

Reforming Youth Futures: Innovative Approaches To Juvenile Justice in Baguio City

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ABSTRACT

This study determines the effectiveness of Baguio City's current juvenile justice policies and practices in dealing with youth offenses and promoting rehabilitation, including analyzing relevant data and statistics. It targets four areas: effectiveness of current juvenile justice policies and practices, challenges and issues faced by implementers, innovative approaches to juvenile justice in Baguio City, and community-based programs and restorative justice practices. The study used qualitative research design, particularly the case study method. The primary tool used was a validated interview guide. The selected participants were social workers of the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO). The participants are called informant 1, informant 2, and informant 3. Their office selected them based on their job specification, stay in the said office, and availability for the interview. In addition, they are the best source of information since they are the ones who are immersed in implementing intervention and rehabilitation programs in line with restorative justice. The informants shared their experiences as social workers, such as the challenges like non-cooperation of clients and families, shortage of workforce, bulky cases, financial shortages, lack of training, and non-compliance or poor compliance of clients. At the same time, they were also able to develop innovative approaches like using interns and technology. In several cases where intervention programs were processed and implemented, they could give a percentage to conclude that the programs they implemented were effective. Lastly, their community-based practices include visitation to other facilities and aftercare programs.

Keywords: Restorative justice, intervention, challenges, community-based practices, innovative approach

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is an evident yet brief chapter, a development journey between childhood and adulthood. It is distinguished by curiosity, experimentation like drug use, unsafe sex, reckless driving, and risk-taking, which put on the possibility of long-term consequences and make them sensitive to peers and social influences. Its prevalent course in developing stages is integrated in the sense of self or developing their

identity or personal identity, including independence, beginning to renegotiate autonomy in their relationship with parents, peers, and social influences. Adolescents are distinguished from adults and children in three specific aspects, leading to behavior differences. First, adolescents lack a mature capacity for self-regulation in emotionally charged contexts relative to adults. Second, adolescents have a heightened sensitivity to proximal external influences, such as peer pressure and immediate incentives relative to children and adults. Third, adolescents are less able to make judgments and decisions that require future orientation (Bonnie et al., 2012).

Throughout the last decade, multiple new strategies and programs have been created to manage juvenile deviant behaviors effectively. These programs reduce recidivism, make our communities safer, and improve interactions (Herter, 2016).

Juvenile justice policies and practices have evolved to address the complexities of dealing with youth offenses and promoting rehabilitation. The influence of stereotypes, such as the "superpredator" stereotype, significantly impacts beliefs about transferring juvenile offenders to the criminal justice system and sentencing them to life without parole, indicating a societal inclination towards punitive measures as belief in such stereotypes increases (Greene et al., 2017). Moreover, the juvenile justice system's interaction with youth offenders has been associated with an increased risk of adult criminality, especially for those receiving residential services, highlighting the long-term implications of juvenile justice involvement (Copeland et al., 2022).

School resource officers are pivotal in referring juveniles for minor offenses, indicating that schools significantly contribute to juvenile justice referrals for less serious offenses (May et al., 2018). This highlights the need for policies prioritizing educational and rehabilitative approaches over punitive measures within academic settings.

Recent developments in juvenile justice policy show a shift towards viewing youth as victims, focusing on interventions to protect and rehabilitate them (Benekos et al., 2013). This shift suggests a return to a more youth-oriented system that recognizes the developmental differences between youth and adults and the potential for rehabilitation.

The formal processing of youth offenders, as opposed to informal diversion to community services, is associated with adverse outcomes, including higher re-arrest and incarceration rates, engagement in violence, and poor educational outcomes (Cauffman et al., 2021). This evidence supports the call for juvenile justice policies and practices focusing on rehabilitation and reintegration rather than punishment. The juvenile justice system in the Philippines is primarily governed by the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006, also known as Republic Act No. 9344. This legislation was enacted to protect the rights and welfare of children who conflict with the law (CICL). The Act establishes a comprehensive system for dealing with juvenile offenders, which includes measures for prevention, intervention, diversion, rehabilitation, and reintegration. It also provides for the creation of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC), an inter-agency body responsible for formulating and implementing policies related to juvenile justice (Sanchez, n.d.)

