person who authored the first Children's Code of Cabanatuan City where she served as councilor for three terms.

The Code has five articles: the first one provides the title, policies, principles, and definition of terms; the second is on the survival and development rights of children; the third, on the protection rights of children; the fourth, on the participation rights of children; the fifth, on special concerns; and the sixth, on final provisions.

**Section 4, Article II. *On the survival and development rights of children*** provides an Early Childhood Development Program coupled with Parents' Effectiveness Service Program, which includes among others day care and child minding services.

**Section 5. *On primary health care***, provides maternal and child care, mother and child immunization, and availment of funds by child patients of indigent parents. The Family and Community Welfare Support System under Section 6 includes a child and youth welfare program, women's welfare program, nutrition program, and Pag-Asa Youth Association and Iskolar ng Bayan Program.

**Article II, Section 7 *On the Community Support System***, provides a consultative assembly called the Nueva Ecija Sub-Committee for the Welfare and Protection of Children (NESCWPC) for "the periodic planning and programming, assessment, and evaluation of welfare and protection of children."

The NESCWPC has 27 constituents: the Provincial Governor, the Provincial Vice Governor, the Chairpersons of the Sanggunian Committees on Women and Family, on Social Services, on Education and on Health, the Provincial Civil Registrar, the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Officer, Health Officer, Agriculturist, Attorney, School Division Superintendent, Planning and Development Coordinator, Prosecutor, three NGO representatives, SK-NE Federation President, ABC NE Federation President, a member of the Local Finance Committee, People's Organization Representative, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Representative, Philippine National Police, Philippine Mental Health Office Representative, Permit and License Officer, Public Information Officer, NE Press and Radio Club Representative, Association of Private Schools, "and such other persons and entities as may be agreed upon by the majority of the members." Section 7 also provides for the creation of the City/Municipal Councils as well as the Barangay Councils for the Welfare and Protection of Children.

Other sections of Article II provide for, among others, the foster families/homes for children in especially difficult circumstances, programs for differently-abled children, prioritization of children's welfare in the budgets of cities and municipalities, recreational and cultural facilities, production of local children's literature, inclusion of rights of children in the school curriculum and training of teachers for this purpose.

**Article III. *On Protection Rights of Children***, provides a comprehensive program on child abuse, exploitation and discrimination, as well as sanctions against establishments which promote, or facilitate child prostitution, sexual abuse, child trafficking, obscene publications, and indecent shows. It also mandates the creation of special services for children in need of special protection and legal services, monitoring of criminal charges against children, support to prosecutors or counsels handing children's cases, establishment of Child and Youth Relations Sections in each police station, special course for PNP members, a rehabilitation center for child and youth offenders, children and family psycho-social program, curfew hours for children below 18, control of children's exposure to new technology that

impede their development, a Sagip Manggagawa team (Inter-agency Quick Action Team Against Child Labor), and a Bantay-Bata Hotline.

**Article IV. *On the Participation Rights of Children***, declares October as Children's Month, October 17 of every year as Children's Day, and the third Monday of October as Children's Day of Governance/Administration during which they will be occupying government positions under close supervision of adults. During Children's Month, a convention of minors for purposes of consultation and expression of their views shall be convened with the engagement of NGOs concerned with children.

**Article V. *On special concerns***, starts with a section on prohibited acts which include, among others: illegal recruitment, peonage of children, sexual exploitation of children, admission of children into movie houses and other establishments showing pornographic materials, admission into karaoke bars, sauna baths and other places intended for adult patronage, distribution of pornographic materials, pushing/enticing minors into live-in arrangements for monetary considerations, forced marriage, and discrimination against illegitimate children. It also prohibits expulsion, suspension from school, refusal to graduate or issue clearance to a girl child by reason of her pregnancy; physical and other degrading forms of punishment; selling liquor, cigarettes, rugby and all other addictive substances to children; and smoking and drinking by a child in public places. Article V also contains sections detailing the rights of children belonging to indigenous peoples, and of "juveniles" (now called children in conflict with the law).

**Article VI. *On Implementing Mechanism***, provides the creation of a Division for Children's Concerns under the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO). The Division shall take charge of the following: reception and study center for children and youth; psycho-social rehabilitation center for children in extremely difficult circumstances; advocacy and campaign for children's rights; early child care and development program; and legal assistance program.

Based on interviews with personnel of the PSWDO by a member of the research team, the Children and Youth Welfare Code is now being subjected to review and updating. The functionality of entities created by the Code for implementation purposes is uncertain, and needs to be reviewed and assessed. For example, the Provincial Council for the Protection of Children (PCPC) has just been reactivated. (Interview with Munsayac, 2017).

## CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES

Nevertheless, the national campaign to have child-friendly cities and municipalities in the province seems to have taken off. Majority of Nueva Ecija cities and municipalities (26 out of 32, based on the discussion during the Sept. 11 orientation on the Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA) Project have been assessed as “child friendly” using the following indicators:

1. Percentage reduction in deaths among under-five years old children
2. Percentage reduction in children under six years old with below normal weights
3. Percentage increase in day care attendance
4. Completion rate for elementary schooling (public and private)
5. Absence of child labor or percentage reduction in child labor cases
6. Percentage reduction in the number of children victims of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and trafficking in persons
7. Safety measures for children in the community and schools
8. Extent of mainstreaming children’s rights to survival, development, protection and participation in the Core Development Agenda (CDA) of the LGU
9. An ordinance establishing Barangay Violence Against Women and their Children (VAW/C) Desks
10. 2014 Philhealth accreditation in its main facility or rural health unit for the following:
  - a. Maternal Care services
  - b. Primary Care services
11. A Local School Board (LSB) Plan for CY 2016 that is aligned with the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
12. Completed at least 70%its LSB Plan for CY2016

Each city or municipality is supposed to have an audit team tasked with preparing a summary of scores for submission to the Provincial Local Government. This three-member team is headed by the City/Municipal Local Government Operations Officer (C/MLGOO) serving as chairperson, with the City/Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer (C/MSWDO) and the Department of Education (DEPED) Representative as members.

The data requirements for Indicators 1, 2 and 10 in the list above shall be provided by the City/Municipal Health Officer. Those for Indicators 7,8, and 9 shall be certified by the Secretary to the Sangguniang Bayan/Panglungsod. The District Supervisor under the Department of Education shall provide the data requirements for Indicators 4, 11 and 12. The C/MSWDO shall certify data for Indicators 3, 5, and 6, and on no. 8, shall also report the number of Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children(BCPCs) with child representative (the requirement is 75%). Regarding the BCPCs, the C/MLGOO shall also provide the number of BCPCs with ideal or mature functionality (50% is required). Still on Indicator 8, the City/Municipal Planning Officer shall certify the existence of an Annual State of Children’s Report, while the City/Municipal Budget Officer shall do the same regarding the inclusion of children’s programs and projects in the Annual Investment Plan, the budget share for these, and the budget utilization rate.

Based on the consolidated overall provincial rating for 2016, the following cities/municipalities reported scores of 90 and above: Cuyapo, Gapan City, Laur, Nampicuan, Talavera, and Talugtog. Those who scored 85 and above include: Aliaga, Cabanatuan City, Cabiao, Carranglan, Gen. Natividad, Llanera, Lopez, Lupao, Palayan City, Quezon, San Leonardo and Zaragoza. In the 80 to 84 range are Bongabon, Pantabangan, Rizal, San Isidro, San Jose City, Science City of Muñoz, and Sto. Domingo. Those reporting scores of 75-79 include Gabaldon, Gen. Tinio, Guimba, Jaen, Licab, Penaranda, and San Antonio. Sta. Rosa got a score of 74.

The Provincial Local Government Operations Officer receives the summaries of scores from the various cities and municipalities and takes these at face value. There is no process of monitoring or validation. (Interview with Guansing, 2017).

In this light, there is merit in looking at three of Nueva Ecija's cities more closely in terms of their situation with regard to children's issues, and the legislative and other measures they have taken to address these issues.

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# **CHAPTER III**

## **CASE STUDY OF CABANATUAN CITY, NUEVA ECIJA**

# CABANATUAN CITY CASE STUDY<sup>1</sup>

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

According to the latest Socio-Economic Profile provided by the Cabanatuan City Planning and Development Office, the City, with approximately 300,000 residents, is one of the largest and most prosperous metropolis in the whole of Nueva Ecija as well as of Region 3. It boasts of a burgeoning commercial area with big shopping malls, including SM and Robinsons. Located in the city are 60 banks, 126 financing and lending institutions, and 4,207 registered business establishments. It has three universities, 11 colleges, 14 vocational and technical schools, seven secondary schools, 57 elementary schools, and six integrated school. It is served by two public hospitals, six private hospitals and 64 clinics.

Hotels/motels (numbering 38), restaurants (94), resorts (6) and other tourist spots attract a local clientele as well as outside visitors. In addition, there are 11 amusement and video centers as well as cocktail lounges. The service sector is a large one. Aside from those already mentioned, there are 163 serving refreshments, 73 sari-sari stores, 39 variety stores, and another 205 classified under this sector. It is common knowledge that many of those employed in the informal economy, including children, are in the service sector.

New subdivisions dot the landscape in 47 out of 89 barangays classified as urban. Yet more than half of Cabanatuan City is largely rural, producing rice, corn, fruits, vegetables, and other crops, as well as livestock, poultry and fish both for subsistence and for exchange. It is common knowledge that poverty is rife in rural areas, especially among the landless, which could be the reason why child workers and child laborers are endemic in these areas. Nevertheless, the rich natural resources and agricultural potential of Cabanatuan make it ripe for the emergence of agro-industries and agribusiness.

Only 65 percent or 184,235 of the working age population are in the labor force. Of this number, 164,337 are employed: 31,602 in agriculture, 23,172 in industry, and 109,523 in services.

Perhaps, because of uneven development, the unemployment and underemployment rates in Cabanatuan City are larger than the national average. In 2013, 10.8 percent of the labor force was unemployed, and 16.10 underemployed. This means that almost 27 percent of those in the labor force had no work or did not have enough work which could earn an adequate income. Since the city is still in the process of industrial development and the formal sector is relatively small, it may be presumed that most of those who are employed are in the unprotected informal economy, which nationally is estimated at 77 percent. (Serrano, 2017). Such a situation is associated with poverty, because absence and inadequacy of income results in many forms of deprivation.

Furthermore, 99,561 or 35 percent of the working-age population were not in the labor force in 2013. It may be presumed that most of them were women classified as housewives who were considered not economically active. The national figure for this category was about half of all females of working age. Of those women in the national labor force, 34 percent were without jobs. Joblessness nationally was more marked among the youth at 51 percent, and more so among young women 18-24 years old, (Mangahas, 2014).

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<sup>1</sup> Written by Rosalinda Pineda Ofreneo, with the research assistance of Luningning Baguisa Quirante and Aida Cancio

## CHILD LABOR, TRAFFICKING, COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, AND ECONOMIC EXCLUSION OF WOMEN AND YOUNG GIRLS

A 2016 study initiated by the Philippine Alliance Against Child Trafficking (PACT) on child labor in selected areas had a sample of 15 children from Cabanatuan City, 8 male and 7 female. Four of the latter are between 12-14 years of age, and three, 15-17. All seven females are working as vendors mostly in the wet market, and their past work included being sampaguita vendors, stall helper, canteen helper, and dishwasher. The males are in vending or serve as porters/delivery boys, but previously they were helpers in corn, vegetable or poultry farms, cement mixing and delivery. When they started working, the girls had a wide range of responses, from ages 9-10 years old to 15-16 years old. Three had been working for less than a year, and the rest up to 4-5 years. All the females had monthly incomes ranging from Php 1501-2500, to Php5,500-6500, with most falling in between. Three girls worked ten hours or more; one, six to seven hours, and the rest below four hours. Most found their workplace dirty, littered, crowded and hot. Although they say they are treated well by their employers and are allowed to rest, they get screamed or yelled at by adult vendors or by prospective customers. When there are crowds, they get pinned in between people. (Macapagal, 2016.)

The girls in the study had limited education, mostly reaching only the elementary level. Three lived with their nuclear families, and four with siblings and guardians. Those who have knowledge of the work of their parents say that their fathers are in blue collar or informal work, and their mothers are in the informal economy.

This study, although very limited in sample, provides a glimpse of the lives of a specific category of female children who work as vendors. It also shows that children, mostly males, are also at work in various farms producing corn, vegetables, and poultry in Cabanatuan City.

Another glimpse was provided when the research team conducted an art workshop for nine child laborers in Barangay D.S. Garcia in Cabanatuan City where the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), in cooperation with the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), is about to provide livelihood grants as part of the Campaign for Child-Labor Free Barangays. Among them were children working as waste recyclers (*mangangalakal*) in the dumpsite, as helpers in a construction site and a computer site, as laundry workers and as vendors helping their parents. Some of them are not studying, or if so, continually stopping or irregularly attending. Despite their current plight, the children want to continue schooling, and by working, they hope they could at least have allowance (*baon*) or pocket money for school. They have their dreams, as revealed in their art works: to be a policeman, to have a house, car and television set, to be teachers, to be a soldier, a doctor, a flight attendant, an engineer.

From the summary profile of child labor provided by the D.S. Garcia barangay secretary and noted by the barangay captain, 31 children were identified as beneficiaries of the DOLE program. Among them are 12 females and 19 males ages 7 to 17. Of the 12 females, eight are in scavenging/waste recycling (*kalakal*) and three are vendors (of *balut*, *ulam*). Majority of the boys are also in waste recycling and the remainder are in vending or delivery. Majority of the child laborers are attending school; three are not.

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) held September 26, 2017 yielded observations that child labor continues to exist in agriculture, in markets (where children work as vendors and as *cargador* or loaders), in the streets (i.e., children selling *sampaguita*), and in households (as domestic workers). Child laborers are characterized as school dropouts. There is a perception in the FGD with local government officials held September 27, 2017 that the incidence of child labor has decreased due to the impact of the 4Ps cash transfer program. This, however, still has to be validated.



**Participants in FGD for CSOs, September 26, 2017**

A group interview with leaders of the Katipunan ng Bagong Pilipina (KaBaPa) held just before the validation session on November 29, 2017 yielded narratives of girls doing subcontracted machine-sewing work in the garments industry in some parts of Cabanatuan City. These narratives, however, are dated but their continuity or discontinuity could be a subject of further research.

Regarding child trafficking, eight cases (one male and seven females) were served by the Psycho-social Intervention Unit of the CSWDO in 2016. There were three cases served from January to August 2017, two males and one female. (PSIU, Cabanatuan City CSWDO, 2017). In addition, 13 acts of lasciviousness were reported, 12 of whom were female. Violence against women and children (VAWC) was a category with the following recorded cases: eight for economic abuse; four for economic abuse and three for psychological abuse.

One of the trafficked cases served is a child rescued from a Cabanatuan City bar (Green Apple) and now residing in the Tahanan ni Maria Center in Barangay Bitas for children in custody. She is now 16, and her two-year old baby boy was born in the Tahanan, is staying with her and being cared for in the same place. She participated in an art workshop conducted by the research team on September 25, during which she retold her story. Jessa (not her real name), is the eldest child in a family living in the dumpsite in Navotas. Her mother is a drug addict and she does not know her father's whereabouts. Compelled to help her siblings survive, she started working as a domestic worker and a vendor when she was 12, winding up in the province of Isabela where she was recruited to work in a club. From there, she was brought to a bar in Cabanatuan City, where apparently a client made her pregnant at the age of 14.



**Child Laborers showing their art works after the Art workshop, September 26, 2017**

Freedom Park in the center of the city used to be notorious as a pick-up point for girls and young women victimized by commercial sexual exploitation. In fact, a video on this can still be downloaded and watched on You Tube. (Memoirs of the Episode Kalapati sa Dilim, July 28 2008, may be watched at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ooSyjoo0aLc>). During the FGD with local government officials, CSWDO personnel involved in rescue operations affirmed the continuing use of the Park for this purpose, but now the perpetrators are riding in motorcycles for quick pick-ups arranged through the internet or through mobile phones. Entrapment procedures were actually planned, but the perpetrators had been forewarned and could not be caught. Narratives gathered from the validation session on November 29, 2017 were also quite revealing. They cite certain eateries selling rice gruel (lugaw) patronized by prospective clients. If the clients were asked if their orders were "malalim" (deep) or "mababaw" (shallow), "malalim" would mean rice gruel plus commercial sex.

Evidence of commercial sexual exploitation may be indirectly obtained from the social hygiene clinic run by the City. Such clinics elsewhere are known to regularly test women, and perhaps girls, working as registered entertainers for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). These women are given pink cards

to show that they are free of STDs as a condition for continuing to work as entertainers. The presence of internet and video shops in the City, which are subjected to “saturation drives” to ferret out and ultimately discourage access to cyberpornography, poses a continuing threat that needs to be regularly monitored.

Cabanatuan City has also been identified as number 6 in the country in terms of HIV-AIDS prevalence. Although HIV-AIDS is largely associated with men having sex with men (MSM), it is also linked to commercial sexual exploitation. Girls and young women are vulnerable to HIV-AIDS as well as other sexually transmitted diseases when they work in bars, clubs, and similar establishments, since there is no assurance that their clients are free from such diseases and may refuse to use condoms. Customers are also known to exhibit a preference for girls in sexual transactions, presuming the latter to be less likely to have HIV-AIDS and other STDs. (Council for the Welfare of Children, 2016). It was pointed out in the November 29, 2017 validation session that men having sex with men are now being monitored and tested for HIV-AIDS, suggesting that boys more than girls are considered at risk.

Awareness of economic exclusion of girls and young women seems to be very limited among the LGU officials participating in the FGD last September 27, 2017. CSO participants in the FGD conducted September 26, 2017 seem to be more aware, linking economic exclusion to discrimination against pregnant women and young mothers in formal employment. One participant is herself an example of economic exclusion, carrying a young daughter to the FGD and having four other children to care for. She is a full-time housewife who tries to find time for her CSO activities which she has engaged in since her youth. She exemplifies young women who are considered to be outside the labor force due to the pressures of reproductive work and the absence of child care facilities providing adequate length of daytime service to enable young mothers to work.

## **Childrens’ Code**

The Sangguniang Panlungsod of Cabanatuan City passed its first Children’s Code in 2008. This was sponsored by then Councilor Raquel Agapito, who also has the distinction of sponsoring a similar code for the entire province of Nueva Ecija. Consequently, the City issued its first State of the Children Report in the same year, which unfortunately can no longer be retrieved.

A new Children’s Code was passed on 17 May 2016, after a series of meetings conducted by the City Council for the Protection and Welfare of Children (CCPWC). The guiding spirit for this endeavor is Fiscal Amis, also known for her efforts to stem child trafficking as head of the Anti-trafficking Task Force at the regional level. The lengthy and detailed ordinance, which no longer needs to have a separate document for Implementing Rules and Regulations, has seven Articles.

**Article I.** (General Provisions) Contains the title of the ordinance, declaration of policies and principles, definition of terms, rights of children, responsibilities of the child, primary right and general duties of parents as well as of the community.

In this ordinance, child labor is defined as “any work or economic activity performed by a child that subjects him/her to any form of exploitation or is harmful to his/her health and safety or physical, mental, or psychological development.” Child trafficking is “the recruitment, transportation, transfer or harboring, or receipt of children with or without their consent or knowledge, within or across national borders for the purpose of exploitation which includes at a minimum, the exploitation or the prostitution of children or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude, removal or sale of organs, and engagement in armed activities.” Sexual exploitation is “participation by a child in prostitution or the production of pornographic materials as a result of being subjected to a threat, deception, coercion, and abduction, and force, abuse of authority, debt bondage, and fraud or through abuse of the child’s vulnerability.”

**Article II.** Focuses on the right to survival, covering birth registration, early childhood care and development, primary health care program framework, childcare and mental health, child-friendly hospitals, barangay health center with child health officer, hospital indigent fund for children of indigent parents, integrated health service for children with disabilities, clean and healthy environment, special needs of children in relation to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

**Article III. *On the right to development,*** contains provisions on access to quality primary and secondary education, under five program framework, in-school feeding program, public libraries, education assistance program, leisure, play and culture, and parents' education.

**Article IV. *On the right to protection,*** provides an integrated quick response system to child abuse, child trafficking and child exploitation; the creation of a Child Protection Network; a children's desk in all police stations; a social welfare officer for children; a child friendly judicial system; a child protection policy for all government offices; special protection for street children; involuntary commitment of an abandoned or neglected child; legal protection to victims of child trafficking; a comprehensive intervention program for children in conflict with the law(CICL); a comprehensive program to protect children against child prostitution child trafficking, obscene publications and indecent shows; regulation of internet cafes, kiosks and similar establishments with focus on the operation of computerized video games, recreation/ amusement hall centers to prevent children from playing violent and pornographic games; establishment of a Bahay Pag-asa for Children at Risk (CAR) and CICL, establishment of a Sagip Batang Manggagawa Rescue Team to act on cases involving child labor, and creation of a Bantay Bata hotline.