One of the Act's key provisions is establishing a minimum age of criminal responsibility, which is currently set at 15. This means children under 15 who commit offenses are exempt from criminal liability. Instead, they are subjected to an intervention program unless they act with discernment; in this case, they shall be subjected to the appropriate proceedings under the Republic Act (R.A.) Number 10630, amending the law on RA 9344 (RALB Law, n.d.).

The Act promotes restorative justice and advocates for a child-friendly system where children are treated with dignity and respect. It emphasizes diversion programs and community-based interventions rather than punitive measures. This approach aims to prevent reoffending and help CICL reintegrate into society (Pinoy Attorney, 2023).

In recent years, the juvenile justice system in the Philippines has faced numerous challenges, including overcrowding in detention facilities, lack of access to legal representation for CICL, and the proposed lowering of the minimum age of criminal responsibility. Despite these challenges, various efforts are being made to improve the system, including legislative amendments, capacity-building programs for justice sector professionals, and developing community-based intervention programs (Pinoy Attorney, 2023).

To further enhance the juvenile justice system, the Philippine government, in partnership with various non-government organizations, has initiated programs such as the Alternative Learning System (ALS). The ALS is a non-formal education program that provides educational opportunities for out-of-school youths and adults, including those who conflict with the law. Studies have shown that such programs can play a crucial role in preventing recidivism and promoting the social reintegration of young offenders (Sanchez, n.d.).

Literature Review

The landscape of juvenile justice has undergone significant transformations in response to societal perceptions, stereotypes, and evolving understandings of youth behavior. The "superpredator" stereotype has played a role in shaping punitive measures, with research indicating a correlation between the belief in such stereotypes and a proclivity towards harsher sentencing for juvenile offenders (Greene et al., 2017). This highlights the impact of societal attitudes on juvenile justice practices. Additionally, the long-term consequences of juvenile justice involvement, particularly for those receiving residential services, emphasize the importance of reevaluating the effectiveness of punitive measures in shaping youth futures (Stevenson & Bottoms, 2009).

The juvenile justice system and adult criminal justice system differ in many ways, but aspects overlap. The main difference between the two systems is that the juvenile justice system believes that youth are capable of positive change, so rehabilitation becomes one of the main goals. It also assumes that the youth are part of a family, and attempts are made to involve parents in the different aspects of the system (Krisberg, 2005). The Pennsylvania Supreme Court expressed the separation of the juvenile justice system from the adult system as it is to save, not to punish; it is to rescue, not to imprison; it is to subject to wise care, treatment, and control rather than to incarcerate in penitentiaries and jails; it is to strengthen the better instincts and to check the evil tendencies; it aims, in the absence of proper parental care, or guardianship, to throw around a child, just starting in an evil course, the strong arm of the *parens patriae* (Jams, 2019). The literature significantly explores the influence of educational institutions on juvenile justice involvement. School resource officers, integral to the referral process for minor offenses, underscore the role of schools in contributing to juvenile justice referrals for less severe infractions (May et al., 2018). This insight emphasizes the need for policies prioritizing educational and rehabilitative approaches within academic settings. Addressing juvenile behavior within the educational context becomes pivotal in steering the youth away from punitive pathways.

Recent developments in juvenile justice policies signal a paradigm shift towards viewing youth as victims rather than solely as offenders. This shift is reflected in interventions prioritizing protection and rehabilitation, acknowledging the developmental disparities between youth and adults (Kim et al., 2016).

This reconceptualization encourages a return to a more youth-oriented system, emphasizing rehabilitation over punitive measures and recognizing the potential for positive transformation.

The literature highlights the adverse outcomes associated with the formal processing of youth offenders compared to informal diversion to community services. Formal processing is linked to higher re-arrest and incarceration rates, engagement in violence, and poor educational outcomes. This evidence reinforces the call for juvenile justice policies that prioritize rehabilitation and reintegration, challenging the traditional punitive approach.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework/Paradigm of the Study

The study "Reforming Youth Futures: Innovative Approaches to Juveniles in Baguio City" adopts a comprehensive approach, integrating various theories, principles, and laws to guide its design and ethical conduct.

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory is fundamental to comprehending how social settings affect young people's conduct. Using this theory as a guide, the study looks into the ways that peer pressure, family dynamics, and community influences all play a role in adolescent delinquency. The goal is to create novel strategies that have a beneficial impact on these social elements. The Principle of Restorative Justice strongly emphasizes making amends for harm caused by criminal activity and including stakeholders in finding a solution. In order to prioritize rehabilitation and active community involvement in the reintegration process, the project investigates alternatives to punitive approaches (McLeod, 2024).

Developmental Criminology is considered, recognizing the life-course trajectory of individuals and understanding factors contributing to criminal behavior at different stages. This perspective aids in tailoring interventions to address specific developmental challenges faced by youth in Baguio City. The International Human Rights Laws, particularly in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, guide the study to protect juveniles' rights throughout the justice process, promoting ethical treatment within the system. Community-based approaches involve engaging local communities in designing and implementing juvenile justice programs. This ensures solutions are culturally sensitive, addressing the unique needs and challenges of Baguio City. Evidence-based practices are employed in empirical research and data to inform policy recommendations. The study thoroughly examines existing programs and outcomes to identify effective strategies for reforming the juvenile justice system (Farrington, 2017).

This comprehensive approach, which incorporates social learning theory, restorative justice principles, developmental criminology, international human rights laws, community-based approaches, and evidence-based practices, seeks to provide an in-depth comprehension of youth's challenges in the justice system. The study aims to suggest new, culturally sensitive solutions customized to the specific environment of Baguio City, ultimately contributing to the reform and enhancement of juvenile futures in the community.

Significance of the Study

The output of this study is deemed beneficial to the following:

Academe

The output of this study serves as a formal educational initiative to gain some insights into the prevailing trend in rehabilitation and intervention programs for children in conflict with the law as provided by Republic Act 9344.

Juvenile Facilities

This provides an opportunity to gain insights into overcoming and strategizing to negate juvenile delinquency's effects. This will further help them maximize the utilization of the available intervention programs intended to promote restorative justice.

Community of Interest (Baguio City)

The study aims to enhance community safety and reduce youth involvement in criminal activities by implementing innovative approaches to juvenile justice. These interventions address underlying causes of youth offending, lower recidivism rates, and create a secure environment for residents. The study also emphasizes the holistic development of young offenders through education, skills training, and mental health support, promoting personal growth and successful reintegration into society. The study underscores the importance of involving key stakeholders, such as community organizations, government agencies, youth advocates, and affected individuals, to ensure reforms align with community needs and aspirations. This collaborative approach fosters ownership and investment, strengthening community bonds and promoting active participation in shaping the future of juvenile justice in Baguio City.

Future Researchers

This study offers professional growth and expertise in juvenile justice by enhancing knowledge and contributing to research. It provides practical insights into challenges and opportunities in reforming youth futures. The organization gains credibility and recognition as a contributor to evidence-based solutions in juvenile justice. The study's findings and recommendations can enhance the organization's reputation, leading to future partnerships, research opportunities, and increased impact in the field. This can lead to future partnerships and research opportunities.

Objectives of the Study

To evaluate the effectiveness of Baguio City's current juvenile justice policies and practices in dealing with youth offenses and promoting rehabilitation, including analyzing relevant data and statistics.

1. To identify and analyze the challenges and issues that law enforcement, legal professionals, and social workers face when implementing juvenile justice policies in Baguio City.
2. This study aims to investigate and document the novel approaches to juvenile justice currently being implemented in Baguio City, focusing on understanding their objectives, methods, and potential effects on young offenders.
3. To assess the impact of community-based programs and restorative justice practices on the reformation and rehabilitation of youth in Baguio City's juvenile justice system, including their effectiveness in lowering recidivism rates and promoting positive outcomes.

Specific Objectives

1. How effective are the current juvenile justice policies and practices in Baguio City in addressing youth offenses and promoting rehabilitation?
2. What are the specific challenges and issues faced by the implementers of juvenile justice policies?
3. What innovative approaches to juvenile justice are being implemented in Baguio City to improve outcomes for young offenders?

4. How do community-based programs and restorative justice practices contribute to reforming and rehabilitating youth in the juvenile justice system in Baguio City?

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

This study will use qualitative research methods using the phenomenological approach. Qualitative research methods are often employed to answer the why, is, and hows of human behavior, opinion, and experience, information that isn't easy to obtain through more quantitatively oriented data collection methods (Sitorus, 2012).