A very important **Article (V)** ensures children's right to participation in designing and implementing the Local Development Plan for Children, as well as their participation in the CCWPC and the Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children, the City Development Council, and the Gender and Development Council. In addition, a Task Force for Youth Development shall design and implement programs and activities especially meant for children 15 to 18 years old. Establishment and strengthening of children's organizations shall be encouraged and a children's summit shall be held every November in celebration of Children's Month.

**Article VI** provides various means of promoting children's rights, with focus on the the Children's Code; increasing awareness among children themselves, among law enforcers and other service providers; and forging partnership with media.

**Article VII** details the functions and responsibilities of the CCWPC, particularly the formulation of the Local Development Plan for Children and the Annual State of the Children's Report. The CCWPC is headed by the Mayor as Chairperson, the Chairperson of the City Council on Women and Family Relations as Co-Chairperson, and the City Social Welfare and Development Officer as Vice-Chairperson and head of the Technical Working Group. The CCWPC members include the Chief of the Department of Interior and Local Government – Cabanatuan City, Division of City Schools Superintendent, City Budget Officer, Public Employment Services Officer, City Planning and Development Officer, City Health Officer, Chief of the City Police Station, City Treasurer, President of the Liga ng mga Barangay, President of the Sangguniang Kabataan Federation, President of the League of Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children, City Civil Registrar, City Chief Prosecutor, Executive Judge of the Regional Trial Court or his/her duly authorized representative, President of the Federation of Parents-Teacher Associations, Student Council Presidents from different schools, representative from the Cabanatuan City Scholars, and one representative each from three NGOs with programs on child development.

## **Code of Parental Responsibility**

On 26 July 2016, the Sangguniang Panlungsod issued Ordinance No. 002-2016 otherwise known as the Code of Parental Responsibility(CPR) for the Protection of Children's Rights. The Code defines the

responsibilities of parents toward the child, including to “give him love, affection, guidance, companionship and understanding; “ to provide him proper education in accordance with the means of the family...; to ensure “proper medical attention and health services as regularly provided by the City Government...”; to prevent addiction to vices; and “to provide him his basic needs for survival, such as food, shelter and clothing, including adequate support.” (The consistent use of the masculine pronouns “him” and “his” betrays a lack of appreciation for inclusive and gender sensitive language which would have prescribed the simultaneous use of the feminine pronoun “her”).

The ordinance also enumerates the rights of the child, including “the right to protection against exploitation, improper influence, hazards, and to other conditions or circumstances prejudicial to his physical, mental, emotional, social and moral development”. It also prohibits inflicting corporal punishment on the child.

Criminal liability is attached to any parent who neglects the child through abandonment, fails to enroll the child and give him access to available health services, permits truancy, exploits the child, inflicts cruel and unusual punishment, allows the child to loiter during curfew hours, and permits the child to smoke or gamble. Parents who violate the rights of the child shall be punished through fine or imprisonment. They will also be required to attend Parent Effectiveness Sessions to be conducted by the CSWDO.

## **PERCEPTIONS , PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES OF VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS**

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS**

#### **City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO)**

Based on the Annual Investment Program (AIP) of the City of Cabanatuan for Calendar Year 2017, programs, projects and activities for children are lodged mainly in the CSWDO. Among them are the operation and management of the Children’s Hope Day Center for Children at Risk which serves street children and conducts livelihood training for their parents; Bahay Pag-Asa Rehabilitation Center for Children in Conflict with the Law; a Child Minding Center for the children of Cabanatuan City employees, operating during office hours; day care centers; Pantawid Pampamilya Office overseeing some 7,000 conditional cash transfer (CCT) beneficiaries; Psycho Social Intervention Unit for children in difficult circumstances, which participates in rescue operations together with the PNP and other units; and Tahanan ni Maria Center for women/children needing special protection and protective custody .

During Children’ Month, the CSWDO conducts a Children’s Congress/Summit for one week during which children ages 3-4 from day care centers engage in singing, poetry reading, drawing and calisthenics competitions. On December 12, which commemorates the signing of the protocol against trafficking, it holds parades, motorcades, symposia, poster and slogan making and oratorical contests in cooperation with CSOs such as PACT and IACT.

As mentioned earlier, the City Social Welfare Development Officer serves as the Vice-Chairperson of the CCWPC, and the head of its Technical Working Group.

In addition to their multifarious activities, the CSWDO personnel also take charge of setting up the Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (BCPCs) and the Barangay Women and Children’s Protection Desks. (FGD with LGUs, September 27). They also engage in networking, notably with academic institutions such as the College of Immaculate Conception which assists the Children’ Hope Day Center for street children, and the Wesleyan University Hospital, which provides medication to children in need. (Cucio, 2017).

The research team had a chance to visit the Tahanan ni Maria Center on September 25, observe its facilities, conduct an art workshop and discussion with seven girl residents of the Center, interview its Director (Melanie Victoria, RSW), appreciate the warmth of interaction between its girl residents coming home from school and the staff/house parents in charge, and obtain its manual of operations. The manual provides the guiding principles and legal basis of the Center, which taken together comprise a comprehensive perspective assumed to apply to all CSWCD facilities and operations.

The guiding principles and values include:

1. Every Person has Worth and Dignity
2. Social Justice/Equality
3. Gender-sensitive, Women-Centered, Victim-Survivor Sensitive
4. Child-Sensitive
5. Empowerment
6. Acceptance and Non-Judgmental Attitude
7. Confidentiality

The following were cited as constituting the legal base for the founding of the Center: Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1981; Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989; The 1987 Philippine Constitution; Anti-Rape Law (RA 8353) of 1997; Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act (RA 9262) of 2004; Special Protection of Children Against Abuse Act (RA 7610) of 1991; An Act Prohibiting the Employment of Children below 15 Years of Age in Public and Private Undertakings (RA 7658); and Anti-Trafficking in Person Acts (RA 9208) of 2003

### **Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Nueva Ecija Field Office**

DOLE has begun to introduce a project in Barangay D.S. Garcia as part of the nationwide “HELP ME Convergence Program to Address Child Labor.” (HELP ME is an acronym for Health, Education, Livelihood, Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Monitoring and Evaluation). The Program aims to “implement sustainable and responsive convergence program by providing community-based, focused, converged, and synchronized strategies to effectively address the child labor problem.” (Amat, power point presentation, 2017). Aside from DOLE, the Program engages other agencies, including the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health, “to deliver services to the child laborers and their families.” The Nueva Ecija experience in introducing and implementing the Program not only in a Cabanatuan City barangay but also in barangays in Jaen, Rizal, and Talugtog municipalities, includes “profiling (of beneficiaries), collaborating with social partners, and facilitating employment/livelihood undertakings for the parents of child laborers.” (Amat, 2017). Additional information obtained from a news story revealed that Php 250,000 was allotted for the street food vending of 75 parents and cutting and sewing training for 20 out-of-school youth” in Talugtog. Other outlays for child labor free barangay pilot beneficiaries in Licab (Php 150,000) and Carranglan (Php 186,000) were provided for “cosmetology and foot spa training with kabuhayan starter kits.” (Nueva Ecija Journal, , 2013).

Under the Program, Barangay D.S. Garcia may be classified as a “new frontier barangay,” where “no interventions on the prevention and elimination of child labor have been undertaken yet.” Profiling was completed in February 2017, but the livelihood grants that will enable the parents of child laborers to set up variety or sari-sari stores and sell frozen food have not been released. Other classifications under the Program are “continuing barangays,” where there are initiatives, interventions or services already provided but need enhancements to achieve the goal”; and “low-hanging fruits barangays,” where “services and programs were already provided and various stakeholders were already mobilized but these need to be sustained and continuously monitored” (<http://www.bwsc.dole.gov.ph>).

To be certified as child labor free, a barangay must meet the following criteria:

1. Profile of children in the barangay, including child laborers, regularly maintained and updated
2. Commitment of parents of child laborers not to engage their children in child labor
3. Commitment of school heads to monitor school attendance of identified child laborers
4. Commitment of barangay officials to support campaign against child labor
5. Barangay ordinances or resolutions against child labor enacted and implemented
6. 100% of identified child laborers needing health assistance have access to health and medical services
7. 100% of identified child laborers have access to education services
8. 100% of parents of identified child laborers have access to livelihood and employment services
9. 100% of reported child labor incidents are immediately acted upon by barangay officials
10. Functional Barangay Council for the Protection of Children
11. Inclusion of child labor and/or child protection agenda in the Barangay Development Plan with corresponding budget allocation
12. Partnership with at least four (4) government agencies and/or civil society organizations
13. Participation of barangay officials in capacity building activities on child labor and/or other child protection laws (DOLE website)

### **Department of Education (DepEd)**

During the FGD with LGU officials conducted September 27, 2017, the Department of Education representative claimed that the DepEd requires all schools to display its child protection policy in the mother tongue. Each school has a Child Protection Committee chaired by the principal, and with representatives of the school student government, parents, and the barangays as members. DepEd conducts parent education sessions where children's rights are discussed. Home visitation is resorted to when children in school have issues or problems. Reproductive organs and processes are discussed beginning in Grade IV in order for children to be informed as a precaution against increasing national rates of teenage pregnancy. DEPED also established the Bakod Bayan School for 140 resettled Badjao families to facilitate their inclusion and integration into the City. It has a Special Education (SPED) Center for persons with disability, including children.

### **Department of Health (DOH)**

Similarly, the representative of the Department of Health during the September 27, 2017, FGD claims that the DOH requires all its hospitals and clinics to display its child protection policy for public viewing. It provides primary health care to children and runs a social hygiene clinic for STD and HIV-AIDs testing.

### **Philippine National Police (PNP)**

The PNP in Cabanatuan City participates in rescue operations to save trafficked children and street children. It handles and records cases of children at risk, including those in conflict with the law, and those who suffered economic, physical and psychological abuse, as well as rape, acts of lasciviousness and other forms of sexual abuse.

## CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOs)

### **Philippines Against Child Trafficking (PACT)**

PACT is “a network of child rights advocates committed to building communities that protect children against trafficking. Its members include non-government and people’s organizations, as well as individuals from the government, who believe that it is the moral responsibility of the government, NGOs, business sector, academe, faith-based organizations, people’s organizations and families to create such a community. PACT has over 500 organizational and individual members in the Philippines, with partners reaching more than 53 areas in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.” (PACT website <http://pact.org.ph>).

PACT engages in network building; community educators’ training targeting law enforcers, local governments, NGOs and other community groups; December 12 campaign commemorating the adoption of the “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children;” and capability building of members. PACT is very active in Cabanatuan City, where the City Social Welfare and Development Officer and some of the CSWDO personnel are simultaneously PACT leaders.

### **I-ACT (I Against Child Trafficking)**

I-ACT is a partner organization of PACT. It represents children and youth in the CCWPC, and is active in awareness-raising campaigns against child prostitution, child trafficking and child labor. It provides peer to peer advice, highlights prevention by promoting online safety, and participates in commemorating the July 30 World Day Against Trafficking in Persons and the Dec.12 anniversary of the signing of the “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.” It involves Student Councils, fraternities and sororities, other student and youth organizations in commemorative and other campaign activities. Because it works among millennials, it largely employs audio visual and social media.

### **Outreach Philippines Inc. (OPI)**

OPI is a non-stock, non-profit organization “that aims to help the people help themselves through the Participatory Human Development (PHD) Program.” It envisions a “world without poverty” and has for its goals the building of community-based organizations, assisting the poor in resolving their problems, establishing networks, promoting the PHD process through training and consultancy, advancing entrepreneurship development and documenting and sharing experiences on PHD programs and strategies. (Outreach International (Philippines) website <http://outreach-international.org>).

OPI operates in Northern and Central Luzon, including three municipalities in Nueva Ecija. Its activities in Cabanatuan focus on networking, advocacy, and participatory governance. It has mainstreamed gender in its programs and strategies, and takes a broad anti-poverty and community empowerment approach in resolving issues, including those of children. Such an approach is based on the perspective that child labor, child trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation of children are rooted in poverty. Gender relations also play a crucial role in the victimization of girls as well as the economic exclusion of young women and girls.

### **KATIPUNAN NG BAGONG PILIPINA (KaBaPa)**

KaBaPa is a rural women’s organization founded in 1976 for the pursuit of equality, development, and peace. It has many members in Nueva Ecija, particularly in Cabanatuan City, and is an active affiliate of the Nueva Ecija alliance of women’s organizations called NEWLAC as well as the Pambansang Koalisyon

ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK). It used to have a children's organization called Bagong Sibol, and has conducted peace campaigns among children.

### **PAG-ASA Youth Association**

This is an organization of out-of-school youth 15-24 years old which is affiliated to the DSWD. The Cabanatuan City Chapter is represented in the CCPWC and is engaged in livelihood training and other development programs. It works closely with the CSWDO in child protection campaigns.

### **Samahan sa Ikaunlad ng Kabataang Pilipino (SIKAP)**

SIKAP is a grassroots organization of Filipino youth 15-40 years old, mainly rural and out-of-school. It is strong in Nueva Ecija, particularly in Cabanatuan City. Its activities include leadership development, livelihood and computer literacy training. It can integrate child protection issues in its awareness-raising programs.

## **PRIVATE SECTOR**

### **Alalay sa Kaunlaran Inc. (ASKI Foundation)**

ASKI is a 30 year-old non-stock, nonprofit organization founded in Cabanatuan City by a group of Christian business leaders "committed to the promotion and development of micro and small-to-medium enterprises and the delivery of social services." From its modest beginning, it has expanded its microfinance operations to Regions I to III covering about a hundred thousand clients.

ASKI is active in raising community awareness on women's and children's rights through activities which feature members of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines in Nueva Ecija as resource speakers. It has established a school in Barangay Lourdes accommodating about 60 children of its clients. These children enjoy free tuition and school supplies. ASKI also took part in Operation Smile for children with cleft palate.

### **Leticia Uy Foundation**

Although not represented in the FGD, the Leticia Uy Foundation is well known in Cabanatuan. This foundation is named after its founder, Leticia Uy – a former vendor of *pilipit* (sugar-glazed bread twists) who finished only grade 4 but managed to build a shopping mall and housing for her employees. The Foundation is known for its feeding programs for underprivileged children, as well as for its regular medical and dental missions.

### **Parents**

During the FGD conducted September 26, 2017 at D.S. Garcia with 23 parents, grandparents, and elder siblings of child laborers, it was revealed that these adults and their husbands worked in the informal economy as waste recyclers (*mangangalakal*), variety store owners, vendors (of kikiam, fishball, ihaw-ihaw, balut, chicken, hopia, rice cakes), laundrywomen, house cleaner, janitress, manicurist, canteen helper, part-time tricycle driver, barangay tanod, and construction laborer. Their incomes were not adequate or stable enough to support their families, thus their children also had to earn. They were conscious of their parental responsibility to provide the basic needs their children, to send them to school and give them time to rest and play, but their current economic circumstances would not allow this to happen. They also said they had the responsibility to discipline their children so that the latter would not lose their way.

However, they admitted they applied corporal punishment, which they did not know was not permissible under the Code of Parental Responsibility.



**FGD with Child Laborers' Parents,  
September 26, 2017**

Parents present during the FGD were looking forward to livelihood grants promised by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) as the means for them to have stable and adequate income so that they can get their children out of child labor and consistently send them to school. They believe that if their children are able to complete their education, their lives will improve and will be beautiful. They have been waiting since February for DOLE to release the grants; to facilitate this, they decided to send a delegation of five representing various occupations to the DOLE office, accompanied by two barangay councilors as support.

## Children

Seven girl residents of the Tahanan ni Maria Center for children in custody participated in an art workshop conducted by the research team on September 25, 2017, whereby they drew and shared images of their past and present lives, as well as their dreams for the future. Among them are a survivor of child trafficking waiting for her case to be resolved (please read story of Jessa on page 28), children in conflict with the law, wayward children of drug addicts, a child who took marijuana, and a child who refused to go to school. All of them came from dysfunctional families with parents who were addicted, who were absentee, or who abandoned or neglected them. Five of them want to be teachers; one wishes to be a doctor, and another, an architect. All are appreciative of their current lives in Tahanan ni Maria, where they are able to go to school; in fact, one of them is Top 2 in her class, another Top 6. They claim they learned a lot in Tahanan ni Maria, realized their mistakes, developed discipline and self-confidence, began to mingle with others, and gained acceptance and happiness through the guidance, patience, and care of their house parents and companions in the Tahanan facility.



**Art Workshop  
September 25, 2017**

Although not taken from the art workshop, stories of other children who achieved success are available, as documented by personnel of the Center. One such story is that of Jamaica Galang, a 13-year old former street child selling sampaguita who was admitted after being rescued during a saturation drive at the N.E. Pacific Mall initiated by the CSWDO and the PNP in January 2015. At first Jamaica was "full of anger," arguing with other children and displaying disrespectful behavior towards adults. With guidance and patience, she later on started to participate in sports and livelihood skills training activities conducted by the Center. In June 2015, she was enrolled in the Bitas Elementary School as a Grade IV student. At the end of the school year, she became Top 1 in her class and received the young achiever award. When she was in Grade V, she won first place in the slogan-making competition at the elementary level of the San Isidro Integrated School. (Victoria, 2017).

## CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS

### Challenges identified by LGU Officials

1. Some important provisions of the Children's Code, including the four gifts to children are not yet done: comprehensive program on child protection, dedicated local development plan for children, annual investment plan for children, annual state of the children report (last one was in 2008, which unfortunately could no longer be retrieved).
2. There are problems regarding the functionality of the Cabanatuan City Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children ( CCCPWC); semestral, not quarterly meetings, are conducted, but as needed, more meetings are convened, as when the Children's Code was being formulated; units do not have permanent representatives to the CCCPWC, which affects common understanding and continuity of work; personnel of member units are inadequate and are overloaded with work (e.g., CSWDO, PNP)
3. Only two percent of the BCPCs in the 89 barangays are functional, with structure and regular meetings (Valdefuente and Bantayog Norte) . Only one person from the CSWDO is in charge of creating/reviving the BCPCs, and so far, she has done this work in 24 barangays . Nevertheless, there are Barangay Women and Children's Desks in 54 barangays which try to cover children's protection. (Cusio, 2017)
4. The Quick Reaction Teams to address trafficking (composed of PNP, Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), CSWDO are having problems. Usually only PNP and CSWDO are mobilized for immediate rescue, and now it is more difficult because the traffickers are now resorting to online transactions and are no longer visible. Sometimes, they just pick up clients, i.e., in the Freedom Park area, by motorcycle and are gone before the authorities can intervene.
5. There are as of yet no reports about "Sagip Batang Manggagawa" spearheaded by DOLE
6. Close coordination with the Nueva Ecija provincial government on children's issues and programs still has to be achieved.

### Challenges identified by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

7. Lack of an updated sex-disaggregated situationer on child protection issues, reflecting a lack of specific focus on issues particular to girls and young women.
8. No common understanding of issues, consolidation of interventions and initiatives with priorities and strategies identified through a multi-stakeholder approach.
9. Lack of resources and multi-sectoral coordination in implementing, monitoring and evaluation of the Children's Code and related policies.
10. Inadequate operationalization and downloading of the provisions of the Children's Code all the way to the 89 barangays.
11. Limited engagement and participation of children and youth organizations.

### Challenges identified by parents of child laborers

12. Delay in the provision of livelihood grants promised by DOLE in cooperation with CSWDO on the premise that income from such grants will ultimately remove children from child labor.
13. Type of livelihood (variety store which can later sell frozen food ) was decided upon by the granting agency.
14. Lack of communication as to the timing of the release of grants; in the meantime, families identified as recipients of the grants cannot avail themselves of the 4Ps cash transfer program of the CSWDO, even if their income levels qualify them for this program.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Implement and install a monitoring and evaluation system for the Children's Code, with attention to the "four gifts to children" and other important provisions.
2. Orient the captains of the 89 barangays on children's rights and protection, through their association.
3. Update the sex-disaggregated data base, using the Community Based Monitoring System (CBMS) and the Family Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (FRVA); get more information on child trafficking from the Regional Anti-trafficking Task Force.
4. Include child rights and child issues in Family Development Sessions of the 4Ps, which now covers 7,000 families.
5. Approach principals and guidance counselors (Child Protection Committees) of schools to obtain more information. Use PARED sessions for orientation on child rights and issues for parents. Utilize science subjects to educate children on early pregnancy and HIV-AIDS/ (Cabanatuan is number 6 in terms of AIDS incidence)
6. CSOs and CSWDO should join hands in raising awareness and mounting campaigns on the Children's Code, on the ordinance on parental responsibility, etc. targeting parents in communities particularly
7. Monitor internet and video shops; conduct a saturation drive to discourage viewing of pornographic material.
8. Institutionalize, and ensure through resource mobilization, multi-stakeholder engagement in the various stages of program development for children's protection towards sustainable action and higher impact.
9. Integrate children's concerns in a comprehensive anti-poverty program, given that poverty is considered the root of child labor, child trafficking and similar issues.
10. Sharpen the focus on the girl child and the gender aspect of children's issues.

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## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Interview with Zoren Amat  
Labor Law Compliance Officer of the DOLE Nueva Ecija Field Office  
September 11, Harvest Hotel, Cabanatuan City.