This study utilized a qualitative case study design to evaluate the juvenile justice policies and practices in Baguio City deeply. The case study method was particularly effective due to its ability to explore complex issues in-depth within their context, capturing detailed interactions among various stakeholders and processes involved in juvenile justice. It offered a contextual understanding specific to Baguio City's unique socio-cultural and legal settings, which was crucial for assessing policy effectiveness and rehabilitation outcomes. Additionally, the flexibility of this approach was ideal for investigating novel or evolving practices within the juvenile justice system, allowing adaptations as new insights emerged. Overall, the case study design was foundational in thoroughly assessing juvenile justice policies' intricate mechanisms and effects, thereby enhancing our comprehension of effective practices in the field.

Population of the Study

This study was conducted at the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) in the Silungan Center, Upper Session Road, Baguio City.

The focus was on the social workers employed at this office, selected as critical informants due to their direct involvement in implementing and experiencing restorative justice programs, including various intervention initiatives. The sampling strategy employed was convenience sampling, facilitated through the CSWDO. This office selected three social workers to participate in the research based on criteria such as their specific job roles, tenure at the office, and availability for interviews. This approach ensured that the informants were well-acquainted with the policies and practices being examined, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of restorative justice measures in the context of their work.

Data Gathering Tools

The researchers gathered the needed data by interviewing the social workers in the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) in Baguio City, Philippines. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, interviews were used as a data-gathering tool.

According to an online article by DeCarlo (2018), interviews are a data collection method involving two or more people exchanging information through a series of questions and answers. Hence, this method is appropriate for the study since it meets the objectives of the study.

The researchers allotted ample time to develop an interview guide survey for the intended informants. The interview guide survey is composed of four (4) parts, to wit:

1. Effectiveness of current juvenile justice policies and practices;
2. Challenges and issues faced by the implementers;
3. Innovative approaches to Juvenile Justice in Baguio City; and
4. Community-based programs and restorative justice practices.

Data Gathering Procedure

The team leader initially submitted the interview guide and communication letter for conducting the study to the facilitator for approval. Once approved, these documents and the interview guide surveys were forwarded to the Office of the City Social Welfare and Development for further authorization. After receiving permission to proceed, copies of the questions were distributed to the participants, who were provided sufficient time to respond to the questions. To ensure the accuracy of the information gathered, the researchers sought consent from the informants to record their responses during the interviews.

Treatment of Data

The researchers analyzed the responses using Thematic Analysis (T.A.). The researchers used themes and codes to identify the source of discussion that would reveal the study's significant findings. The thematic analysis involves recording or identifying passages of text or images linked by a common theme or idea, allowing a recorder to index the text into categories and establish a "framework of thematic ideas about it" (Caulfield, 2019). It is an appropriate analysis method for understanding experiences, thoughts, or behaviors across a data set (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Ethical Considerations

In conducting the study, the researchers considered several steps to ensure the participant's confidentiality and anonymity. First and foremost, each participant signed the informed consent form, indicating that they were fully informed about the study's objectives, the data to be gathered, and the measures in place to protect their privacy. The researchers also informed the participants that they could withdraw at any moment without incurring any fees or penalties. The researchers ensured that the participants were treated fairly and with utmost respect and integrity.

To maintain confidentiality, the researchers implemented strict data protection measures. All collected data were anonymized by stripping away identifying information like names or contact details. Unique identifiers, such as "Informant 1," "Informant 2," and "Informant 3," were assigned to ensure that individual responses could not be traced back to specific individuals. The data were securely stored, with access strictly limited to authorized researchers involved in the study to maintain confidentiality and protect participant privacy.

Furthermore, the researchers implemented confidentiality agreements that all researchers must sign, committing not to disclose any participant information to unauthorized individuals or entities. Data sharing was done to protect participant confidentiality, with identifying information removed and secured methods of data transfer employed.

Finally, at the end of the data-gathering process, the researchers provided the participants with a debriefing, during which they reviewed the investigation's goals and conclusions. The researchers also informed the participants of any worries they might have about privacy and confidentiality and gave them the option to remove their data if they so chose.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

EFFECTIVENESS OF CURRENT JUVENILE JUSTICE POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Based on the gathered data, two themes were formulated: Highly effective and moderately practical of the current juvenile justice policies and practices. The effectiveness of the services provided, like most of the participants' responses, appreciate the positive impact of its implementation on juvenile offenders, especially on their recommitment to the community they belong to, to the success of removing the chances

of reoffending. On the other hand, the moderate facts of a signal affect its full continuum implementation of the services provided.

Efficient Referral System

The informants reiterated the efficient referral system which then leads to a success rate of recidivism. Informant 2 stated a percentage that *“10% of Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) cases end up recommitting, indicating a 90% success rate”*. The informant also supported that *“9 out of 10 CICL cases show positive changes”*. And from informant 1 also added that *“They are very effective; sa panahon ng mga pagsisiyasat; nagsasagawa ng agarang aksyon upang mapabilis ang paghahatid ng hustisya”*.

The provided data shows the high effectiveness of the services from the authorized offices for children/children in conflict with the law (CICL). Its implementation is highly acknowledged as a help. The rating given by the participant reflects that the ongoing efforts are making strides to strengthen and improve the system, ensuring that juvenile offenders receive the support and guidance they need to lead them to grow into productive youths and a law-abiding citizen not only that is also the contribution to the swift attainment of justice. The internalization of accepting the program is a motivation, and what they experience are the services that help prevent them from reoffending. Section 44 of Republic Act 9344 likewise provides the objective of rehabilitation and reintegration of children in conflict with the law, and that is to provide them with interventions, approaches, and strategies that will enable them to improve their social functioning with the end goal of reintegration to their families and as productive members of their communities.

Effectiveness of Interventions

Informant 3 also stated that *“The interventions for CICL are highly effective. Ang kaso, kapag barangay mismo ang nag-iimplement ng mga intervention programs, wala silang pangil. Ang input ng Barangay ay madalas na binabalewala, kahit na sila ay nagbayad ng civil liabilities. Kinakailangan pa ng court order para ipatupad ang kanilang mga desisyon.”*

It is a challenge that depicts the system's moderate effectiveness from the statement that the implementation of intervention programs is often ineffective when implemented by the Barangay itself. This may be due to several reasons, such as lack of authorization, lack of workforce, lack of knowledge and training, and the like, as stated by informant two as one of their weaknesses being an experienced social worker. The experiences of juveniles in the different rehabilitation programs or part of the juvenile justice system are dynamic and progressive, for they bring positive changes in their physical, psychological, social, and even spiritual well-being. The rehabilitation programs seek to have a progression of events moving forward to a gradual development of the juveniles. However, as they go along with these programs, a lot of coping mechanisms, efforts, and energy are required to meet the needs of the juveniles and eventually meet the rehabilitation objectives (Panelo, 2021).

Adherence to Legislative Protocols

Informant 1 also added that *“They are very effective; sa panahon ng mga pagsisiyasat; nagsasagawa ng agarang aksyon upang mapabilis ang paghahatid ng hustisya”*.

This statement can be understood that a timely response is given in each case that ensures swift justice. It can be added that the informants *“strictly adhere to the protocol outlined in RA 9344, as amended by RA 10630, regarding interventions for Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL),”* as stated by Informant 3. As stated in section 20-B of Republic Act (R.A.) 10630, which amended RA 9344, otherwise known as the "Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006", the CSWDO, as the local social and welfare development office, is assigned to implement community-based intensive intervention programs to those children who

commit an offense for the second time or oftener (Lawphil, n.d.). This law further emphasized child-sensitive justice policies focused on the child's best interest, which is seen in its exigency from the services provided by the authorities.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FACED BY IMPLEMENTERS

The findings revealed several challenges faced by the juvenile justice system in Baguio City, including client and family non-cooperation, shortage of manpower, bulky cases, financial shortages, lack of training, and client non-compliance or poor compliance.

Non-Cooperation and Poor Compliance

As stated by Informant 1, “*minsán, magfapollow-up kami sa mga kliyente lalo sa mga parents pero ayaw nila mag-comply*”. This theme addresses obstacles related to clients' and their families' non-cooperation, which leads to difficulties in program compliance. It highlights the need for extensive follow-up efforts and the challenges posed by clients' refusal to adhere to diversion or intervention programs, indicating a barrier to successful implementation.

The theme of non-cooperation and poor compliance in juvenile justice programs presents significant challenges to achieving positive outcomes for young offenders. By recognizing these obstacles and implementing targeted strategies, social workers can enhance program effectiveness, promote greater client engagement, and ultimately contribute to the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of youth in Baguio City's juvenile justice system.