Interview with Ester Dalara  
DOLE Nueva Ecija Field Office  
September 11, Harvest Hotel, Cabanatuan City.

Interview with Vanessa Cucio  
Child Development Section Head  
City Social Welfare and Development Office  
September 25, CSWDO Office, Cabanatuan City

Interview with Melanie C. Victoria  
Head of the Tahanan Maria Center  
September 26, Tahanan ni Maria Center, Cabanatuan City.

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

### **With Civil Society Organizations**

September 26, Day Care Training and Resource Center, Cabanatuan City

**Agustin, Ma. Isabel**, representing the Samahan sa Ikauunlad ng Kabataang Pilipino (SIKAP)  
**Almuete, Krysha Jane**, President of the Pag-Asa Youth Association Philippines  
**Antonio, Christian Faith**, Corporate Secretary, PACT, and Chairperson of I-ACT  
**Baguisa, Luningning**, National Council member, Katipunan ng Bagong Pilipina (KaBaPa)  
**Cancio, Aida D.**, representing the provincial committee, KABAPA  
**Delfin, Fely**, representing Outreach Philippines International (OPI)  
**Soriano, Ethel B.**, Program Officer, ASKI Foundation

### **With Local Government Unit Representatives**

September 27, Day Care Training and Resource Center, Cabanatuan City

**Bagasao, Helen S.**, City Social Welfare and Development Officer  
**Cucio, Vanessa Anne R.**, Child Development Section Head, CSWDO  
**De Guzman, Evelyn C.**, representing the Department of Education  
**Macam, Diana May**, representing the Philippine National Police  
**Maligo, Rowena P.**, representing the Psycho-Social Unit of the CSWDO  
**Manapat, Mila B.**, representing the City Health Office

### **With Parents and Other Relatives of Child Laborers**

D.S. Garcia Barangay Hall grounds, September 26, 2017

Abalos, Judie Ann C.  
Alomago, Pusio S.  
Alvarado, Gemmalyn  
Arce, Leonila S.

Arcenas, Luwelyn C.  
Cabrera, Lourdes S.  
Canlas, Felipa G.  
Carpio, Cherry L.  
Concepcion, Anita M.  
Dela Cruz, Dina K.  
Gonzales, Rowena  
Guligado, Rowena DC  
Lopez, Ma. Monica E.  
Mendoza, Marilyn M.  
Nabong, Rose P.  
Ocampo, Nea  
Padilla, Jesusa  
Pagdunzulan, Marilyn L.  
Pastrana, Norma M.  
Reyes, Lucita de  
Sarmiento, Larina B.  
Songcaya, Jeana G.  
Talana, Evalyn

**With Child Laborers**

D.S. Garcia Barangay Hall grounds, September 26, 2017

Carpio, Harry L. , 13 years old, male  
Gonzales, Angelito I., 15 years old, male  
Guligado, Edmund DC, 17 years old, male  
Magtibay, Marjorie Anne B., 14 years old, female  
Magtibay, Lara A. , 16 years old, female  
Mocsol, Emily M., 14 years old, female

**With Girl Residents of Tahanan ni Maria Center**

September 25, 2017

Apple  
Benita  
Charmaine  
Jessa  
Mary  
Mary Joy  
Reine

## VALIDATION SESSION

### **LGU/CSO research Validation**

De Luxe Hotel, Cabanatuan City with the local women's organization

November 29, 2017

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>
1. Antonia Salvador	PKKK
2. Lydia Tuliao	SIKAP
3. MarryFe Hepolito	DALUYONG-PKKK
4. Teresita Duque	SARILAYA -PKKK
5. Jovita Valdez	LIWANAG
6. Marcosa Cenon	KABAPA
7.Emelita Pelayo	KABAPA
8. Mariane Perez	KABAPA
9. Trinidad Domingo	KABAPA
10. Aida Cancio	KABAPA
11. Luningning Quirante	KABAPA
12.Maebelle Loresco	NIKE-NE
13. Elvira Fadriquelan	KABAPA-PKKK
14. Rebecca Miranda	PKKK
15. Ma. Theresa Molino	Researcher
16. Efryl Miranda	PKKK-GAA
17. Julieta Cerezo	ILAW/SARILAYA
18. Rosalinda Ofreneo	Researcher
19. Mylene Hega	PKKK

**CHAPTER IV**

**CASE STUDY OF  
PALAYAN CITY, NUEVA ECIJA**

## PALAYAN CITY CASE STUDY<sup>1</sup>

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Palayan City, the Capital of the Province of Nueva Ecija, has 19 Barangays, six of which are classified as urban: Caballero, Caimito, Ganaderia, Malate, Militar and Santolan. The remaining thirteen (13) barangays are classified as rural. The urban barangays have a total population of 16,400 (3,616 households with an average of five members each). Its population density is three individuals per hectare. The city is the most sparsely populated city in the Philippines, according to the National Statistics Office in 2015. The population growth rate is slow due to the emigration of individuals outside the city. The shrinking population of 41,041 has a small proportion of children and a relatively large proportion of older people. The population between ages 0-14 with a total of 12,805 accounts for 31.20%; ages 15-59 years old with a total of 2,578, for 62.61%; ages 60 years old and above is 2,540 or 6.19%. (NSO Census, 2015).

On the labor force of the total population, 62.61% or 25,696 individuals are of working age (male 28.26% / female 26.45%), Some 21.39 % of working age are employed, according to the City Labor and Employment Office, Thus, 6,718 of Palayanos are employed: 4,672 male and 2,046 female. Most of the Palayanos are farmers, overseas workers, teachers, and blue collar workers such as construction workers, electricians and welders. The poverty incidence data can be gleaned from the DSWD Listahanan 2012 survey. Out of 3,816 households in the city that were assessed, 1,806 household were identified as poor households or 47% of the assessed households. (CPDO, Palayan City Socio Economic Profile 2016)

MBN survey shows that 3,127 families are below the subsistence food threshold level and 1.9 % of the total populace have no house and lot of their own. This suggests that these people do not have the means to meet their minimum nutritional requirements and other needs for survival, much less live a comfortable life. (Local Development Plan for Children 2013 - 2016).

### PALAYAN CITY CHILDREN AND YOUTH : THEIR SITUATION

Palayan City government ensures that every child has access to education and is enrolled at government-run educational facilities: day care center, public elementary schools, public high schools, college, universities and a Technical-Vocation School .



**Focus Group Discussion with Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) Beneficiaries**

There are youth organizations in Palayan City, namely: Pag-asa Youth Association, 4-H Club and SK Council. The organized youth leaders participate in activities of the city and barangays. The Palayan City government expects the youth leaders to express their concerns/needs and participate in the planning process.

During the conduct of focus group discussions and key informant interviews with young girls, parent leaders, traditional leaders, indigenous leaders and other CSO leaders, participants cited unrecorded cases of child abuse, violations of children's rights and exploitation of children in their respective barangays, which are not given attention in their communities and even in their own organizations.

<sup>1</sup> Written by Ma. Theresa Molino with the research assistance of Teresita Duque and Antonia Salvador

## Child Labor

Rural poverty has prevented rural children to enjoy most of their rights, including those related to food, health and family care. The research team conducted a focus group discussion (FGD) with girl children ages 13 – 15 in grades 7, 8 and 10 from three (3) barangays: Caballero, Atate and Imelda 1. At an early age, these girls are forced to work as scavengers who sort garbage and earn Php 12 per plastic bag to buy food and play games in the internet shop. These girls work in order to contribute to the family income. Most of their parents are separated; one shared that her mother works as a domestic helper in Saudi Arabia and she was left in the care of her father employed as a construction worker. Moreover, some parents are unemployed and engaged in vices. These girls also help in the household chores (cleaning, cooking, laundry, etc) and taking care of their siblings.

The Chairperson of KASAMA-NA, a people's organization in Barangay Marcos Village and SARILAYA member in Palayan City says there are no reported cases of CSEC, child trafficking, child labor, and economic exclusion of girls and young women in their community. She observes that children ages 10-15 years old gather the rejected corn yield in the field with no pay. Some children climb the tamarind tree to harvest the fruits and then sell these in the market to augment family income. Their mother works as an OFW and their father is unemployed and with an excessive drinking habit.

The children have common situations and conditions; they are vulnerable to hazards such as exposure to pesticide during gathering of corn as well as to accidents climbing the trees because they lack safety gears and professional guidance. The children's lives are in danger as their young bodies are exposed to harsh chemicals without protective gears, and scavenging plastics and other materials that can be sold just to earn for their families.

## Child Abuse and Child Trafficking

The Barangay Tanod shared that there are three (3) cases of child abuse (incest) in Barangay Imelda. A parent leader also mentioned one (1) case of child trafficking, a 15 year old girl resident from Barangay Imelda, recruited to work in a restaurant in Manila. The job turned out to be working at the Resto-bar as a GRO (Guest Relation Officer). The girl was sexually exploited by male clients. She was returned to her sister's care because of anxiety, trauma and psychological disturbance/imbalance. At present, she is 21 years old, separated from marriage, living an ordeal with psychological and emotional problems (hatred, anger and rage).

A member of the indigenous community mentioned that in Barangay Caballero, there is an unreported case of a girl child who, because of poverty, allowed herself to be sexually exploited and paid by a non-indigenous perpetrator. The perpetrator exploited the girl child's vulnerability and violated her right to self respect, and full enjoyment of her development.

PNP – Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) reported that in 2016, there were nine (9) cases of violation of Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act (RA 7610):

1 – physical abuse  
3 – rape cases

5 – other cases of violation under RA 7610

In 2017, violations of RA 7610 are as follows:

4 – act of lasciviousness  
3 – rape cases

4 – physical abuse  
1 - trafficking

One (1) case of trafficking was reported; the victim was rescued in Palayan City but was not a resident of any barangay in Palayan City.

All the victims reported by the PNP were transferred and referred to the care of CSWDO, since parents of the victims had limited capacity to properly protect and care for her children.

During the validation session held at the Palayan City Hall on November 29, the woman officer in charge of the PNP Women and Children Protection Desk said she believed that there were unreported cases of victims of child abuse at the barangay level. The parents, particularly the mothers, would be afraid to report the cases. Relatives or neighbors, even if concerned, would not know where and how to report the cases. She challenged those present, especially community and CSO leaders, to carefully document cases, report them to teachers, to the barangay tanod or councilors, and to social workers in the CSWDO who can record the narratives and thereby prevent withdrawal of cases due to pressure. She also urged everyone to conduct an awareness-raising campaign on violence against women and children by informing at least three persons each, and posting IEC materials.

## PALAYAN CITY CHILDREN'S CODE

Palayan City was awarded in 2014 the Seal of Child-Friendly Local Governance National Award as Finalist; and in 2016 Regional Child Friendly City. Both were awarded by DILG Region Office. Three (3) Child Friendly Barangays in Palayan City were awarded in 2015: Marcos Village, Brgy Caballero and Maligaya. A Child-Friendly Barangay provides and implements programs for the welfare and protection of children. The criteria of selection include; (1) zero child abuse, (2) increased number of day care services and (3) facilities.

In 2014, the Resolution No. 37-B Ordinance No. 04 Series 2014: An Ordinance Enacting the Code for Protection of the Rights and Welfare of Children in Palayan City, was enacted. This ordinance is known as the "*Code for Protection of the Rights and Welfare of Children*". The policy and principle of the local government of Palayan City is to ensure that programs will :

- prioritize the rights of children to their survival, protection, participation and development;
- work for the respect for the role of the family in providing for children and will support the efforts of parents, other child care and development workers, NGOs and communities to nurture and care for children, from infancy including the earliest stages of childhood to adolescence.

In Article II of the Protection Rights of Children and Sexual Abuse, Sections 4 and 5 stated that the Palayan City Social Services and Development Office (PCSSDO) and Palayan City Council for the Welfare of Children (PCCWC) shall formulate a comprehensive program on Child Abuse, Exploitation, Discrimination, Child and other Sexual Abuse to protect children against child prostitution, indecent shows and other acts of abuse, and circumstances which endanger child survival and normal development. Section 6 protects the children from obscene publications, indecent shows and child trafficking. In section 8, it is clearly stated that "Any person who shall engage in trading and dealing with children including, but not limited to, the act or buying and selling of a child for money, or for any other consideration, or barter, shall suffer the penalty prescribed in Article IV of the Republic Act No.7610."

Stated in the Children's Code Section 24 is the role of the Palayan City Council for the Welfare of Children (PCCWC) as the Consultative Assembly of the Palayan City on children's concerns tasked with periodic planning programming, assessment and evaluation. It is a regulatory body for the operations of all existing programs and projects designed for children. It is involved in all processes related to the refinement of the implementing rules and guidelines of the Ordinance. It is also cited in Section 4 that PCCWC shall formulate a comprehensive program for the protection of children.

## GAINS AND GAPS IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

### Local Development Plan for Children

The Palayan City Government formulated the Local Development Plan for Children for 2013-2016, to ensure that each of the barangays has a well-organized Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC), with interventions in support of children's concerns. The role of the BCPC is to consolidate and evaluate children's concerns.

The Palayan City Local Development Plan for Children had the following goals with reference to the right to protection and the right to participation:

#### Right to Protection

1. 100 % of victims of child abuse cases are recorded and evaluated for necessary intervention
2. 100 % of all BCPCs are updated with existing laws, policies, ordinances, rules and regulations governing child welfare and development

#### Right to Participation

1. 100 % of all youths participate in SK election, meetings, seminars and other activities that redound to their welfare and development.
2. 100 % of all youths are registered member either of 4-H Club or Pag-asa Youth Association.
3. 100 % of all plain housewives-mothers join in every activity geared towards promotion of their children's welfare.
4. At least 90% of children join in sports and other activities promoting their welfare.

The Local Development Plan for Children (2013-2016) programs and services related to child labor and child trafficking are the following :

#### City Labor and Employment Office (CLEO)

Target program for child labor with the CLEO and CSWDO are the assigned offices for implementation.

#### CSWDO plan program:

Organization/reorganization/Strengthening and mobilization of Community Welfare Structure

Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) (2013 baseline 19 BCPC assisted, but no project cost for 2014-2016)

### Child and Youth Welfare Program

Anti-child trafficking (with budget allocation of Php 600,000 for two years – 2014 and 2015 but no specific activities in the plan, and no baseline as of 2013)

### Municipal/City Social Welfare and Development Office (MCSWDO)

In the Local Development Plan for Children for 2013-2016, the LGU through the City Social Welfare and Development Office should evaluate all concerns of children for immediate solutions. The social workers were tasked not only to implement social welfare and development programs but also to consolidate problems and concerns within the community, particularly regarding the children sector.

At present, CSWDO provides programs and services to children and other vulnerable groups in the local communities such as: day care service, family and youth welfare program, supplementary feeding program, City Wide Children’s Congress, Gabay sa Katandaan, Philhealth for indigent families, free water installation for indigent, livelihood assistance, housing assistance for disaster victims, Parents Effectiveness Services (PES), and Responsible Parenthood Services (RPS). The sector direct beneficiaries are children, women, senior citizen, 4Ps members, and the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) community. The budget and fund are covered in the Gender And Development (GAD) Plan and Annual Investment Plan.

For the sustainability of the programs and services, the CSWDO continues its coordination with NGOs and national agencies such as Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), National Housing Authority (NHA), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and Technical Education and Skills Training Authority (TESDA).

The Association of Barangay Captains (ABC) conducts regular meetings and updating of projects such as the installation of water system, day care services, senior citizens and beneficiaries of Bottom Up Budgeting (BUB). ABC also ensures participation of young girls in Junior Citizen Organization, SK Task force organized by DILG. The young girls are active in sports activities, clean and green, and attend trainings and seminars related to good governance, Manila Bay cleaning, and team building.

In the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP 2017-2022) there is a list of legislative requirements that are due for enactment in 2017-2022 related to the Protection and Welfare of Children such as:

1. Ordinance on *Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act*.
2. Ordinance on the *all girls or all boys dormitory regulation*
3. Adoption of Children Development Plan
4. Formulation and adoption of the IRR for the Code for the Protection of the Rights and Welfare of Children
5. Formulation and adoption of the Gender and Development Plan

### **City Planning Development Office (CPDO)**

To address the issue on the lack of youth participation in community development programs, the Unlad Kabataan Program was included in the GAD Plan. The objective is to increase youth participation in various government programs. Activities identified for 2018 are: conduct information education campaign for youth; and leadership skills training for the youth. There was no Children’s Plan prepared for 2018, 2019-2022.

### **Annual Investment Program (AIP) (2016-2018)**

In the Annual Investment Plan (AIP) of 2016, CSWDO has no specific programs and activities related to the protection of children in child labor, child trafficking and CSEC. The LGOO/DILG program activity is to conduct planning workshop and strategies for the functionality of the Barangay Based Institution (BBI) to formulate the following plans:

Barangay Based Institution (BBI)	PLANS
Barangay Development Council (BDC)	Barangay Development Plan
Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Committee (BDRRMC)	BDRRM Plan
Barangay Peace and Order Committee (BPOC)	Barangay Public Safety Plan (BPSP)

Barangay Based Institution (BBI)	PLANS
Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC)	Annual Work and Financial Plan (AWFP)

The BCPC plan is not included in 2016. Another program of the DILG is the reactivation of City Awards Committee to take charge of the following: 1) Lupong Taga Pamayapa Incentives and Award; and 2) Child Friendly Local Government Audit (CFLGA).

In the Annual Investment Plan (AIP2017) CSWDO program and activities targeted for senior citizens and women are the following:

- Orientation and Seminar
- Magna Carta for Women (RA 9710)
- PWDs (RA 7272)
- Solo Parent (RA 8972)
- VAWC (RA 9262)
- Special Protection of Children (RA 7610)
- Target groups for the seminar
- 500 women
- 50 PWD
- 42 Solo Parents
- 50 Senior Citizens

For the youth and children programs and activities:

- Observe citywide yearly Children’s Congress
- Youth Congress and Anti-Drug Seminar
- Leadership training for out of school youth ( OSY)
- Day-care services

The 2018 Annual Investment Plan (AIP) includes GAD programs and activities for children. There is a pending endorsement to update the GAD Code.

The City Tourism Development Program for Children: Services for children such as story- telling, education, film showing, and arts and craft. Support for Boy Scouts of the Philippines (BSP), Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP) Camps, and Sports events.

The Traffic Management Services – City Management Office (CMO): Children’s Protection of RA 10666 (Safety of Children Aboard Motorcycle) service

Sanguniang Panlungsod (SP) - Publication and posting of resolution and ordinance (information and dissemination)

DILG program – City Awards Committee reactivation 2018

- Reactivation of operations of the City Awards Committee for Child-Friendly Local Governance Audit among others
- Planning workshop and strategies for functionality of Barangay Based Institution (BBI) to formulate plans of:
  - Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (BADAC)
  - Barangay Development Council (BDC)
  - Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Committee (BDRRMC)

- Barangay Peace and Order Committee (BPOC)
- Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC)

#### PNP Operation Program

- Anti-drug campaign
- Law enforcement activities (check points, police visibility, mobile patrol, police assistance and management)
- Drug related training

#### CSWDO

- Day care service
- BNS (Barangay Nutrition Scholars)
- City wide children's congress
- Supplemental feeding program
- Nutrition Month celebration
- Training of volunteers on Infant Youth Child Feeding (IYCF); awareness on Milk Code of the Philippines and importance of exclusive breastfeeding.
- 

#### UNLAD KABATAAN Program

- Out of school youth scholarship program
- Youth development session/population awareness and family life orientation
- Leadership training for out of school youth
- Youth Congress
- Income generating project (IGP) for youth

#### DOLE:

- Implementation of the Special Program for Employment of Students (SPECS)
- Employment opportunities for high school and college students
- Labor ducation for Graduating Students (LEGS)
- Career guidance for high school students and Out of School Youth (OSY)

During the validation session held at the Palayan City Hall on November 29, a representative from the Department of Education shared some of their contributions to child protection. A Children's Protection Committee and a Child Protection Policy exist in every school. Information related to reproductive health is imparted beginning Grade V. Gender sensitivity and awareness seminars are given annually by the GAD Committee of Department of Education (DepEd). And children with special needs coming from the Home for the Girls are accommodated in schools run by DepEd.

- City Development Investment Program:  
Three (3) Year Executive Legislative Agenda (2017-2019)
- Local Development Investment Program (LDIP) or ELA  
under the Local Government Code 21991
- Social Government – CSWCD Youth Development Program
- City wide children's congress
- Lakbay Aral/fieldtrip of day care center
- Supplemental feeding program
- Nutrition Month Celebration
- Assessment of needy OSY (out of school youth) for the availment of scholarship program
- Youth Development Session/population aware and family life orientation
- Leadership training of OSY
- Youth congress and Anti-drug summit
- Poverty alleviation program
- Livelihood
- Finance and management training

- Care of elderly program
- Women's Month Celebration
- Person's with Disability Empowerment

Palayan City Social Development Goals and Policies for 2018-2022 under the sub-sector: Social Welfare strategies are to:

- Mobilize Inter-agency Monitoring Task Force in monitoring Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPCs) in 19 barangays.
- Strengthening of Barangay Desks for victims of trafficking, illegal recruitment and women and children who are victims of violence
- Strengthen Gender and Development (GAD) activities.

Programs and Projects of the Social Welfare and Development Program related to CSEC and Child trafficking aim to :

- Strengthen the implementation of Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPCs) in all barangays
- Provide support facilities for victims of trafficking, illegally recruited and Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC).
- Conduct capability building of barangay officials as front liners in dealing with victims of trafficking, illegal recruitment and VAWC.

The Gender and Development Plan (GAD) for Palayan City, the following activities include:

- Orientation on Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy and Guidelines
- GAD/Gender Sensitivity Training (GST)
- Mainstreaming GAD in Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM)
- Sex disaggregated survey in high risk areas covered by detailed geohazard investigation to determine a how many women and children reside in high risk areas
- Symposium on the Magna Carta for Women and VAWC lecture discussion
- Children's Congress Celebration

During the review of the AIP plans and CDP Plans, it is observed that the Palayan City Council for the Welfare of Children (PCCWC) has had no specific plans, programs, and activities since the Children's Code of 2014 was enacted.

During the data gathering and review of policies and legislation , there seems to be no passage of resolutions and ordinances related to CSEC, child Labor, child trafficking, and economic exclusion of girls and young women . Other legislative requirements like an investment plan for children, policy on violation of children's rights, programs, services, and budget for the protection and welfare of children to ensure implementation of the Children's Code and Children's Plan have not been realized At present, the PCCWC is not operational and functional.

There are challenges in the implementation of the Children's Code and the functionality of the Council, i.e.:

- Lack of monitoring on the part of the Sangguniang Panlungsod regarding the implementation of the Children's Code
- Lack oversight in the functionality of the Council to develop programs and services related to the Children's Code's main goals.
- Difficulty in mobilizing the members of the Council due to unavailability and conflict of schedule
- Lack of information from the BCPCs related to the condition and situation of children

- and girl child cases of violence and abuse in the community
- Lack of information dissemination regarding the Children's Code

It was observed that IEC advocacy materials to promote Palayan City Children's Code, children's rights and other related laws for the protection and welfare of children are not visible.

Economic exclusion of girls and young women as a concept is very new to CSOs and women traditional leaders in the community. They are aware of child labor, child abuse and child trafficking but at present, most of their programs and services are not focused on youth and children.

On the plans of the local government, CSEC, child trafficking and child abuse are integrated in the sub-sector programs, activities and budget but not yet translated into policies, resolutions or ordinances to ensure effective measures for the protection and welfare of children and youth. Child labor concerns are not much mentioned in the plan. Nevertheless, there are lists of legislative requirements that should be acted upon in the next six (6) years 2017-2022.

The research team observed that the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) is not visible and functional in the local communities. During focus group discussions with key stakeholders and key informant interviews with traditional leaders, BCPC participation was never mentioned in the cases of rescued victims of child abuse, neglect, incest and trafficking in the community. People in the communities are aware that there are cases of incest and child abuse, but they are not concerned enough to report the cases or do not really know how. They never discussed or raised the problem during meetings of 4Ps, senior citizens, and barangay community consultations like in the Council meetings.

Parent leaders and community leaders are the source of comfort and security of the victims of child abuse. The victims wanted and chose to stay within their care and share their predicaments with them.

## **THE ROLE OF THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

A focus group discussion was conducted among selected CSO accredited in Palayan City, namely:

- Palayan City Calamansi Growers Association (PCCGA)
- Palayan City Ministers Organization (PCMO)
- Palayan City Overseas Workers' Association (PACOWA) Office Federation of NE
- Aulo Rural Workers' Association (ARWA)
- South Igorot Tribal Association of Nueva Ecija (SITA) Inc.

The Palayan City Calamansi Growers Association has 32 Calamansi grower members, 80% are women employed in sanitation and labelling, and 20% men workers in the juice extraction, with ages ranging from 25 years old – 35 years old. The women are paid Php 350/day, while men are paid Php 600/day because of their skills and the heavy technology managed by them. The goal is to increase income and production of the members, create employment, and mainstream the product in the local market. The calamansi farmer growers and workers are aware of children's rights; some of them are members of the Barangay Councils. They ensure that no children below 18 years old will be employed in the industry. The children of the local farmers help their parents in harvesting the calamansi before distributing to the production area. Farmers do not consider it as child labor because children are not forced to help or work in the family business. They just want the children to be involved to understand the family business and source of income.

They are not aware of the Children's Code of Palayan City, since it was not yet discussed at the barangay level. According to them, there are no cases of child labor in the calamansi industry in Palayan City.

The Minister of Palayan City conducts Church services for the communities and organizes children

and youth age 12 – 18 years old for a mid-week and Sunday service for character development, devotional service and counselling for children in conflict with their parents. Young people use the Church to join the service or to run to because of conflict within their families. The Church conducts seminars on topics like sex education for the youth members, but the Minister needs more IEC materials on child abuse to disseminate to the families in the community. There are some cases of child abuse (i.e. incest) in the community that are officially unreported and undocumented.

PACOWA Federation members are OFWs and returnee overseas workers; they are about 192 OFW members (50% women, 20% men and 30% sons/daughters of OFWs). They also have programs and services offered for the OFWs, such as:

- Values orientation before they leave
- Counselling and guidance because most of the women especially young mothers are not prepared to work abroad, and
- Re-integration in the family and community

For 2018, they plan to organize children of OFWs age 12-24 years old to address the prevalent problem of OFW children getting into vices often described as *napariwara*. They are worried and concerned that this may lead to children's vulnerability to child abuse, neglect, trafficking and prostitution. Some alarming issues encountered are:

- Family problem (dysfunctional)
- Negative vibes
- *Barkadahan*
- Drug addiction

At present, there are no cases of OFW children discussed in their organization related to CSEC, child trafficking, but they committed to monitor cases of child abuse and violence against children in the communities.

The South Igorot Tribal Association of Nueva Ecija (SITA) Inc. was organized in 2011. Its main purpose and program is to have tribal cooperation among IP migrants in Nueva Ecija. SITA believes that children's issues are very important so that the children of indigenous peoples (IPs) know their rights. "*Ang pananaw po ng SITA patungkol sa children's issue ay napakahalaga para sa mga bata na malaman nila ang kanilang karapatan at kahalagahan sa komunidad na kanilang kinabibilangan*". (Interview Transcription, Pukya, 2017)

CSEC, child trafficking and child labor are not prevalent issues at present in their barangay but they believe that there could be undocumented and reported cases of child trafficking. Most recorded and alarming issues and problems are cases of child abuse, rape and incest. Children's neglect by parents and relatives is another problem. The contributing factor is the separation of parents and an increasing number of women who are OFWs. Children, especially girls and young women, are vulnerable when left behind to the care of irresponsible fathers with vices and therefore, unable to provide them with care, protection, and nourishment.

## TRADITIONAL WOMEN LEADERS

The focus group discussion was conducted at Barangay Imelda after the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino program's (4Ps) monthly meeting. The members of the 4Ps are:

- Brangay Health Workers (BHW)
- Barangay Nutrition Scholars (BNS)
- Barangay Tanod,
- Parent Leaders
- SARILAYA Member
- ILAW Member
- Green Vegetable Cooperative Member
- 11 women 4Ps beneficiaries

They have been 4Ps beneficiaries from 2011-2017. They were organized as one cluster group headed by a Parent Leader. The person-in-charge or coordinator from the 4Ps Program of DSWD facilitates the monthly meeting, checking of attendance, and giving of updates. They have conducted a monthly seminar on Family Development Session, Sustainable Livelihood Program and Food Security Program. In 2016 they attended a seminar on topics related to Women and Children's Rights.

Lists of topics in the seminars conducted in 2017 for the 4Ps members:

### A. Family Development Session

- Breast feeding (infant to 6 months)
- Disaster Hazard
- SSS orientation
- Proper nutrition and lactating methods
- Parent effectiveness
- Parenting the adolescents
- *Mga kumikitang negosyo*
- Family enhancement
- *Pagpapahalaga sa edukasyon*
- *Usapang disaster*
- *Paghahanda ng komunidad*
- Some basic facts on food nutrition and health

### B. Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP)

- Dress making
- Food processing
- Beauty care
- Welding

### c. Family Backyard Gardening Program

- Home gardening

## IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Local Government Unit (LGU)

- One key informant from the CSWDO recommends: a) strengthening of the Palayan City Council for the Protection of Women and Children; b) training for Barangay Volunteers on topics related to violence against children and women, and c) information and education on responsible parenting and values formation. *“Violence is a chain reaction of parents suffering violence, then they continue to do it to their children. More information dissemination, educate parents about responsible parenting. Value more the high level of education of every family”*. Continue the programs and services for children.
- The participation and involvement of the Committee Chair for the Welfare and Protection of Children in formulating plans and programs is limited or not visible during regular planning and meetings of the different agencies. *“Regular meeting of the agency should involve the Chair of the Committee of the Sanggunian especially in formulating plans and programs”*.
- All programs are funded through the approval of the annual budget by the Sanggunian Panlungsod (SP); however, a concern was raised that the SP is not aware of the need to implement the Children’s Code.
- The view of the respondent is that, *“best result of all programs and proper implementation will be attained through the noble intention and advocacy of the person-in charge of and the political will of the Chair of the committee to pursue and support the programs of the government”*. (SP Secretary)
- Ensure regular monitoring of SP on the implementation of the Children’s Code and passage of ordinances, laws and policies for the protection and welfare of children.
- There should be participation and representation of children and youth leaders in the Council for the Protection and Welfare of Children. Encourage involvement of children leaders, girl youth leaders in developing programs, projects and services for them.
- Reactivate the Barangay Council for the Protection and Welfare of Children (BCPC), and ensure visibility and functionality of council members to monitor, update and recommend policies and laws for the protection of Children during SP sessions.
- Increase the monthly allowance of volunteers (Day Care Worker (DCW), BNS), service providers for more efficient delivery of service.

### Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

The key stakeholders realized the importance and significance of taking serious action to look into issues of child abuse, incest, prostitution, trafficking, maltreatment and neglect affecting children and youth. They are committed to review and include these in their Vision, Mission, Goals (VMGs), programs, plans, policies and monitoring tools of the organization. They aim to promote active participation of all key stakeholders including the children and youth in monitoring and advocacy work for the passage of legislative policies and laws for the protection of children and youth against all forms of discrimination.

### RESEARCHER

- More advocacy work has to be done at the level of the local government and CSOs to take seriously the implementation of the 2014 Children’s Code of Palayan City and functionality and visibility of PCCWC.

- Violence of children and youth should be the priority concern of all sector agencies of the Local Government and translated into agencies' programs, policies, resolutions or ordinances.
- Conduct a comprehensive study at the barangay level on the existence and prevalence of all forms of violence and discrimination against children, girl child and youth towards establishing measures, policies, plans and programs at the barangay level with active participation of children and key stakeholders in the community.
- Establish a barangay task force or Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children to ensure monitoring, documentation, recording of cases of violence against children, which should be included in the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC).
- Provide a Children and Youth Center in the barangay for the immediate security and comfort of child survivors that will be managed by women leaders in the community and supported by the local government.
- Promote IEC materials on all laws related to children and girls on CSEC, child trafficking, child labor, child abuse etc, which should be posted in all barangay centers.
- The Association of Barangay Captains (ABC) should integrate in their activities the role of the BCPC in the barangays, conduct monitoring and discussion on the state of children in every barangay during council session, and discuss the Palayan City Children's Code to their policy making body, leaders and constituents.
- Encourage collaborative and joint partnership among stakeholders, youth and local government units to monitor and implement the comprehensive welfare and protection of children program at the barangay level of Palayan City.

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Annual GAD Plan and Budget (2017)

GAD Plan 2018 Final

Palayan City Comprehensive Development Plan (2016-2022)

Information Profile of Palayan City

CPDO, Palayan City Socio-Economic Profile, 2016

List of accredited NGOs/POs/CSOs

## PALAYAN CITY LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS AND FGD PARTICIPANTS

NAME	FGD Civil Society Organization (CSO)	DESIGNATION
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### TRADITIONAL LEADERS

ANTONINA SALVADOR	ILAW	Chairperson / Parent Leader
ALEJANDRA B. REDULA	ILAW	Member
JOVITA VALDEZ	LIWANAG	Member
DANA NADNADEN	LIWANAG	Adviser

### 4Ps Members

JENNIFER G. DELA CRUZ	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)	Barangay Health Worker (BHW)
ELIZA T. SANTIAGO	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)	Barangay Health Nutrition Scholar (BHNS)
CATALINA R. NICOLETA	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)	Parent Leader
PACITA GERMAN	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)	Barangay Police

### Young GIRLS

	AGE	GRADE LEVEL
FERLYN G. DELA CRUZ	13	Grade 7
SOPHIA R. AUSTRIA	13	Grade 8
STRAWBERRY DUQUE	15	Grade 10
JESSELE JOY CEREZO	15	Grade 10

### NGOs/POs/CSOs

JOSEPHINE B. PERLAS	ARWA	President
ERNESTO P. PERLAS	PCCGA	Chairperson
SUSAN R. GAWANAN	PACOWA Office Federation of Nueva Ecija	President
NELIA P. SUGAY	SARILAYA	Municipal Chairperson
PTR. DANIEL M. VIDAL Jr.	Palayan City Minister Org.	Sec. PCMO
MARIETA K. PUKYA	SITA	Secretary

### KII TRADITIONAL LEADERS

ELENA VERA	KASAMA-NA	Chairperson
DINAH C. REGUYAL	KASAMA-NA	Member
ROWENA B. BALMORES	SARILAYA	Member

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (LGU)

EMELITA CRUZ-BOLIVAR, RSW, MSW	DSWD Regional Home for Girls	Head, Social Worker
REMEDIOS M. PASCUA	Barangay Caballero	Punong Barangay
MARIAL LUISA B. ADRINADOR	CSWD	SWO 2
PRISCILLA B. SIBLAG	CSWD	SWO 3
MARILOU B. GANTE	CSWD	SWO 1
EDEMETRIO E. MARCELO	Sanguniang Panglungsod	Secretary
HELEN GRACE A. ANTONIO	LGU Palayan CDP	AA II
ZYHRA A. SAN BUENAVENTURA	PNP	Chief Police

**LGU/CSO Research Validation - Palayan City, Nueva Ecija  
November 28, 2017**

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2. Evangeline Queddeng	AGM
3. Celso Queddeng	TODA
4. Iluminada Fernandez	PACOWA
5. Haidie Gleyo	PACOWA
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7. PO1 Avelina Rubio	PNP-Palayan
8. Ptr. Daniel Vidal	PCMO
9. Dhang Sandic	LGU-Palayan
10. Margarita Angeles	CPDO
11. Priscilla Sibltag	CSWDO
12. Evelyn Deston	DepEd
13. Virginia Gonzales	DepEd
14. Imelda Franco	CPDO – LGU Palayan
15. Leonila Bautista	CMO – LGU Palayan
16. Esther Ramos	CMO – LGU Palayan
17. Fercilyn Grospe	OCM –LGU Palayan
18. Susan Dupra	CPDO –LGU Palayan
19. Sarah Jimenez	CW – LGU Palayan
20. Sarah Crisostomo	CLO – LGU Palayan
21. Juliuzar Uera	City Agriculture’s Office - Palayan
22. Antonia Salvador	ILAW
23. Josephine Perlas	ARWA
24. Estrellita Andasan	ARWA/4P’s
25. Jovita Valdez	LIWANAG/SARILAYA
26. Isabel Gacutan	IP
27. Raymunda Andy	IP
28. Julieta Cerezo	ILAW/SARILAYA
29. Romeo Gacutan	FARMERS
30. Josephine Canlas	BHW
31. Lucila Pablo	4P’s
32. Ernesto Perlas	PCCGA
33. Elvira Fadriquelan	KABAPA-PKPP
34. Efryl Miranda	PKPP-GAA
35. Rebecca Miranda	PKPP
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# CHAPTER V

## CASE STUDY OF THE SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ, NUEVA ECIJA

# SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ CASE STUDY<sup>1</sup>

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

The Science City of Muñoz (SCM) is categorized as an independent component city with a population of 88,360 (based on Brgy. Profile, December 2016) 37 barangays and a total land area of 16,305 hectares. It is the first and only Science City in the country and is considered a world-class science community or as the “W” growth corridor of Region 3 that will provide for the development of human and scientific resources. SCM is tasked to provide new technologies that will increase agricultural production, serve as sources of innovation, and new knowledge and breakthroughs developed by the R&D centers based within its territorial jurisdiction. Muñoz is also home to the Central Luzon State University (CLSU) where most of the R&D centers and other centers of excellence are located. SCM encourages public and private research and development centers, local and international, to establish their laboratories in Muñoz.

Business establishments listed in SCM are mainly engaged in services: 163 are fruit and vegetable dealers and retailers; 158 belong to the category composed of eatery, burger stand, catering services and canteen; 121 are groceries, convenience, and sari-sari stores; 98 are meat, chicken and fish retailers; 82 are internet cafes/online services; 40 are boarding houses; 2 are beauty parlors, barber shops, spas, or skin care product retailers; 16 are videoke bars; 10 are into travel and tours; six are hotels and drive ins, and five are resorts. In the financial sector, there are six commercial banks and 16 pawn shops. In terms of information and communication technology, there are two telephone service providers, three internet providers, four cellsites, and three broadcasting networks.

The cooperative sector is quite developed. There are 19 cooperatives – the biggest, with 598 members is into lending; the second biggest, with 548 members is into general merchandising. Many cooperatives are into lending and production.

## SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ CHILDREN AND YOUTH: THEIR SITUATION

The children and youth in the Science City of Muñoz enjoy their rights to education. The local government provides programs and services for the out of school youth and girl children with special needs in the Alternative Learning System (ALS) and livelihood program.

The Science City of Muñoz was awarded the 2016 Seal of Child-Friendly Local Governance by the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) for its commitment in promoting child rights to survival, development, protection and participation towards a “Child Friendly Philippines: A Caring and Protecting Society for, by and with the Children.”

Nevertheless, there are serious issues concerning children and young women in SCM.

Cases of incest, rape, neglect and delinquency have been documented in SCM. There are cases of girl children with special needs under the care of CSWDO. During the research period, a focus group discussion was conducted among girl children with special needs ages 17 to 21 years old. These girls were rescued and presently with on-going cases of child abuse, incest, neglect, and rape filed against their perpetrators. Two of the participants ages 18 and 21 years old already have children. They aspire to finish their studies to give new hope and a good life to their children.

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<sup>1</sup> Written by Ma. Theresa Molino with the research assistance of Mary Fe B. Hipolito and Elena Mangulabnan

## Economic Exclusion

At an early age, girls are forced to work in the informal economy as *labandera, manicurista, nagbabantay ng tindahan* (laundry person, manicurist, store minder) as well as in the rice fields to augment economic needs. These young girls have limited opportunities in the formal economy because of their age, lack of educational attainment and job experience, or their status as young mothers with on going cases and special needs.

The young girls also help in the household chores, and are active in school activities and social media. They survive but do not enjoy their rights to live without fear and discrimination in their homes, community and schools.

Their predicament includes fearing for their life and child, as mothers forced to work to feed their families and as teenagers bullied because of their status and experience.

In the focus group discussion (FGD, 2017) among the young girls with special needs, they were asked about their perceptions and views on the abovementioned issues.

*“Pananaw ko sa buhay ay maging maayos ang paglaki ng aking anak at hindi sana mangyari ang mga karanasan ko sa aking anak. Sana maging mabuti syang anak at makapagtapos ng pag-aaral para maging mabuti ang kanyang kinabukasan pagdating ng araw. Wala naman akong ibang pananaw kundi ang magkasama kami ng anak ko sa habang buhay”. Gusto ko sanang isulong sa mga kabataan ngayon ay magkaroon ng activity para magkaroon sila ng kinabukasan sa buhay.”* ( My viewpoint in life is for my child to have a better future than I had before so that she wouldn’t have to go through the experiences I had during my childhood. I hope that she grows into a better individual who will finish her studies so that she’ll have a great future ahead. I don’t have any other vision other than having to spend the rest of my life with my child. I hope I can encourage the youth today to conduct activities for the betterment of their future).

*“Maraming nabibiktima ng child abuse, bullying, at marami pang iba. Marami kasing kabataan na mali ang kinalakihan at mali ang pananaw. Sana maakatulong tayo sa mga taong mahihirap, maturuan ang mga kabataang hindi nag-aaral.”* (There have been innumerable victims of child abuse, bullying, etc. It’s because there are many kids who grew amidst the wrong environment carrying wrong perceptions or mindsets. I wish that we would be able to help poor people or those who are suffering from poverty and educate kids who are illiterate).

*“Nakikita ko sa pananaw na ang aking sitwasyon ay isang mabigat na dinadala pero kayang kaya kong pagaanin sa aking sariling paraan. Dapat marami ang kabataan na makapag tapos ng pag-aaral.* (From my perspective, I see that my current situation is a heavy burden I have to carry. However, I can find a way to make things easier for myself. A lot of young people should finish their education).