One previous study corroborating these findings is Klatt et al. (2020), which further emphasizes that collaboration between parents and speech and language therapists (SLTs) is crucial in family-centered models and can positively impact parents' and children's outcomes. This result is similar to the theme "non-cooperation" since it also tackles how SLTs should collaborate with their clients (parents), which is also challenging for the SLT.

Toros and Eriksen (2021) likewise studied how a strengths-based approach facilitates working relationships between child welfare services and families. In their findings, strengths-based skills were essential to fostering a stronger rapport with families and building relationships with them. Furthermore, strengths-based approaches facilitate personal engagement, which can increase the sense of empowerment and encourage families to find solutions and make decisions about their lives.

Personal Financial Burden on Personnel

This theme focuses on the personal financial burden personnel face due to financial shortages. It highlights how personnel often have to use their funds for activities within the juvenile justice system, indicating the strain on individual resources and the need for additional financial support.

Informant 2 added, “*Personal funds are used for activities due to financial shortages.*” In implementing such programs, the social workers often have to use their own money for the activities of the programs that they are implementing. As recommended by Informant 3, “*Funds need to be carefully allocated, especially for proposals.*”

As used in this study, personal funds refer to money the social workers bring out from their own pockets to implement such programs. According to the informants, insufficient funds are being given because there are times when, unexpectedly, the number of children needing intervention programs is pretty high, leading them to do "backup."

In the study of Chisholm et al. (2021), one of the key challenges identified for programs similar to intervention programs by social workers is the low funding level. It also discusses opportunities in the form of new political interest in ongoing reforms to national insurance schemes.

Operational Challenges and Workload Management

This theme focuses on the operational challenges juvenile justice policy implementers face, including handling bulk cases, difficulties in assessing appropriate intervention locations for clients, and the need for self-directed learning. It also highlights the impact of sudden duty rotations, indicating the strain on workload management and adaptability in the workplace.

As stated by Informant 1, "*Nagiging mahirap at mahaba ang pagproseso. Ang daloy ng pondo ng gobyerno ay mahirap pangasiwaan*". Aside from funds, a lack of workforce also contributes since there are insufficient social workers to process each case. These bulk or stocked-up cases often lead to pressure to meet the deadlines. These findings emphasize the inadequacies and complexity of Baguio City's juvenile justice system. There is a chance to change young people's possibilities and build a more efficient juvenile justice system that puts rehabilitation, equity, and accountability first by tackling these issues through creative solutions, cooperative collaborations, and focused interventions. The study's findings suggest that the juvenile justice system in Baguio City faces significant challenges that must be addressed to improve the outcomes for young people involved in the system.

As stated by the study by Okoye & Ezejiofor (2013), "any organization needs money to pay its staff and buy essential materials or equipment for operation. There is no organization with human resources. Even though an organization has all the money and machine or material needs, it must still find capable people to put them into effective use. It is therefore logical to claim that human resources are the most important of the three essential resources of an organization."

The same challenges were also stated in Manuel's (2019) study, "The Long-Term Effects of Rehabilitation Program for Children in Conflict with the Law," wherein she stated that according to rehabilitation program implementers, "challenges faced in the program were casework and limited financial assistance."

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO JUVENILE JUSTICE IN BAGUIO CITY

The study's informants personally described techniques such as "maximizing the presence of interns, on-time conduct of activities, and on-time completion of diversion/intervention programs."

Help from Interns

Help from criminology interns is the first theme concluded from the information given by the informants. These interns, being deployed as one of their assignments during their On-the-Job Training Program, are required to involve themselves in different government processes, including but not limited to the administrative works of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Philippine National Police, Bureau of Jail and Management Penology, Bureau of Fire Protection, National Police Commission, and others.

Informant 1 stated "*ang laki ng tulong ng mga criminology interns na nadedeploy dito. Kaya habang anjan sila, tumutulong at tinuturuan na din namin sila kung paano ang proseso ng mga ganitong cases*". (*The Criminology interns have been helpful since their deployment in our facility, and while they are here, they are helping us and in some way we show them the processes of these kinds of cases relating to inmates*).