- *“Pananaw ko sa mga kabataan na nakakaranas ng pananakit ng mga magulang- sana itigil na nila ang pananakit sa mga kabataan. Lahat ng kabataan sana mabigyan ng karapatan para mapagtanggol ang kanilang sarili sa kabila ng mura nilang edad. Gusto ko sana isulong para sa mga kabataan na magkaroon ng programa para sa mga batang nakakaranas ng pang-aapi o anumang kaso ng harassment.”* (In my opinion, parents must stop abusing their children physically. I hope that these children will be given equal rights to protect themselves despite their young age. I hope that we can require the youth to conduct programs for children experiencing bullying or any type of harassment).
- *“Pananaw ko sa mga batang gaya namin, iwasan na lang nila yung alam nilang maling gawain at sumunod sa magulang at huwag makakalimot sa Diyos. Gusto ko na matulungan yung mga bata na di nakakapag-aral at yung mga batang napupunta sa maling landas.”* (In my opinion, the youth must avoid doing activities they know that are wrong, follow their parents and never forget

to acknowledge God, I hope I can help those kids who are illiterate and those who are in the wrong path of life.

- *“Ang mga issues ng mga kabataan lalo na sa mga minor de edad ang minsan nagiging dahilan ng mga pag-susucide o pag rerebelde ng mga bata o kabataan. Ito ay nakakatulong para sa mga kabataan dahil dito maiiwasan ang mga hindi magandang gawain ng mga kabataan.”* (Due to the issues the youth are facing today most especially the minors, they are driven to commit suicide or even consider rebelling against their parents. This will be helpful for the teenagers because through this, they can avoid doing unnecessary activities).

The young girl leaders also help in the household chores, are active in community services in the church school, feeding program, in values formation through *Katolikong Nagbabahay-bahay*, and youth formation. They help in the family sari-sari store business. Some earn Php 5,000.00 pesos as a sales lady, Php 100 per hour teaching Japanese student to speak English through social media online website called rare jokes, Php 1,000.00 to Php 1,500.00 (a day) as a model. They work in order to contribute to the family income.

## **Child Trafficking**

At present, one (1) case of child trafficking has been reported. She was rescued and referred to the DSWD. As reported, the girl child is not from SCM; she was rescued in the locality of SCM. One case should be an eye opener and should cause alarm since there could be an establishment catering to child trafficking in SCM.

However, an increasing number of children are involved in drugs. Three (3) cases of Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) and child abuse (incest and sexual harassment) have been reported.

## **SCM CHILDREN’S CODE**

The SCM local government stands as the principal duty bearer to develop and ensure mechanisms that are accountable for plans, policies, programs, and services that respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of children that will free them from violence, abuse, discrimination and exploitation.

In 2007, the SCM Sangguniang Panlungsod enacted RESOLUTION NO. 97, S-2007. **ENACTING CITY ORDINANCE ENTITLED** *“COMPREHENSIVE CHILDREN AND FAMILY SUPPORT SYSTEM IN THE SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “THE CHILDREN’S CODE OF THE SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ.”*

Article 1 Section 2 of the Children’s Code under Declaration of Policy and Principles of the Local Government of the Science City of Muñoz cites the “plans, programs, policies and resources of the agencies aimed at the achievement of goals for the rights of children for their survival, protection, participation and development from infancy, caring of pregnant women and the earliest stages of childhood to adolescence based on the goal situation analysis: health, nutrition, education, Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), HIV, CNSP, emergencies, gender disparities and others”.

The child trafficking and child prostitution concerns are highlighted in Article II Section 20 under Protection Rights of Children, Program on Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination. The program covers the strict implementation of Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act (RA 7620) fo 1992. “An Act Providing for Stronger Deterrence and Special Protection Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination, Providing Penalties for its Violation and other Purposes, and other laws affording protection against child exploitation”. The section directed the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), PNP, and the Council for the Welfare and Protection of Children of SCM (CWPC) to formulate a program in coordination with other government agencies,

NGOs and private sector to protect children from prostitution, child trafficking, obscene publications and indecent shows, and other kinds of abuse and circumstances which endanger children's survival and normal development.

Article II Section 21 provides for "Sanctions for Establishments or Enterprises which Promote, Facilitate, or Conduct Activities Constituting Child Prostitution and Other Sexual Abuse, Child Trafficking, Obscene Publication, and Indecent Shows."

In the implementation of Section 22 on Establishments to Post Notices and Information at Entry or Front Desks Regarding Child Protection. PNP and the City Tourism Office shall regularly monitor and spot check hotels, inns, karaoke bars and other establishments that are supposed to post notices and information on child trafficking, prostitution and other sexual abuse.

The Science City of Muñoz recognizes the significance of children's participation, in Article IV on the Participation Rights of Children Section 36 on the Participation of Children in Decision Making Processes, acknowledges that the interest and welfare of children in the family, school, community or other organization or institution shall be heard.

It is stated that "Every child has the right to express his opinion freely in so far as such opinion is not contrary to law, morals, good customs, public safety and public policy, and to have this opinion be taken into account in all matters of procedures affecting the child. It shall be the responsibility of the adults to provide opportunities for children to express their views, organize among themselves, and obtain information, regardless of tribe, sex and religious belief."

In Section 37 on the Convention of Minors for Purpose of Consultation, the ordinance provides a venue for children to express their views in the making of city government policies, and that children 7 to 12 years old, and 13 to 18 years old, are convened once a year, specifically during the Children's month to be heard collectively regarding their needs and demands. The expression of this is in Section 38 on the Celebration of Children's Month in October of every year through the City Social Welfare and Development Office. During this Month, the CSWDO is tasked to launch different activities that involve the mothers of children 0-5 years old, day care workers, elementary and high school Student Councils and other children organizations, as well as Parent Teacher Association (PTAs).

In Section 41 of the Code, The City Council for the Welfare and Protection of Children of the Science City of Muñoz (CCWPCSCM) through the members of the council shall be established to ensure that the survival, development, protection, participation and rights of children are given highest priority in the investment and development programs. The Members of the City Council for the Welfare and Protection of Children are the following:

1. City Mayor
2. Chairman, Sanggunian Committee on Women, Family and Social Welfare and Development
3. Chairman, Sanggunian Committee on Education
4. Chairman, Sanggunian Committee on Health
5. City Budget Officer
6. City Civil Registrar
7. City Social Welfare and Development Office
8. City Health Officer
9. City Agriculturist
10. City Legal Officer
11. City Schools Division Superintendent

12. City Planning and Development Officer
13. City Prosecutor
14. Three (3) NGO Representatives (i.e., Academe, Agencies, etc.)
15. SK President
16. ABC President
17. A member of the Local Finance Committee
18. People's Organization Representative
19. DOLE Representative
20. Philippine National Police
21. Permit and License Officer
22. Public Information Officer
23. Nueva Ecija Press and Radio Club Representative
24. Association of Private Schools Representative

The functions of CCWPCSCM are the following:

- Formulate a City Plan of Action for Children (CPAC) incorporating projects and programs needed in the barangays; and ensure their integration into the city's development plan.
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the City Action Plan for Children.
- Submit quarterly status reports on plan implementation to the Regional Sub-Committee for the Welfare of Children through the City Planning and Development Office.
- Promptly address issues and concerns affecting children and youth
- Advocate for the passage of other relevant child and youth protective ordinances.
- Advocate for the increased support and resource allocation for children's programs and projects.
- Provide technical assistance to the community-based front line workers through conduct of capability building and human resource development activities.
- Prepare contingency measures to protect children and their families in crises brought about by natural and man-made calamities.
- Ensure the proper implementation of this ordinance
- Ensure that all member agencies submit quarterly accomplishment or status report to come up with a consolidated city accomplishment report.

## GAINS AND GAPS IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

During the research validation workshop held November 29 at the Central Luzon State University, it was pointed out by Councilor Jose A. Ruiz Jr. that the Children's Code of 2007 was never implemented as is, given the non-existence of an Executive Order signed by the SCM Mayor required for implementation. The CWPC never existed and was never operational. Given this context, there have been efforts since the last quarter of 2016 to review the 2007 Children's Code, update and enhance it, push for its enactment by the Sangguniang Panlungsod and its implementation through the Office of the Mayor, and finally establish the CCWPC with the necessary funds and implementing office.

On November 29, 2017, civil society organizations including PKKK were invited to a public hearing on City Ordinance No. 2017-122 Children Welfare Code of the Science City of Muñoz, authored by Hon. Vincent D.V. Alvarez, Chairperson, Committee on Social Welfare; Hon. Bienvenido H. Paulino, Chairperson, Committee on Gender and Family; and Hon. Jose A. Ruiz, Jr., Chairperson on Peace and Order and Public Safety.

Consequently, some recommendations from PKKK will be considered for inclusion in the enhancement of the 2017 Children's Code:

- Sex disaggregated data on children and youth, particularly on CSEC, child labor, child abuse, child trafficking
- Celebration of Girl Child Day Oct. 11
- Survival rights of girls and young girls victims of CSEC, child trafficking, child labor and economic exclusion
- Article III: Development Rights of Children. Section 27. Promotion of Boy and Girl Scouting in Schools, to note in the categories to include Kid Girl Scout (3-4 yrs old), Girl Cub Scout (6 to 8 yrs old), Girl Scout (9-12 yrs old), Senior Girl Scout (13-16 yrs old)
- Action plan for the protection of children and girl child for integration in the City Comprehensive Development Plan
- Reproductive Health Education for the youth
- Climate Change and DRRM emergency assistance for children including girls

Hon. Ruiz asked the CSOs to be proactive in representing themselves in the Council for the Welfare and Protection of Children, pushing for the passage of the Children's Code, lobbying at the Office of Mayor for approval and issuance of an Executive Order for implementation.

Despite the non-implementation of the Children's Code of 2007, each agency in SCM has its own priority programs and projects addressing welfare issues and concerns such as poverty alleviation through 4Ps (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program), health and nutrition, day care, supplementary feeding, education, environment, DRRM and Climate Change. Programs on the protection of children addresses the issues and concerns on drug abuse, children in conflict with the law, and child abuse.

### **CSWDO implements programs and services, namely:**

1. Day Care and Supplementary Feeding Program
2. Feeding, Health and Nutrition Program
3. Care for girls with special needs (child abuse, incest victim) reintegration to their families and community after the care
4. Care for Children at Risk
5. Children in Conflict with Law (CICL)

The City PNP office established the Task Force Night Time Service that regularly monitors business establishments through spot check/visit to ensure that no girl below 18 years old is hired as a waitress or as a guest relation officer (GRO). The Task Force also monitors cases of child prostitution, sexual abuse, child trafficking in the area, presence of advocacy IEC materials on the protection of children, and ensures that the establishments post warnings regarding hiring of underage girls. The PNP reported one (1) case of child trafficking referred to the care of DSWD. The child is not a resident of the Science City of Muñoz.

The Six (6) year (2017-2022) Comprehensive Development Plan of SCM provides for “Strengthening of the City Council for the Protection of Children (passage of resolutions/ ordinances addressing Climate Change Adaptation/ Disaster Risk Reduction Management (CCA/DRRM) priorities and DRR Management Training for BCPCs)”. The passage of resolutions/ordinances is focused on CCA/DRR.

The Annual GAD Plan and Budget for year 2018 includes programs for the protection of children, out of school youth programs and Family Base for Children and the Environment in the Slum (FACES) program with an annual budget of Php 1,000,000.00 . The CSWDO mentioned some activities with allotments:

1. Special protection for children covers meetings, seminars, livelihood projects, spiritual strengthening, emergency assistance for children with special need, children in need of social protection (CNSP), Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL).
2. Sustained assistance for Children with special needs (child abuse, neglect)
  - Children Protection Task Force per cluster
  - Court assistance
  - Counselling
  - Financial assistance
3. Children’s Congress every October in celebration of the Children’s Month. All day care centers in the Barangays are encouraged to join in contests such as solo singing, poetry, and group dancing

The Executive Legislative Agenda of SCM (2017-2019) states that programs, services and activities for children focuses on 1) Protection of Children : a) Children in Conflict with Law (CICL); b) Children with Special Needs (child abuse), c) anti-drug campaign; d) DRRM and Climate Change, and 2) Welfare of Children: Day care, health, feeding, nutrition.

The Local Development Investment Program of SCM 2017-2019, Social Sector Areas of Focus includes:

- a.) Social Welfare: livelihood, day care center; Philhealth; 4Ps; Senior Citizen; Person With Disability (PWD); Skills Vocational Training of Out of School Youth; and Supplemental feeding program.
- b.) Health: maternal and child health care; nutrition program; HIV/AIDS and STD Prevention and others;
- c.) Education: ALS program, Out of School Youth Program, vocational program, etc;
- d.) Agriculture
- e.) Business Trade and Industry
- f.) Tourism Promotion
- g.) Environmental Protection and Preservation Program
- h.) DRRM and Peace and Order Program
- i.) Infrastructure
- j.) Fiscal Management
- k.) Development Planning
- l.) Human Resource
- m.) Good Governance

There is recognition on the part of the Science City of Muñoz that it needs to focus on programs and policies concerning children. The City Council for the Welfare and Protection of Children in the Science City of Muñoz (CCWPCSCM) , under the 2007 Children’s Code, is supposed to coordinate the planning, implementation, and evaluation of children and youth programs and policies. Throughout the duration of the study, some who are supposed to be members of the Council say that the CCWPCSCM is not functional and not even once conducted a meeting. It became clear during the validation session that this is because an Executive Order to implement the Children’s Code was never issued.

Until the last quarter of 2016, not much attention was given to the revival of a Children’s Code because it is not yet in the priority in local government agencies. In the recent past, , priorities were the programs and services on climate change, and DRRM. At present, the emphasis is more to address the issue of drug abuse.

There is no report from CSWDO, CDPO and City Tourism Office, on the issues highlighted in this research. The PNP shared one (1) case of child trafficking. There are no available sex disaggregated data on children, and annual report on the state of children of SCM.

The City Development Planning Office (CDPO) developed a City Planning Development Monitoring System (CPDMS), as well as a training course on how to use the planning tool for profiling of citizens



**Hon. JOSE RUIZ, City Councilor  
During the Research Validation - SCM, NE**

in the city, describing the pattern and presence of OFW returnees, and their re-integration in the community. The child labor concerns in agricultural production, poultry raising, public vending in the market and other economic activities were not given focus in the monitoring systems that should include the economic contribution of children in the family and their hours of work as workers and volunteers in the household economy.

The City Tourism Office (CTO) is supposed to monitor children’s protection in the business establishments. At present, there are no policies and guidelines related to CSEC, child labor, child trafficking and economic exclusion in availing and renewal of license to operate.

In reviewing the Sanggunian Panlungsod resolutions and ordinance, not one directly mentions CSEC, child labor, trafficking, and economic exclusion of girls and young women. The Ordinances passed are as follows:

- Kapasiyahan Blg. 22, S2002; Kautusang Panglungsod Blg. 07 – S-2002 “Kautusang Pangdisiplina sa Kabataan” (Juvenile Disciplinary Ordinance)
- City Ordinance No, 36, S-2005 An ordinance creating the “City and Barangay GAD Council”
- City Ordinance No. 2016-109 Ordinance banning the selling beverages, cigars, and cigarettes to minors
- City Ordinance No. 99, S-2015 An ordinance creating the Local Council on the Prevention and Control of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) and (HIV/AIDS) in the City, defending the operation of the Social and Hygiene Clinic, and prescribing regulations in the operation of entertainment establishments in the City.

It shows that during the sessions of the Sangguniang Panlungsod, issues and concerns on CSEC, child trafficking, child labor, economic exclusion were not raised.

## THE ROLE OF THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The **Civil Society Organizations** (CSO) as the rights holders in the development process, are taking the lead in SCM. There are a number of accredited CSOs in SCM and the research team had the opportunity to conduct a focus group discussion (FGD) with young girl leaders and young girls with special needs as well as a key informant interview (KII) with the Chairperson of the City Youth Development Council and Senior Vice-Chairperson and District Coordinator, IACT.

The girl youth leaders and girls with special needs were enthusiastic and excited during the focus group discussion (FGD). They had a chance to voice out their concerns and raise more information on other youth issues.

**Young Girl Leaders.** Seven (7) young girl leaders (ages 12-22 yrs old) are members of IACT (I Against Child Trafficking) the youth advocacy arm of Philippine Against Child Trafficking (PACT) in SCM. They are the President, Vice-President, Chairperson, and leaders of their respective organizations, namely:

- a) International Order of the Rainbow for Girls
- b) Supreme Student Government
- c) ALS Division
- d) San Sebastian Group
- e) CLAIM Youth Organization
- f) SKAP (MYSS)
- g) City Youth Development Council (CYDC)

According to the young leaders, there is a Child Protection Policy in their respective schools, manifested in the School Child Booklets. But there are still violations and problems that need to be addressed.

During the discussion, young leaders shared much on the common problems of youth:

- a) Excessive use of gadget within their classrooms
- b) Smoking
- c) Drinking
- d) Cyber bullying
- e) Hazing
- f) Emerging issues, such as that involving a sex video of a student posted in the social media that violates her right to privacy

They also revealed they were curious about Philippine National Railway (PNR) night life and yet, they were not comfortable with the possibility of girls experiencing harassment and abuse in that area. (During the validation session held November 29, the GAD point person of the Central Luzon State University (CLSU) committed to include in their research program the PNR night life to gain knowledge on how to protect young girls from violence and prostitution.

These young girl leaders are knowledgeable on children's rights, but share little regarding the incidence and prevalence of CSEC, child trafficking, child labour in their respective organizations, schools and communities. They are much more concerned with other forms of sexual exploitation through social media, and the posting of a sex video of girl student that affects her self-esteem and confidence.

The young girl leaders are active members of their organization cum fraternity/sorority. They want to advocate :

- a) anti-hazing, and the notion/mind setting of the new recruit that the fraternity/sorority is their back-up for quarrelling;
- b) against use of social media for cyber bullying and non consensual posting of sex video among students.

During the FGD, the researchers used the Self-Inventory and Expectation Check tool, which would help the girls clarify their growth and direction in life, and heighten their awareness of their present emotions (positive and negative). The results show the girls occasionally get angry and irritated, they dislike some people but can relate harmoniously with them.

In assessing themselves, they identified negative emotions that affect them most. These negative emotions were contributed by their experiences in the school, their peers, relatives, social media, siblings and parents. But the most common negative emotion was brought about by social media.

The result of the test shows that social media is the core issue and concern of young girl leaders that needs to be studied further and addressed by the policy making body of their schools and SCM for the protection and welfare of children and young girls.

**Young Girls with Special Needs.** The research team had a chance to conduct an FGD with young girls



with special needs under the care of CSWDO after they had been released from Home for Girls and returned to parent care. The CSWCDO assisted them in their cases, provided counselling and facilitated their reintegration in their families. Six (6) young girls participated in the FGD

The Self-Inventory and Expectation Check tool<sup>1</sup> was answered by the girls, and the results showed that they felt irritated, angry, resentful against a few people, and fearful of certain things they wished to avoid.. The girls showed mostly their negative emotions with their peers, relatives, social media, siblings that had much impact on their inner selves.

But the main triggers of the negative emotions were their peers, next were their relatives and lastly social media. The results implied that that the girls after leaving the Home for the Girls and re-integration into their families , relatives and communities need special care to build their confidence and self-esteem and feel accepted in their homes and communities.

The City Youth Development Council of SCM is active in organizing, capacity and capability building of youth in different schools, sorority and fraternity groups. Its programs and projects for the youth include:

- a) Oplan Kaka Program – in partnership with PNP
- b) Unity Project – among fraternity and sorority groups
- c) Barkada Kontra Droga – in schools and communities in partnership with DepEd and PNP
- d) Project Hope Center – focus on children in conflict with the law and Out of School Youth in collaboration with the Evangelical and Catholic churches

<sup>1</sup> The self-inventory and expectation check is a tool used during the youth camp held in May 2017 to assess individual growth direction in life. It was shared by Jose Victor Penaranda from the Philippine Theosophical Institute, Theosophical Society in the Philippines, Quezon City.

- e) Registration of youth organizations in the community in preparation for the SK election for youth with ages ranging from 15 yrs old – 30 yrs old

The research is an eye opener for the CYDC leaders to mainstream CSEC, child trafficking, child labor and economic exclusion of girls and young women in their programs, projects and advocacy work. The issue is not new to CYDP leaders because they are members of PACT, but they lack integration of these issues to their work and campaign against drugs.

CYDC appreciates the research and was very active in mobilizing the young girl leaders to the FGD with participation of Police Communication Relation (PCR) -PNP Officer. As the Chair of CYDC remarked *“makakatulong po ito para sa mas balanseng representation ng lahat ng sector ng kabataan sa lunsod bilang importanteng bahagi ng adbokasiya sa holistikong pag-unlad”*. (Ruiz, 2017).

Anti-drug campaign, CICL and Children with Special Needs are the usual answers that the local government officials and CYDP gave when asked about their programs for the welfare and protection of children and youth. When asked further as to their program on CSEC, Child Trafficking, child labour and economic exclusion, they responded that they had no no specific activities on these particular issues.

The concepts of CSEC and economic exclusion of girls and young women are new to local government, CYDC and girl youth leaders. On the other hand, child trafficking and child labor are not new to CYDC PACT member and local officials. These four (4) concepts altogether still need to be integrated in the capacity and capability development programs of both the local government and CYDC organization members.

### **Civil Society Organization (CSOs)**

Daluyan at Ugnayan ng Organisasyong Pangkababaihan sa Kanayunan (DALUYONG) is an accredited NGO in the Science City of Muñoz operating in 12 Provinces (Ifugao, Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya, Bataan, Cavite, Marinduque, Quezon, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, North Cotabato and Negros). DALUYONG is a Federation organized by PRRM since 2006 with 5146 members. It focuses its work on VAWC, sustainable agriculture and women friendly technology. The GAA research gave DALUYONG the opportunity to integrate in its advocacy the girl child issues and concerns related to poverty, social media, parent guidance and awareness of the children and youth on their rights.

Other CSOs and women advocates like Kababaihan, B.N.S, Nagkakaisang Kababaihang Entreprenyur - Nueva Ecija (NIKE-NE), Catholic Women’s League, 4Ps, Barangay Health Worker (BHW) and CSWDO Child Development Worker shared some of their programs and services for children in their respective barangays, such as 1 health, nutrition and feeding program, parent’s effectiveness services (PES) and education. Catholic Women’s League (CWL) is a member of tje SCM Task-Force Anti-Mendicancy.

The group mentioned that parent's guidance is important in every child's development (infancy – adolescence).

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study showed that there is weak evidence on the incidence and prevalence of CSEC, child trafficking, child labor and economic exclusion of girls and young women in SCM. Although a case of child trafficking in SCM was reported, this concern still needs to be taken seriously by the local government and CSOs of SCM. It may not be seen as an immediate priority but addressing this concern could mean prevention of similar cases.

### **From the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)**

1. Development of comprehensive policies, programs and mechanisms on CSEC, child trafficking, child labor and economic exclusion of girls and young to protect them from all forms of discrimination;
2. Integration or mainstreaming of four concepts CSEC, Child Trafficking, Child Labor and Economic Exclusion of Girls and Young Women in SCM development framework;
3. Representation of the CYDC as an NGO member in the eventual LCPC for SCM;
4. Empowerment of the youth leaders and their active participation in developing programs and policies for the protection of children and youth, especially the girl child.
5. Maintenance of the Child Protection Policy Guidelines of DepEd, and Child Protection Committee in all schools.
6. Support and guidance to the girls at home, schools and communities;
7. Value formation seminars for the girls and their elders; Advocacy campaign so that proper agencies are informed of cases of children's violence, child labor, exploitation and trafficking.

### **Local Government Unit**

1. Passage and implementation of the proposed Children's Code, and , institutionalization of the corresponding LCPC
2. Inclusion and passage of policies, ordinances, resolutions and program for the protection of children and youth related to CSEC, child trafficking, child labor and economic exclusion of girls and young women.

### **RESEARCHER**

1. There should be advocacies at the household, community and municipality and CSO levels on issues and concerns of children and youth related to CSEC, child trafficking, child labor and economic exclusion of girls and young women.

2. At the household, community, schools, religious organizations, POs, NGOs and business establishment level, there should be posting of ordinances and more IEC materials on children's rights, laws on child trafficking, child labour and child abuse.
3. At the city level, advocacy should focus on the LGUs role in providing resources to child protection programs related to CSEC, child trafficking, child labour and economic exclusion of girls and young women
4. Advocate for Sangguniang Panlungsod to pass and monitor the implementation of the proposed children's code and ensure passage of resolutions and ordinances related to CSEC, Child trafficking, child labour, and economic exclusion of girls and young women.

## REFERENCES

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Accredited CSO March 2017

Brief Description of SCM 2009

Executive Legislative Agenda of Science City of Muñoz (2017-2019)

Local Development Investment Program of Science City of Muñoz (2017-2019)

**LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS AND PARTICIPANTS  
IN FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

NAME	KII	DESIGNATION
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**NGOs / POs / CSOs**

REBECCA B. MIRANDA	DALUYONG	Chairperson
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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT  
(LGU)**

ANASTACIO D. REGATCHO Jr.	CPDO	Economist II
MYRNA B. ESTRADA, RSW	CSWDO LGU-SCM	CSWDO
JEFFERSON G. ONGOCO	CPDO LGU-SCM	CPD Chairperson, GFPS TWG
RAUL VILLACORTA	SP LGU-SCM	SP Secretary
DYAN SANTOS	LGU-SCM	City Tourism Officer
PO1 MARIBETH B. ABAD	PNP	Police Community Relations (PNCO)
PO2 JACQUELYN B. SORIANO	PNP	PCR PNCO
REIGNFRED L. RUIZ	City Youth Development Council (CYDC)	Chairperson

**CSO**

GINA G. GONZALES	KABABAIHAN	President
CARMELITA G. EVANGELISTA	BNS	Secretary/Treasurer
PRESCILA A. ENCARNACION	BNS	President
MAE BELLE C. LORESCO	NIKE - NE	BOT
MARY JANE PASCUA	4Ps	President
FILIPINA U. CARGADO	CWL	President
VIRGINIA P. CARBONEL	CSWO	Vice-President

**Young Girls with Special Needs**

	AGE	GRADE LEVEL
RICA MAE FERNANDEZ	17	
ANGELITA A. UPLINDO	21	
MARIA ERIKA M. OBENA	17	
DAISY LYN V. AVENIDO	18	
THENIA S. DELA CRUZ	17	
CRYSTEL REGACHO	17	

**Young Girl Leaders**

Name	Age	Organization	Designation
NICA DOMINIQUE G. TABING	20	International Order of the Rainbow for Girls	Vice-President
ROBY JANE B. TORRES	17	Supreme Student Government	President
JESSICA B. RAMOS	22	ALS	
PATRICIA G. CARPIO	16	Division SSG President	President
JASMINE GLORY D.C. BOSA	16	CLAIM - Youth Org.	Leader
IVY ROSE G. DESISTO	18	SKAP (MYSS)	President

**LGU/CSO research Validation – Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija  
November 29, 2017**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>
1. Jovita Valdez	LIWANAG/SARILAYA
2. Antonia Salvador	SARILAYA
3. Jennie Corpuz	BNS
4. Carmelita Evangelista	BNS
5. Rhodora Parugrug	BNS
6. Prescila Encarnacion	BNS
7. Venus Quiming	MAPS
8. Virginia Carbonel	CSWDO FCDW
9. Erwin Eligado	Driver (TODA)
10. Nelson Alejandro	LGU-Muñoz
11. Marryfe Hepolito	DALUYONG/PKKK
12. Gina Gonzales	Pandalla Women
13. Margie Cabanilla	Pandalla Women
14. Estelita Lazaro	Pandalla Women
15. Vera Gastron	Pandalla Women
16. Ligaya Guerrero	Pandalla Women
17. Rosalie Estrada	Pandalla Women
18. Virginia Urmatan	Pandalla Women
19. Nida Agustin	Pandalla Women
20. Mila Rose Cabigon	Pandalla Women
21. Isabelita Agustin	Pandalla Women
22. Rosalinda Ofreneo	Researcher
23. Janice M. Fuerte	CSWDO - LGU-Muñoz
24. Juliebeth Milar	CSWDO - LGU-Muñoz
25. Mark Albert Nardo	LGU-Muñoz
26. Efryl Miranda	PKKK-GAA
27. Mylene Hega	PKKK
28. Elvira Fadriquelan	KABAPA –PKKK
29. Engr. Prudencio Domingo	SCCM
30. ReignFred Ruiz	CYDC – LGU Muñoz
31. Gaudencio Madadang	SMART
32. Jose Ruiz Jr.	City Councilor – LGU Muñoz
33. Nonoy Villanueva	City Councilor – LGU Muñoz
34. Maritess Calica	Sangguniang Panlungsod Staff – LGU Muñoz
35. Reina Lomboy	ANGAT BUHAY
36. Marcelina Macaraeg	ANGAT BUHAY
37. Ronalyn Pascual	DepEd
38. Charmy Mae Badua	DepEd
39. Jenalyn Siping	DepEd
40. Filipina Cargado	CWL
41. Mary Jane Pascua	4P's

42. Prescilla Marcelo	4P's
43. Trinidad Domingo	KABAPA
44. Shirley Gadong	CHO – LGU Muñoz
45. Mae Belle Loresco	NIKE -NE
46. Niel Feliciano	CLSU GAD
47. Estrelita Paca	CLSU Kagawad
48. Helen Montecillo	CLSU Brgy. Captain
49. Jocelyn Esmenia	CLSU Treasurer
50. Rebecca Miranda	PKKK

# CHAPTER VI

## **CASE STUDY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF MARIVELES, BATAAN**

## MARIVELES CASE STUDY<sup>1</sup>

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Mariveles is a first class municipality in the province of Bataan, Philippines. It is located in a cove at the southernmost tip of The Bataan Peninsula, 165 kilometers from Manila. It is bounded on the East by Manila Bay and the North Channel which separates it from Corregidor Island and on the South and West by South China Sea. Mariveles can easily be accessed by travelers from Manila within a forty (40) minute travel time through a ferry boat and via land that takes three (3) to four (4) hour bus ride. The vicinity of the municipal market serves as terminal for jeepneys and tricycles, the means of transportation going to barangays and within the inner arteries of the municipality.

Mariveles covers a total land area of 15,920 hectares or 153 kilometers representing twelve (12) percent of the total land area of Bataan Province. Of this, nineteen (19) percent is forestland, home to an Aeta community speaking a Sambalic language called Mariveleño; six (6) percent is agricultural land; fifteen (15) percent is industrial and residential; and sixty (60) percent is pasture land which could easily be converted into an industrial facility. As of 2016, Mariveles has registered a total population of 127, 536 spread among 25,507 households in its 18 barangays with a population growth rate of 1.94 percent per annum, five times that of the province.

Mariveles is a tourist destination. Aside from its nice beaches, resorts, ridges, restaurants and lodging houses, the municipality is known in history for being the starting point of the well-known Death March, during World War II where the combined Filipino-American forces who surrendered to the Japanese Army were forced to march to Tarlac Province and thousands were either killed or died of exhaustion along the way.

Mariveles is the site of the country's first Export Processing Zone with existing infrastructures that include eleven (11) Standard Factory Buildings (SFB) with three stories each, and a total working area of 8,352 square meters or 89,900 square feet. The export processing zone or ecozone (economic zone) as it is commonly called by the locals is currently home to over 50 locators engaged in manufacturing products for export ranging from tennis balls to yachts, animal feeds processing and an enterprise currently constructing a clean coal power plant. One big contribution of the "industrial revolution" now going on in Mariveles is the establishment of small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) plus the self-employment generated in the surrounding localities made possible by the salaries and wages that flow into the local economy. People started spending money pushing up the prices of commodities eventually providing gainful livelihood for small and medium entrepreneurs in the municipality. The municipality has a relatively young population and posted a high employment rate of thirty (30) percent with more than 36,000 people working in the different industrial firms in the locality or into livelihood programs and entrepreneurship.

Endowed with a deep-water bay, Mariveles has excellent potentials of a world-class port facility. With the presence of Asian Terminal, Inc., port operator and logistics provider and the first of its kind in the Philippines, Mariveles' port is being operated efficiently with a 10-hectare bulk grain terminal in the municipality. The facilities present in the port are the Herma Shipyard, Inc. (HSI), formerly the Bataan Shipyard and Engineering Corporation (BASECO) for ship related services such as docking, repair, etc., San Miguel Corporation, which receives malt in bulk direct from the ship's hold and stores and delivers them to San Miguel breweries in Polo, Valenzuela City; San Fernando, Pampanga; Mandaue City in Cebu and Davao City. Aside from these port facilities, another industry located in Mariveles is the GN Power, a 600 megawatt coal-fired power facility just established at Barangay Alasasin, Mariveles, Bataan. This Php44-B coal plant ensures adequate power supply which has been available in Luzon since 2014. The coal plant likewise ensures continued economic gains through increased investments, better production,

1 Written by Florence F. Pasos with the research assistance of Elvira Andicoy

and high level of business confidence from investors or locators especially inside the Freeport Area of Bataan.

Mariveles is one of the most peaceful towns in Bataan. This is attributed largely to the creation of a Public Safety Office (PSO) augmenting the scarce police force in the municipality. Under the PSO, there are more than 100 junior police and traffic marshal volunteers who help maintain peace and order and enforce traffic rules and regulations. They are divided into clusters and are assigned in detachment posts around the municipality to provide a round-the-clock security to the community and property. It is interesting to note that the municipality has "Dial 166", a 5-minute quick response program and a fully-equipped emergency response system that is efficiently maintained by the local government unit (LGU) to respond to multiple emergencies. Under this program, a resident can dial 166 during calamities and emergency situations and expect a response within five (5) minutes. Failure of a team member to respond in 5-minutes time is subject to disciplinary action.

Also, under the supervision of the PSO are the Bantay Dagat and Task Force Mariveles Anti-Illegal Logging and Fishing (MAILAF) that manage a special ranger patrol network devoted to the protection and maintenance of Mariveles waters and forests. This network maintains regular mobile patrols roving around the municipality. This is one reason why Mariveles waters are not contaminated with industrial waste despite its industrial image. This also explains why the municipality's watershed areas continue to supply abundant waters to its residents and its industrial communities.

Based on the data on poverty incidence among households as of 2015, Mariveles has a relatively low poverty incidence when it comes to the indicators of basic needs like food, shelter, education, employment and maternal and infant mortality rate and in terms of access to safe water. In the 2015 census, the municipality has 42 (0.27%) households that experienced food shortage; 481 (3.10%) informal settlers, 283 (1.81%) living in makeshift houses; 957 (1.19%) with illiterate members; 648 (3.65%) with members who are not in school and; 4,116 (12.30%) with unemployed members; 25 (0.025%) with under five (5) child death. Mariveles has 0 percent (%) maternal mortality rate and 0.13 percent infant mortality rate as of 2015. A total of 22,159 (86.87%) households have access to safe water; and 21,441 (84.06%) have satisfactory waste disposal. However, the data on poverty threshold reveals that 5,976 (38.51%) households have income below the poverty threshold and that a sizable number of households have no basic sanitation facilities (Only 2,337 (9.16%) have basic sanitation facilities).

Being an economic zone and having huge port facilities, Mariveles is in a situation where its young population are vulnerable to victimization as child laborers in factories or in trafficking contexts and/or as *akyat-bangka* prostitutes not to mention the risk of children to be port or market stevedores. This is the reason why there is a need to examine the existing situation of children in the municipality particularly those who are possibly in child labor, CSEC, victims of trafficking and those young women who are economically excluded.

## INCIDENCE OF CSEC, CHILD TRAFFICKING and CHILD LABOR IN MARIVELES

### *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children*

Based on the 2016 Social Welfare and Development Report (SWDR) in the Province of Bataan on vulnerable children 0 to below 18 years old, Mariveles reported 0 incidence in prostitution, pedophilia, pornography and cyberpornography in 2015 and 2016. However, a significant information gathered during the focus group discussion with the teachers is a case involving two sisters, one in Grade 9 and the other in Grade 8, who happened to be studying at Mariveles National High School. The older one, “Cynthia” (not her real name), was noticed by the teacher because she was bald (kalbo). Cynthia said that her hair was cut by her mother. The teacher tried to talk to the mother about this and the mother reportedly said that she had to do it because Cynthia could not be disciplined and controlled; she would go to the fishing boat of fishermen (reportedly from Malabon or nearby cities in Manila fish port) for “paid sex”. At 15, Cynthia was reported by her mother to be always loitering at the seashore. Later, Cynthia’s sister was reportedly joining her in her activity and the mother could not stop them. The school referred the children to the MSWDO for proper intervention. To date, the students are reported to have dropped out from school. The teachers fear that there may be other cases of children being lured into prostitution by fishermen, who allegedly gave them money taking advantage of the vulnerability of the young women in their adolescence and this is a cause for alarm in the municipality.

### *Child Labor and Trafficking*

There were no reported cases of child labor in Mariveles as per the 2016 SWDR. A possible case of “child labor” mentioned repeatedly in the interviews is the presence of Badjaos in the city especially before Christmas. There are many children and families going around the city with concentration in the marketplace, where they beg. The researcher once observed two street children in the area in one of her visits particularly along Jollibee, and the children asked money from her. The tricycle driver confirmed that there are street children in Mariveles. During the Key Information Interview (KII) the respondents said that the Badjao families are non-Mariveles residents; the city has its own tribal community, however, they are reportedly mainstreamed in the locality, participating actively in local activities, children are getting their education and scholarships, some finishing their degrees and not experiencing any discrimination at all.

The researcher inquired if there were any children working in the factories, the MSWDO and PNP representative said that there are no children in the factories. The city is very strict in monitoring the issuance of work permit and monitoring the factories in relation to the involvement of children in work that may be harmful to their health. People applying for work in factories are also required to get a police clearance. So far, the PNP said that no police clearance has been issued to children 17 years old and below. They experienced, however some children who attempted to change their age only to be able to work in factories but these were detected at the onset. All KII and FGD respondents said that Mariveles does not have a reported case of trafficking at all mores involving children.



**Interview with PO2 Maria Eloisa Quiambao of Mariveles, Bataan PNP**

### *Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and the Situation of Girl Children*

Among the topics discussed in the focus group discussions (FGD) with different stakeholder groups was the situation of girl children in the municipality and how the stakeholders perceive and take care of the welfare of girl children. Although based on the key informant interviews and FGDs, there were no noted

official reports on girl children participating in child labor or who have been victims of trafficking, there have been accounts of possible exploitation by means of “paid sex” such as the case mentioned earlier pertaining to the two teenage sisters, who were reportedly engaging in sex with fishermen for a meager amount of P20.00. This was supported by the statement of another teacher participant in another FGD group: *“May nabalitaan nga ako na may mga batang umaakyat sa bangka kapalit ng kaunting halaga nakikipagsex ang mga batang babae.”*

Other accounts would pertain to cultural practices in the home that have an implication on girl children. As one participant shared: *“Kapag nalalasing ang ama madalas ay anak na babae ang nag-aasikaso.”* (Interview Transcript 2017) One teacher stated that based on informal reports, there are teenagers who are engaged in pre-marital sex and some teenage girls are impregnated by their boyfriends. There have also been reports of incest in some families involving girl children/youth. There is also a case where one female



**Focus Group Discussion with Teachers**

student, a teenager, had to stay in the house of her boyfriend because she was not in good terms with her grandmother with whom she was staying. Some participants said that because of the need of some parents to work in the factories for long hours, they entrust their children to their neighbors throughout the day. It was revealed in the discussions that some factory workers staying in Mariveles are merely “boarders” coming from nearby towns like Nueva Ecija and some from the Visayas, who went to Mariveles just to work. During the course of the FGD session, some teachers requested for an orientation session with all girl students in Barangay Poblacion so that they will become aware of their rights and be able to protect themselves from abuse and exploitation.

The 2016 SWDR on vulnerable youth 15-30 years old provided some data that revealed the situation of girl children as compared to male children. From 2015 to 2016, all reported cases of rape, incest, acts of lasciviousness and physical abuse involved female children whereas majority of the cases of CICL, street youth and drug dependents involved male children. What is quite alarming is the number of teenage pregnancies which amounted to 87 cases in a span of two years.

The primary question that comes to mind upon hearing all these accounts from the locals is what can be done to save these children, particularly girl children found within these different situations. Clearly, the aforementioned situations of girl children fall under the category of abuse, exploitation and traditional practices in the home.

The PNP reported that they receive reports and blotters on cases of wife-battering, child sexual abuse, drug use and dependency, which are properly managed and referred to proper agencies for intervention. It also has a *“Bahay Pagbabago”* to temporarily house drug surrenderees. The municipality has its Women and Children’s Desk (WCD) managed by the police at the municipal level in close coordination with the MSWDO. Based on the Mariveles Children’s Welfare Code the WCD serves as the MCPC secretariat. Reported cases involving abuse and exploitation of children are coordinated with the MCPC, where the PNP has a representation.

### ***Emerging Issues Among Children***

Recently, two cases of suicide were reported in Mariveles involving school children (15 years old). There were reportedly seven (7) children who actually pledged to support each other in their plan to commit suicide. It is good that this was detected and given intervention at the onset. Upon investigation, the main cause is parental neglect based on the children’s testimonies. The first child who committed suicide was reported to have been having issues on parental neglect and lack of attention and care. The parents have been so busy with their work in the factory and worked overtime so that they missed out on their

responsibilities to their children, leaving the children on their own most of the time. This incident alarmed the local government so the Mayor directed the MSDWO and the MCPC to coordinate with the schools in Mariveles in order to educate parents on their parenting responsibilities. There was a massive orientation on parenting in all schools of Mariveles because of this. Currently, the MCPC is leading the organization of Parents' Councils in every barangay in order to strengthen parental and children monitoring capacities among parents. In the FGD with children, the participants expressed their concern over a case of rape and an attempted rape that were reported in Mariveles in 2016 involving school children. They expressed fear for their own safety as the attempted rape was made by a tricycle driver who was supposed to fetch a teenager from school and bring her home. According to them it was good that the child was able to shout for help.

### *Perceptions of local stakeholders regarding the issues highlighted*

From all the KIIs and FGDs and informal conversations with the different stakeholders covered by the study, the following are the stakeholders' general perceptions on the issues of child labor, CSEC, trafficking, the situation of girl children and other children in the municipality:

- Girl children are vulnerable to abuse.
- Children need to be protected from abuse and exploitation.
- There are family traditional values that discriminate against girl children such as the idea that they are the ones that must do household chores and take care of a child or children at home.
- Respondents are aware that abuses must be reported.
- The problems of child labor, CSEC and trafficking can be prevented through strong policies and responsive programs.
- Parents and children need to be aware of children's rights and laws
- Girl children need to be oriented on their rights.
- All respondents are aware of the MCPC, its benefits and most of them are part of the structure.
- The BCPC is a helpful mechanism in the barangay
- Children can participate in efforts on the promotion of children's rights

## **LOCAL STRUCTURES, ORDINANCES, EXECUTIVE ORDERS, OTHER POLICY ISSUANCES ON CHILDREN**

### *The Municipal Council for the Protection of Children (MCPC)*

The MCPC is the municipal-based local council for the protection of children. It is mandated, through the Local Government Code of 1991 and the department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to be organized by local government units to coordinate policies and programs that protect, promote and uphold children's rights.

While other cities/municipalities are having a challenge in organizing and/or reactivating their MCPCs, Mariveles takes pride in having a very functional MCPC structure. Based on interviews and FGDs, the presence of a "consultant for children's affairs" in the person of Ms. Roselle Fernandez, a social worker who had worked with the Philippine Rural reconstruction Movement (PRRM), is a major factor in the functionality of the MCPC, hence, the effective coordination of child welfare and child rights concerns in the municipality involving all stakeholders and duty-bearers. When one requests for data on children in the municipality, he/she is usually referred to Ms. Fernandez, who is also the coordinator of the MCPC. The MCPC is composed of representatives of the different departments (MSWDO, PNP, Health, DepEd, barangay, parent-teacher association (PTA), children, youth, CSOs, church and others). The MCPC holds regular meetings, planning and mobilization activities and it has its own vision, mission and goals. The MCPC has also been instrumental in drafting resolutions for adoption by the municipal council. Among these resolutions are on the improvement of 2016 work and financial plan, updating the membership

of the MCPC, the operation of and provision of funds for the Mariveles children's center, the conduct of parenting seminars in all barangays and other relevant resolutions.

Moreover, the MCPC serves as the binding force between and among the stakeholders in the municipality. All individuals and groups of stakeholders who have so far participated in FGDs and KII interviews can articulate the purposes of the MCPC and their meaningful participation in the structure what the municipality envisions for their children, that they will be enjoying fully their rights by the year 2025. As Ma'am Remy, the SB secretary would put it, "*Dito sa amin nagkakaintindihan kami, walang kiyeme ang bawat isa.*" *Kung may kailangang gawin, isang text lang, alam na nominee at nagkakaintindihan kami*" (in relation to children).

### ***The Mariveles Children's Center***

The center was constructed using the monetary award received by the municipality from DILG as a Child Friendly Municipality. It has rooms with double decked beds that are meant to accommodate children while their cases are being processed (abused children, children in conflict with the law, neglected and abandoned children, etc.). It also serves as the office of the MCPC. The center has a counseling room with a one-way mirror and an audio facility, all designed to help investigators and social workers in gathering data from child victims. This facility will promote confidentiality and protect the child victim from the usual burden of being interviewed by different persons and repeating his/her story during case investigation that is considered as another "victimization" as the agony of the child is being prolonged. This structure reinforces the institutionalization of a child protection system in Mariveles.

### ***Mariveles Children's Welfare Code***

Municipal Ordinance No. 57-2008: An Act Establishing a Comprehensive Children's Protection and Family Support Program and for Other Purposes, otherwise known as the Children's Welfare Code of Mariveles was passed on May 14, 2008 by the Sangguniang Bayan under the term of then municipal Mayor Hon. Jesse I Concepcion. It contains the municipality's priority laws, local policies and programs and structures for the children of Mariveles and serves as a guide and anchor of all concerned agencies in planning and budgeting for children's programs and services. With the Children's Welfare Code, the municipality does not have to pass single ordinances related to children unless such item or concern has not been included in the code or it is deemed necessary to be passed for stronger protection of children and compliance by duty-bearers. The code highlights the following concepts, policies, programs and priorities of the municipality in relation to protecting and promoting the rights of the children:

- Role of stakeholders/duty-bearers
- Role of the family and parents
- Role of schools
- Role of churches
- Role of people's organizations and non-government organizations
- Role of women
- Role of Judicial institutions
- Role of mass media
- Role father business sectors
- Role of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK)

### **Programs and services for children and family**

- Pre-marital preparations and parenting courses
- Primary health care services and programs
- Education of health support service providers

### **Early childhood care and development and primary health care programs**

- Day care Program (0-6 years)
- Comprehensive newborn screening
- Rooming-in and breastfeeding
- Garantisadong Pambata Program (Food fortification program) in response to malnutrition
- Children's health 2025 program

### **Programs for Children with Physical and Mental Disabilities**

- Survey and active program for specially-abled children
- Investment in educators and health professional training program for children with special needs
- Mariveles Dong-in tulay center ( a facility for specially abled children donated by a Korean firm in the Bataan Economic Zone)
- Tuloy Aral Walang Sagabal (TAWAG) project
- Classifications of specially abled children:
  - Mentally retarded children
  - Physically handicapped children
  - Emotionally disturbed children
  - Mentally ill children

### **Special Concerns**

- Program on child abuse, exploitation and discrimination
- Child protection goals - Mariveles adopted the goals of the Philippine Plan of Action for Children for the year 2000 and beyond
- Prevention programs:
  - primary prevention
  - secondary prevention
  - tertiary prevention
- Child labor
- Child trafficking
- Child prostitution and other sexual abuse
- Obscene publications and indecent shows

### **Other acts of neglect, abuse, cruelty or exploitation and other conditions prejudicial to the child's development**

- Peonage of children
- Using girls as commodities in benefit dances
- Discrimination against girl children
- Discrimination against illegitimate children
- Discrimination by reason of pregnancy
- Physical and degrading forms of punishment
- Pushing or enticing minors to live-in arrangements
- Entry, selling and distribution of pornographic materials
- Selling liquors, cigarettes, rugby, solvents and other addictive substance to a child
- Smoking in enclosed places and public conveyances
- Discrimination of indigenous children

### **Control on exposure to new technology, amusements and others**

- Control on the exposure to commercial video games
- Control on children's exposure to internet cafes

- Control on playing billiards and similar games
- Limited use of cellular phones
- Children's curfew

### **Children in situations of armed conflict**

- Children as zones of peace
- Evacuation of children during armed conflict
- Family life and temporary shelter
- Rights of child arrested for reasons related to armed conflict

### **Children in conflict with the law (CICL)**

- Rights of children in conflict with the law
- Minimum age of criminal responsibility
- Determination of age
- Treatment of child below the age of criminal responsibility
- Procedure for taking the child into custody
- Prohibition against labelling and shaming
- Diversion program
- Rehabilitation and reintegration

### **Local Councils for the protection of children (LCPC)**

- Creation of the municipal council for the protection of children
- Composition and functions
- The barangay council for the protection of children (BCPC)
- Internal rules for the LCPCs

### **Support services and facilities**

- Desk for women and children's concerns
- Rehabilitation center for children and provision of appropriate facilities
- Youth detention home
- Reception and training center for youth and children Complaint center

### **Budgetary appropriations**

Appropriation for children's programs- the municipality has highlighted the allocation of 1% from its Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) for MCPC activities and for supplemental funding for the implementation of the children's code, the drafting of the implementing rules and regulations, orientation of stakeholders and the promotion of the code to the general public. It also includes specific support for cool parents and their children.

### **Remedial measures and penal provisions**

This portion describes provisions on who may file a complaint, confidentiality, reporting, mandatory reporting, duty of government to report, failure to report, immunity for reporting and penalties.

It is interesting to note that the children's welfare code of Mariveles has a comprehensive list of children's issues and corresponding policies and laws, programs and structures to protect their 4 fundamental rights of survival, development, protection and participation. The issues of child labor, CSEC, trafficking and girl children are also mentioned in the code. There is a need, however, to review the code as it has been passed nine years ago and there are MCPC resolutions requesting

for its updating and for the development of its implementing rules and regulations (IRR) for dissemination to all stakeholders. It also needs to be strategically used and synchronized with the local development plan and annual investment plan and the local situation of children report.

### *Gender and Development Code*

Municipal Ordinance No. 2012-90 or the Gender and development Code Mandating the Implementation of a Comprehensive and Sustainable GAD Program was passed on December, 2012 by the Sangguniang Bayan also under the administration of Hon. Jesse I. Concepcion. The code outlines the municipality's intentions based on the provisions of RA 7192 otherwise known as the Women in Development and Nation Building Act. It ensures the equal participation and benefits of women and men in government programs and projects of selected funding agencies especially under those "funded under foreign development assistance". Under the GAD code, the participation of men is also included. Terms are defined for proper understanding of stakeholders and emphasized are the role of women in environmental concerns and livelihood and social services for OFW families and the creation of the gender and development council, among others. The GAD plan is a potential source of fund for initiatives on girl children.

### *The Good Practices of the Municipality in Relation to Children's Rights:*

#### **A Child-Friendly Municipality**

Mariveles has gone a long way in ensuring the protection of rights of its children. As a matter of fact, it has the so called Four (4) Gifts for Children, which are policy indicators provided for in the child friendly movement, namely: Local Development Plan for Children (LDPC), Local Investment Plan for Children (LIPC), Local Code on Children (LCC) and Local State of the Children Report (LSCR). The municipality takes pride in having received the following awards in a span of six years from 2011 to 2016:

- Presidential Trophy as The Most Child-Friendly Municipality in the Philippines in 2011
- Hall of Fame Awardee Most Child-Friendly LGU -regional level (2010- 2012)
- Hall of Fame Awardee Most Child-Friendly LGU - provincial level (2012- 2014)
- Most Functional MCPC -(Ideal Stage) -provincial level (2015 - 2016)

The Presidential Award is the highest award given to municipalities and cities in the Philippines. It is conferred to deserving LGUs in recognition of their vital role in the sustained promotion of children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation as well as in ensuring child-friendly governance. In 2011, Mariveles received this award under the category of 1st-3rd class municipality. This means that Mariveles has satisfied the requirements and criteria set for this award. It would be interesting to present the criteria used by the National Award Committee (NAC) under the auspices of the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) in evaluating entries to the Presidential Award category. There are six (6) indicators being used to assess a municipality in terms of its being child-friendly: a) planning and policy formulation; b) resource allocation and utilization; c) service delivery; d) institution-building and capacity-building; e) child participation and; f) community participation and community mobilization.

#### **Presence of Collaborative Partners**

Mariveles has a group of civil society organizations as partners in implementing programs and services for children. Mariveles has been able to tap several civil society organizations present in the area as partners and benefactors of children's programs, activities and even the Mariveles Children's center. These CSOs are also automatically represented in the MCPC.

- Children's Village -Bataan formerly known as SOS
- Rotary Club of Mariveles
- Rotary Club of Mariveles- Ecozone
- Association of Christian Churches in Mariveles

- Mariveles Water District
- Iwahori Multi-Purpose Cooperative
- WatchLife Workers Multi-Purpose Cooperative
- Mariveles Federation of differently-Abled Persons
- KALIPI

### **Having a Functional MCPC**

Mariveles has a functional MCPC as evidenced by its winning the Most Functional MCPC -(Ideal Stage) at the provincial level for 2015 - 2016. This means that the municipality got a score of 80-100% and was able to satisfy all the indicators of a functional LCPC set by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) under the categories of organization, meetings and policies, plans and budget.

The most laudable actions in relation to trying to sustain the MCPC are the presence of a technical person, hired by the municipality as consultant and the one in charge of coordinating the MCPC and the building of the Mariveles Children's Center, which has a function of serving as an office for the MCPC. These two important decisions made by the municipality could not be found in all municipalities in the country and these speak of the political will and a sound framework on child rights of the LGU led by its Chief Executive, the Mayor and supported by the members of the MCPC coming from the local departments, CSOs and private sector, the parents and children and school, etc. The MCPC, as it has been envisioned, is by far the most potent force in the municipality when it comes to coordinating and synchronizing all policies, programs and services for children.

The MCPC has proven to be responsive to emerging and current issues of children in Mariveles. In response to the cases of suicide among teenagers in 2015, it immediately coordinated a school wide parenting seminar involving all parents of each barangay. The offshoot of this activity is the current effort of organizing Parents' Councils (PC) in all 18 barangays covered. The PC is meant to be given continuous capacity-building activities for parents to be able to support their children effectively in all aspects of their lives. The MCPC is also continuously involving the youth through the *Kongreso ng mga Bata* (KONGRESO), a youth organization organized by the MCPC, in certain children-related activities such as orientation on laws on children and children's rights. The council likewise organized several fora in 2016 to strengthen the BCPCs and, for anti-smoking and anti-drug addiction campaigns, to refresh concerned agencies and groups on mainstreaming child rights in local development planning. The council has also continued to update its databank on children and conducted trainings and activities related to health, education and child protection. These and other activities have been facilitated by the MCPC with the wide participation of stakeholders in the municipality.

### **The Children's Welfare Code**

The Mariveles Children's Welfare Code serves as the general guide of the municipality and all the stakeholder groups therein in the planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of children's programs and services. So far, Mariveles has a very comprehensive code containing practically all concerns and issues of children. It is also set to be revisited as MCPC has filed a resolution on this to the Sangguniang Bayan. This is a good move considering that the municipality has emerging issues on children such as the ones mentioned above on mental health, abuse and exploitation of girl children and others.

It is worthy to mention that the issues of child labor, trafficking, CSEC and girl children are mentioned in the code as part of the municipality's concerns and agenda. These only need to be more deliberately reflected in the municipality's local investment and development plans, programs and activities.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the emerging issues that need to be given special and continuous attention to are the following: sexual exploitation particularly the “*akyat-bangka*” issue, sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy, mental health and child labor and trafficking given the risks posed by the rapid technological advances including the social media where the children are exposed, presence of the economic zone and port of Mariveles making the municipality a tourist destination and center of economic investments that make children vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

Mariveles is relatively advanced in its institutional mechanisms to protect the rights of children especially the most vulnerable ones, the girl children, working children, victims of sexual abuse and exploitation and those children especially young women who are economically excluded. Moreover, the stakeholders’ perceptions on the importance of protecting children reinforce the municipality’s efforts on the promotion of children’s rights. It is good to know that the necessary political will, inspiration, support of the people and resources and mechanisms are in place for the municipality to be able to sustain the promotion and protection of the rights of its most important human capital: the children. Beyond all these good practices of Mariveles, the municipality can still strive for some improvements as to the “quality” of its processes, programs, services and efforts on child rights protection. What remains to be done would be the “enhancement” of certain areas for the municipality’s actions to be more strategic, aligned and responsive to local and national goals on children. Hence, some recommendations are in order for the municipality to consider to make it a more sustainable, child-friendly municipality for the rest of the LGUs to emulate. These areas would fall into the broad categories of: **strategic planning and reporting, organizational development, program development, child protection referral system, monitoring and evaluation, child participation and awareness-raising, advocacy and networking**. It is recommended that the MCPC will continue to spearhead the discussion and possible adoption of the following specific recommendations:

### **Strategic planning and reporting:**

1. Revisit the municipal Children’s Welfare Code to:
  - align it with the goals and targets of the 3rd NPAC
  - include stronger protection of girl children and children involved in CSEC, child labor and victims of trafficking under the category of special protection
  - identify priority issues of children to be included in the MCPC’s agenda and corresponding local development plan and investment plan for children and to be allotted corresponding budget
  - draft its IRR
1. The MCPC should revisit its strategic plan to include emerging issues in its priority agenda and align its goals to the goals and targets of the 3rd NPAC. The strategic plan must inform the policies, plans, programs, database and monitoring and evaluation system of the municipality in relation to children. Involve all stakeholders in the strategic planning process especially the private sector: the ecozone managers and port managers
2. Revisit the investment plan and local development plan to include priority issues of children
3. Design a “State of the Children Report” that tackles and provides updates on the priorities indicated in the investment and local development plans

**Organizational development:**

1. Continue to conduct regular general assemblies of the MCPC and BCPCs for consolidation and synchronization of programs, activities, accomplishments, challenges and lessons learned and one up with a plan on how to sustain the capacities of its members and strengthen the councils as organizations including the representation of children 10-17 years old in the council
2. Continuously conduct relevant capacity-building and team-building for MCPC and BCPC members

**Program development:**

1. The MCPC should assess all programs for children to balance efforts related to the children's survival, development, protection and participation rights. The MCPC should continue coordinating all child protection programs and activities in the municipality and collaborating with government agencies and non-government organizations
2. Consistently document policies, programs, services and activities, good practices and lessons learned for a variety of purposes: program development, monitoring and evaluation, replication of programs by other areas, research and policy development

**Child protection referral system:**

1. Design a referral network to strengthen child protection mechanism in the municipality, identifying different stakeholders as key players from detection, reporting, referral to intervention, rehabilitation and integration. Each community resident must know who can report, when to report, how to report and who to report to in cases of violation of children's rights happening in the home, in school or in the community
2. Post printed referral flowchart in every school, barangay, agency, institutions, organizations and business establishments

**Monitoring and evaluation:**

1. If possible, conduct a survey of children in each barangay (as part of the regular function of the BCPC) in order to have an updated profile of children and their families/households. More importantly, the survey will be able to gather data on other possible incidence of child abuse and exploitation.
2. Revisit the municipality's database on children and modify it according to the requirements of the child-friendly local governance. Update the database after the survey. Use the data base as basis for program development.
3. Develop indicators and monitoring and evaluation tools based on the strategic plan and programs for children that are in turn based on an updated database. Utilize the indicators set by Child 21, child-friendly movement and the 3rd NPAC as anchors.
4. Provide feedback on monitoring and evaluation results and relevant updates on the situation of children to all stakeholders (during assemblies and meetings).

**Children's Participation:**

1. Organize barangay children's associations (BCA) to prepare children 10-17 years old, with the participation of girl children, for their intensive awareness-raising, capacity-building, participation in local governance and in their own protection and development through awareness raising and capacity-building on their rights, responsibilities, leadership skills and other activities. The BCA can be merged with the current Kongreso ng Bata structure.
2. BCA representatives must have a seat at the MCPC, BCPC and the Child protection Committee in schools and other similar structures. The MCPC can organize child-led activities after the strengthening of the BCA.

**Awareness-raising, Advocacy and Networking:**

1. Expand the MCPC's network among the private sector and civil society organizations to maximize resource sharing and collaboration for children's rights
2. Encourage internal and external volunteers to speed up efforts in organizing parents councils and BCAs and other activities
3. Develop materials on children's rights and issues on children and disseminate them to all stakeholders

## REFERENCES

Data for this study were gathered from:

1. 1. Key Informant Interviews with the representatives of the PNP, MSWDO, MCPC, parents, children and teachers
2. Focus group discussion with groups of children, teachers, parents, CSOs and the MCPC members
3. Secondary Documents:
  - MCPC Accomplishments 2016
  - Local Situation of Children 2017
  - 2016 Provincial Social Welfare and development Report
  - Socio-economic profile document form the MCPC
  - Mariveles website documents
  - Mariveles Children's Welfare Code
  - GAD Plan
4. Researcher's observations and informal conversations with stakeholders

**LGU/CSO research Validation – Mariveles, Bataan**  
**December 4, 2017**

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**CHAPTER VII**

**CONCLUSIONS  
AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS<sup>1</sup>

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRENDS

The trend in all four areas of study is increasing urbanization. Although many of the barangays in each locality remain rural and agricultural, commercial establishments particularly in the service sector is on the rise. Urbanization is most pronounced in Cabanatuan City, the largest metropolis in Nueva Ecija, and arguably in Region III. In fact, it is ripe for being declared a Highly Urbanized City . Mariveles, a first class municipality which has a port and has been the location of an export processing zone since the 1970s is also advancing in the process of urban development . Palayan City, which now serves as the capital of Nueva Ecija , is still largely agricultural despite having some barangays already classified as urban. The Science City of Muñoz is well known as a knowledge center focusing on agricultural technology. Production is still largely agri-based and a large part of the service sector is engaged in marketing agricultural products.

What is new in all the four cities is the spread of internet and mobile phone services, social media, and video shops. Tourism , entertainment, food and lodging establishments are on the rise. However, the largely service sector cannot seem to absorb those in the labor force. Unemployment and underemployment figures are high, and rural poverty remains a persistent issue.

The implications on women and girls are worrisome and need to be addressed. Labor force participation is low, and data nationwide reveal that almost half of women and girls are economically excluded because they do mostly unpaid care work that is not considered an economic activity. Many women and girls are employed in informal work, which is low-paying and has no social protection. Tourism and entertainment establishments are associated with commercial sexual exploitation; cybersex and trafficking arrangements now can be coursed through internet and mobile phones. The negative impact of migration especially by mothers manifests itself in the neglect and abuse of children left to the care of irresponsible fathers who have vices and/or mistresses. More generally, violence against women and girls is common fare in both mainstream and social media, influencing perceptions and attitudes which tend to generate more violence.

## CHILD LABOR, TRAFFICKING, COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION OF YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS: INCIDENCE AND DATA GAPS

In general, the research team encountered very few recorded incidents of child trafficking in all the research areas. But the possibility of there being many unrecorded cases has been brought up in the focus group discussions. Entrapment mechanisms are now less effective because traffickers now can easily avoid arrest through internet- or mobile-phone based recruitment and earning systems.

Commercial sexual exploitation is assumed to exist in entertainment establishments where women work and are required to have check-ups in social hygiene clinics for sexually transmitted diseases. Whether or not children below 18 work in these establishments but are hiding their real age remains a question that may be pursued. In Mariveles, some children have been reported to be sexually servicing fishermen through what is known as, *akyat barko*. The possibility of street children loitering around parks, malls, and other public places being sexually exploited is always there, given past testimonies and documentation, but there is no current hard evidence. Cybersex featuring children in poverty may also be occurring with parental knowledge and consent, because this can now be easily arranged, and neighbors or other observers who can serve as witnesses may not know to whom to report and how to handle the situation. The high incidence of HIV-AIDS reported in Cabanatuan City could lead to preference for young girls for

1 Written by Rosalinda Pineda Ofreneo with inputs from Florence Pasos and Ma. Theresa Molino

commercial sexual exploitation with the assumption that they are “safer” but this still has to be proven. At the moment, official attention has been on men having sex with other men, and perhaps also with boys. In general, statistical and gender-disaggregated data on CSEC are not available.

Child labor is more easily tracked but will require an information and monitoring system that reaches all the way down to the barangays. Some children, both boys and girls, are into waste recycling (*nagangalakal*) in Cabanatuan City and Mariveles. Some girls are in the informal service sector as vendors, waitresses, dishwashers, domestic workers, laundry persons. More boys than girls are in agriculture and in agri-business such as poultry farms. And girls do unpaid care work on top of paid work to augment the family income. Statistical data on child labor are dated and general. What are available on a per province or per municipality/city basis can only be obtained through special requests which require funding. The Department of Labor and Employment as well as other agencies involved in the HELP ME convergence program has micro data for certain barangays targeted to eventually be child-labor free.

Street children are visible in Cabanatuan City and Mariveles. There is a program for them in Cabanatuan City, in the form of a Hope Center where they can drop in, and a Tahanan ni Maria for those rescued. Indigenous children such as the Badjaos in Cabanatuan used to roam the streets but are now in LGU-supported settlements. In Mariveles, however, Badjao children have been observed begging in the streets as Christmas approaches.

Economic exclusion of young women and girls up to 24 years old is a fairly new issue that has not been addressed in particular in the cities studied. There are informal reports of young women being discriminated against in fast food centers and other formal establishments when they get pregnant. Teenage pregnancy is on the rise, and this can also mean more young women being excluded from productive work because they are burdened with infant and child care at an early age. It is also more likely that teenage mothers would drop out of school and would therefore most likely be unable to find decent work. Most young women coming from poverty-stricken households would also not have the educational and skills level to be employed in formal establishments and would most likely land in the unprotected informal economy.

Aside from these issues, other forms of violence against children, old and new, have been recorded and brought up. PNP-PSIU records show data on acts of lasciviousness, as well as physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse victimizing women and children. Emergent issues that are more rife among the youth are cyber-based bullying and shaming, as well as hazing among fraternities/sororities. Discrimination against girl children with special needs is felt especially in schools where they are supposed to be integrated. Mental health issues that lead to suicide have also emerged, especially in Mariveles.

## LEGISLATION AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

All four areas of study have been considered child friendly, based on the local governance audit. One, Mariveles, is already in the Hall of Fame for accumulating so many awards for its child-friendly governance.

All have enacted Children’s Codes, but one (SCM) has not been implemented due to lack of an executive order from the Office of the Mayor but it is currently in the process of updating. Consequently, the City Council for the Protection of Children was not convened. Two (Palayan City and Cabanatuan City) have fairly recent Children’s Codes but mechanisms for implementation by the local councils at both the city and barangay levels need a lot of improvement. The Mariveles Children’s Code needs to be revisited for updating and for the needed implementing rules and regulations. Of the four areas, Mariveles seems to have the best experience so far, since it has dedicated personnel and a center tasked with implementation and ensuring that the local councils for the protection of children at both the city and barangay levels are functioning.

All are supposed to have annual state of the children reports, where data can ideally be obtained to track changes in the situation of children over time, but these have not been done or can no longer be traced. Mariveles does have reports, but these need to contain more relevant and comprehensive data based on existing plans on children.

There is an ordinance called the Code of Parental Responsibility in Cabanatuan City which aims to make parents responsible for protecting children's rights but it needs to be strongly disseminated in order to be effective. In Palayan City, there are other ordinances concerning children but these are not focused on child protection. It has also been pointed out in validation sessions that if Children's Codes are truly and fully implemented, there would be no need for other ordinances. Provisions for children can be found in the local development plan, the GAD plan, and the annual investment plan of the cities but they have yet to be put together in dedicated plans solely on children.

Provisions, services, and accomplishments in relation to child survival and development are more evident than those dealing with child protection and participation. Mariveles has a relatively more advanced planning and implementation of activities on child protection than other areas. Child representation in Mariveles is ensured in BCPCs, convened in Children's Congresses and Assemblies.

In Cabanatuan, activities in observance of the International Day Against Trafficking are regularly conducted. A more general gap in relation to advocacy is the lack of visible information, education, and communication (IEC) materials on children's rights and on laws/ordinances passed to respect, protect, and fulfill these rights.

Engagement of civil society organizations, private sector, children and youth organizations in the pursuit of children's concerns is still quite limited and needs to be systematically addressed to develop a multi-stakeholder approach to the realization of children's rights.

## **KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

Aside from the local government units that are the principal duty bearers in making sure that children's rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled, there are other stakeholders which are important in the pursuit of this goal.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have varying levels of engagement with the LGU on children's concerns. They seem to be most active in Cabanatuan City, where leaders and members of the Philippines Against Child Trafficking (PACT), I-ACT (I Against Child Trafficking), and the Pag-ASA Youth Association have leaders and members in the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) and/or have been involved in the crafting of the new Children's Code in 2016. However, other CSOs still have to be made aware of the provisions of the Code and be engaged in a process of convergence and collaboration in furtherance of children's rights. Lack of CSO awareness and engagement has been noted in Palayan City and the Science City of Muñoz, but due to the research, there seems to be interest in being more active in the pursuit specifically of child protection. In Mariveles, CSOs have reportedly been collaborating with the local government through their participation in the MCPC, partnerships and fund support in certain children's programs. However, there is still a wide space for more CSOs to participate, particularly non-government organizations working on children's rights.

Children and youth groups interviewed or which have been part of focus group discussions and validation sessions, articulate their perceptions, issues and concerns. Those who have experienced trafficking and child labor are appreciative of the services extended to them by government institutions. Those who have not yet been helped, such as those in child labor, are hopeful that assistance will eventually be extended to them and they can still have a bright future. Older children and youth brought up new concerns connected with cyber-violence, hazing, sexual abuse and neglect. Girl children who have

attended the Children's Youth Advocacy Training in Quezon City express appreciation for the opportunity to learn and build on their capabilities.

Teachers who participated in FGDs and validation sessions say that they need more exposure to and training on child protection issues, and hope that more of the children in their particular schools can have opportunities for capability building not only in advocacy but also in listening skills for peer counseling. Those in Mariveles, in particular, are worried about their readiness to address cases of mental health and imminent suicide. Those who discover that children in their school are victims of commercial sexual exploitation are not equipped to handle the situation even if in many cases, teachers are among the first to notice unusual behavior or appearance among their students.

Parents of child laborers are aware of many of the rights of the child but are not familiar with all of their responsibilities, particularly those contained in the Code of Parental Responsibility enacted in Cabanatuan City. They know they have to ensure the survival, development, and protection of their children, which is why they are hopeful they can be assisted by government through livelihood grants to enable them to do so. The participation aspect does not seem to be etched in their awareness, and corporal punishment is still their practice to instill discipline even if the Code prohibits this.

The role of the private sector is not yet that clear and visible in the case study areas. In the case of Cabanatuan, the lone private sector participant from the Alalay sa Kaunlaran Inc. (ASKI) participated in the CSO FGD and shared the ASKI experience focused mainly on survival and development, but with some awareness-raising activities focusing on violence against women and children. Ideally, the private sector needs to be engaged in preventing the occurrence of the four issues highlighted in this study, but this has not yet taken place.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the recommendations revolved around the full provision and implementation of the four gifts to children: a local Children's Code, a dedicated local development plan for children, an annual investment plan, and a yearly State of the Children report. These documents should eventually provide for the specific interests and protection of the girl child. Such an eventuality is premised on a fully functional and gender-sensitive City/Municipal Council for the Welfare of Children, active Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (BCPCs) on the way towards being "ideal," and existence of dedicated personnel with an office/center and budgetary support with the sole purpose of ensuring the realization of the four gifts in practice.

BCPCs need to be organized and/or activated in all the barangays through a systematic community organizing process that could be spearheaded by CSOs and child advocates present at the grassroots. They should eventually be federated and be in close coordination with the City/Municipal Councils. Regular assemblies of the BCPCs with the City/Municipal Councils can be held. The BCPCs, ideally with the support of grassroots organizations and the City/Municipal Councils, may also be encouraged to organize barangay children's associations (BCA) to prepare children 10-17 years old, with the participation of girl children, for their participation in local governance and in their own protection and development through awareness raising and capacity-building on their rights, responsibilities, leadership skills and other activities. In terms of data collection for cases of child labor, child trafficking, CSEC, and child labor, barangay mechanisms are in the front lines as reporting first goes to the barangay tanod, the Barangay Women and Children's Desks, etc.

The Children's Codes in Cabanatuan City and Palayan City are relatively new and updated, but the one in SCM is now being replaced by a more relevant and effective version, while that in Mariveles needs to be revisited and buttressed by Implementing Rules and Regulations. Integration of girl child concerns in these codes and their implementing mechanisms can still be advocated and pursued. Effective modalities for child protection and meaningful participation need to be created. There should be an effective monitoring and evaluation system for the Children's Code, with attention to the "four gifts to children" and other important provisions anchored on the children's survival, development, protection and participation rights. The four gifts to children: the investment plan, local development plan, the local state of children report and LCPCs must be updated and adjusted regularly based on monitoring and evaluation results. There is a need to ensure that the investment plan, development plan and local state of children report including updated situational analysis and data on children are separate documents focused only on children and not merely a part of the regular plans that the cities have. There is an existing Child Friendly Local Government Audit on the basis of which the three case study areas in Nueva Ecija have obtained high scores. However, the city submissions are not validated and counter-checked, and the research undertaken in these areas reveal important gaps.

Complete, substantive, and evidence-based Annual State of the Children's Reports need to be produced in all the case study areas. Although Mariveles already produces such a document, it needs to reflect the priorities of the existing plans for children, and track these through time through a systematic, gender-disaggregated data collection system. Cases that provide evidence for the pressing and emerging issues such as those highlighted in this research have to be documented, recorded, counted, and addressed.

In each of the case study areas, strategic planning should be conducted to identify priorities that are anchored on national frameworks and programs such as Child 21, Child friendly Movement and the 3rd National Plan of Action for Children. There is a need to institutionalize, and ensure through resource mobilization, multi-stakeholder engagement in the various stages of program development for children's protection towards sustainable action and higher impact. There is a need, as well, to integrate children's concerns in a comprehensive anti-poverty program, given that poverty is considered the root of child labor, child trafficking and similar issues. The focus on the girl child and the gender aspect of children's

issues should be sharpened in the planning process. Children and youth advocates and organizations should be identified, capacitated, and mobilized to participate meaningfully in this process.

Advocacy activities also need to be highlighted and funded. Child rights and child issues with emphasis on the girl children can be included in Family Development Sessions of the 4Ps, which covers as many as 7,000 families in Cabanatuan City alone. School principals and guidance counselors (the key persons in Child Protection Committees) of schools should be approached to obtain more information on cases of child labor, child trafficking and CSEC. PARED sessions of schools should be used for orientation on child rights and issues for parents. Science and other subjects to educate children on early pregnancy and HIV AIDS/ (Cabanatuan is no. 6 in terms of AIDS incidence) should be maximized. CSOs, CSWDO/MSWDO and other key units in the City/Municipal Councils for the Protection of Children should join hands in raising awareness and mounting campaigns on the Children's Code, on the ordinance on parental responsibility, etc. targeting parents in communities particularly. Mainstream and social media should be maximized to reach children and youth, especially the millennials.

In particular, there should be more clarification and awareness raising regarding economic exclusion of young women and girls because consciousness regarding this issue is not at all apparent. The connections with the gender division of labor, unpaid care work, low female labor force participation, rising teen-age pregnancy, relegation of young women and girls to the unprotected informal economy, and gender-based discrimination in the formal sector, need to be drawn and traced. Gender-disaggregated data on labor force participation, patterns of employment, unemployment, underemployment need to be collected by the LGU, particularly by the PESO, to come up with a clearer picture. Based on these data, strategies for the economic empowerment of young women and girls can be drawn by the LGUs and other stakeholders for eventual integration in the "four gifts" mentioned above.

To make awareness-raising and advocacy efforts and all other initiatives on children more effective, the data and situation of children covering their four major rights must be updated. One important function of the BCPCs and MCPCs is to conduct a regular survey on children in all barangays to serve as basis for planning. This is strongly recommended to be done by all study areas. The survey results will then provide a new baseline for the areas and will substantiate the monitoring and evaluation system in the community.

To aid the awareness-raising and advocacy efforts, there should be exchange of experiences and good practices among the case study areas based on the results of this research. Mariveles, for example, can share the factors behind its multiple and sustained child-friendly awards to interested LGUs. The comprehensive Children's Code of Cabanatuan City could serve as a reference for ongoing hearings for a new Code in Muñoz and in the suggested review of the Children's Code in Mariveles.

Last but not least, the importance of creating and strengthening local structures and systems cannot be overemphasized. The local councils for the protection of children are envisioned to be the mechanisms to synchronize all local policies and programs for children that entail efficient and child-centered planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Based on the results of the research in the study areas, there is a great need for these structures to be more functional and responsive. Mariveles has achieved the ideal level of functionality for its MCPC and it has active BCPCs that are reportedly conducting regular meetings and implementation of activities. Child protection mechanisms are in place in all areas as there are reporting mechanisms and women and children's desks (VAWC) in both barangay and municipal levels with the barangay, PNP and MSWDO as key participants in case management. Nevertheless, there is no clear and comprehensive child protection system that includes reporting and referral system on child abuse and exploitation cases with the involvement of all the community stakeholders particularly the schools, which have their child protection committees. Continuing development and enhancement of structures and systems therefore should be pursued.

## ACRONYMS

ABC	Association of Barangay Captains
AIP	Annual Investment Plan
ALS	Alternative Learning System
ARWA	Aulo Rural Workers' Association
ASKI Foundation	Alalay sa Kaunlaran Inc.
AWFP	Annual Work and Financial Plan
BADAC	Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council
BASECO	Bataan Shipyard and Engineering Corporation
BBI	Barangay Based Institution
BCA	Barangay Children's Association
BCPC	Barangay Council for the Protection of Children
BDC	Barangay Development Council
BDRRMC	Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Committee
BHW	Barangay Health Worker
BNS	Barangay Nutrition Scholar
BPOC	Barangay Peace and Order Committee
BPSP	Barangay Public Safety Plan
BuB	Bottom Up Budgeting
CAR	Children At Risk
CBMS	Community Based Monitoring System
CCPWC	City Council for the Protection and Welfare of Children
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CCWPCSCM	City Council for the Welfare and Protection of Children of the
CDA	Core Development Agenda
CDP	Comprehensive Development Pan
CFM	Child-Friendly Movement
CICL	Children in Conflict with the Law
CIDG	Criminal Investigation and Detection Group
CLAIM	Chosen Leader Association in Munoz
CLEO	City Labor and Employment Office
CLSU	Central Luzon State University
C/MLGOO	City/Municipal Local Government Operations Office(r) Science City of Munoz
CMO	City Mayor's Office
C/MSWDO	City/Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office(r)
CNSP	Children in Need of Special Protection
CPAC	City Plan of Action for Children
CPCP	Comprehensive Program for Child Protection
CPDO	City Planning Development Office
CPR	Code of Parental Responsibility
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CTO	City Tourism Office
CWC	Council for the Welfare of Children
CWL	Catholic Women's League
CYDC	City Youth Development Council

DALUYONG	Daluyan at Ugnayan ng Organisasyong Pangkababaihan sa Kanayunan
DCW	Day Care Worker
DepEd	Department of Education
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOLE	Department of Labor and Employment
DRRM	Disaster Risk Reduction Management
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution and Trafficking
FACES	Family Base for Children and the Environment in the Slum
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FRVA	Family Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
GAA	Girls Advocacy Alliance
GAD	Gender and Development
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GRO	Guest Relation Officer
GST	Gender Sensitivity Training
HELP ME	Health, Education, Livelihood, Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Monitoring and Evaluation
HSI	Herma Shpyard, Inc.
IACACP	Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography
IACAT	Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking
I ACT	I Against Child Trafficking
IEC	Information, Education and Communications
IGP	Income Generating Project
ILO	International Labor Organization
IRA	Internal Revenue Allotment
IRR	Implementing Rules and Regulations
IYCF	Infant Youth Child Feeding
JJWC	Juvenile Justice Welfare Council
KaBaPa	Katipunan ng Bagong Pilipina
KII	Key Informant Interview
LCE	Local Chief Executive
LCPC	Local Council for the Protection of Children
LDIP	Local Development Investment Plan
LDPC	Local Development Plan for Children
LEGS	Labor Education for Graduating Students
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)
LGC	Local Government Code
LGU	Local Government Unit
LIPC	Local Investment Plan for Children
LSB	Local School Board

MAILAF	Mariveles Anti-Illegal Logging and Fishing
MBN	Minimum Basic Need
MC	Memorandum Circular
MCPC	Municipal Council for the Protection of Children
MSM	Men having Sex with Men
MYSS	Mapangpang Youth Soul Saver
NBI	National Bureau of Investigation
NBOO	National Barangay Operations Office
NCLC	National Child Labor Committee
NCPC	National Child Protection Committee
NE	Nueva Ecija
NEDA	National Economic Development Authority
NEUST	Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology
NGO	Non-government Organization
NHA	National Housing Authority
NIKE-NE	Nagkakaisang Kababaihang Entreprenyur - Nueva Ecija
NPAC	National Plan of Action for Children
NSCB	National Statistical and Coordination Board
OFW	Overseas Filipino Worker
OPI	Outreach Philippines Inc
OSY	Out of School Youth
PACT	Philippines Against Child Trafficking
PACOWA	Palayan City Overseas Workers' Association
PARED	Parents Education
PARTCO	Partner in Research and Community Organization
PCCGA	Palayan City Calamansi Growers Association
PCCWC	Palayan City Council for the Welfare of Children
PCMO	Palayan City Ministers Organization
PCPC	Provincial Council for the Protection of Children
PCSSDO	Palayan City Social Services and Development Office
PD	Presidential Decree
PKKK	Pambansang Koalisyon ng Kababaihan sa Kanayunan
PES	Parents Effectiveness Services
PNP	Philippine National Police
PO	People's Organization
PPACL	Philippine Program Against Child Labor
PSA	Philippine Statistical Authority
PSIU	Psycho-Social Intervention Unit
PSO	Public Safety Office
PSWDO	Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office
PTA	Parents-Teachers Association
PWD	Person with Disability
RA	Republic Act
RPS	Responsible Parenthood Services
SARILAYA	Kasarian Kalayaan
SCM	Science City of Munoz
SIKAP	Samahan sa Ikauunlad ng Kabataang Pilipino (for Palayan and Munoz)

SIKAP	Samahang Ikabubuto ng Kabataan na Aagapay sa Pangangailangan ng Bayan (for Munoz)
SITA	South Igorot Tribal Association of Nueve Ecija, Inc
SK	Sangguniang Kabataan
SPECS	Special Program for Employment of Students
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
SWDR	Social Welfare Development Report
TAWAG	Tuloy Aral Walang Sagabal
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Training Authority
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UP CSWCD development	University of the Philippines College of Social Work and Community De-
VAWC	Violence Against Women and Children
VMG	Vision, Mission, Goal
WDC	Women’s and Children’s Desk
WHO	World Health Organization
4Ps	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program
SAMACA-NA	

GIRLS  
ADVOCACY  
ALLIANCE



Development Cooperation  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