This approach of maximizing the presence of interns in the juvenile justice system can have several benefits. Firstly, having interns present in the juvenile justice system can provide additional support and

resources for young offenders. Interns can assist with conducting activities and facilitating diversion/intervention programs, ensuring they are on time and completed efficiently. This can contribute to a more effective and efficient process for addressing youth offenders. Additionally, having interns involved in the juvenile justice system allows them to gain hands-on experience and develop their skills and knowledge in working with young offenders.

In a study conducted by Bawica (2021), "internships have been viewed as an important means for college students to get practical work experience and expertise, enhancing their employability in a competitive labor market." Likewise, a study by Lawson & Katz (2004) stated that "interns can assist with conducting activities such as educational programs, vocational training, and counseling sessions. Additionally, the presence of interns allows for a lower staff-to-youth ratio, enabling more individualized attention and care for each young offender". Furthermore, the study also emphasized the importance of community involvement in rehabilitation. By creating partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and community leaders, the juvenile justice system in Baguio City aims to provide young offenders with opportunities for skill-building, employment, and mentorship.

Use of Technology to Complete Programs

Incorporating technology in the juvenile justice system is also seen as an innovative approach, as perceived by social workers or informants. Indeed, using technology, such as social media like Facebook, to facilitate the completion of diversion or intervention programs can lead to faster evaluation of their effectiveness. Informant 2 added that "*some diversion or intervention programs are completed on time through the use of technology like Facebook and other social media. Dahil jan, mabilis na din ang pag-evaluate natin if effective ba or not.*"

Informant 3 also stated "*Other activities are conducted on time dahil syempre, pindot dito, pindot jan, okay na. tapos na.. at napaka-flexible ng ating schedule kaya kung sakaling may emergency meeting, kayang-kaya nating iadjust*".

These findings suggest that technology can significantly improve the effectiveness and efficiency of juvenile justice initiatives. According to the informants, flexible scheduling makes it possible to complete tasks on time and adjust to last-minute meetings. These findings emphasized how crucial it is for the juvenile justice system to be adaptable to guarantee that treatments and programs are implemented on schedule and can address unforeseen situations. Furthermore, these findings also highlighted the importance of continuous data gathering to assess the procedure and results of using trauma-informed treatment. These results emphasize the possible advantages of utilizing technology, such as social media, inside the juvenile justice system.

Previous research by Burd (2010) demonstrated the effectiveness of restorative justice programs and practices in reducing future delinquent behavior among young offenders. According to the study, kids who are at risk of crime may unintentionally be exposed to criminal activity through interactive media, which could result in recidivism. The report also casts doubt on the efficacy of several initiatives, including impact panels, reparative boards, teen courts, and restitution. These initiatives' less-than-encouraging results in lowering juvenile offenders' delinquency raise the possibility that other strategies would work better. Given these results, practitioners and policymakers in the juvenile justice system must consider cutting-edge strategies like victim-offender conferences, family group conferences, arbitration/mediation programs, and circle sentencing schemes that have demonstrated potential to lower delinquency and foster positive outcomes.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES

Community-based programs and restorative justice practices play a crucial role in reforming and rehabilitating youth in the Juvenile Justice System. These programs offer an alternative to traditional punitive measures, focusing instead on addressing the underlying causes of delinquent behavior and promoting accountability and healing.

Facility Visitation and Donor Engagement

The study's data revealed that the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO) implements successful community-based programs that have positively impacted young offenders in Baguio City.

As stated by Informant 1, *“Nagcoconduct po tayo ng visitation sa mga various facilities, namely, Bahay-Pag-asa sa Irisan, Silungan Center, Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth (RRCY) at Sablan, Benguet, Child and Family Service Philippines Inc. (CFSPI), SLU Half-way home, Regional Haven, at DSWD CAR. Yung visitation na yan ang isa ding nakakatulong sa atin para makakalap ng donation”*.

As backed-up by the statement of Informant 2, *“yung visitation period namin na yan, nakakatulong talaga para maipaintindi sa mga sponsors or mga donors yung mga specific na kinakailangan ng mga bata ng sa gayun, alam din nila kung ano yung kelangan talaga ng mga facilities”*.

This theme focuses on the success of community-based programs through regular visitation to facilities housing young offenders and abused individuals. It illustrates how these visits help donors understand the needs of clients, leading to increased donations and support for rehabilitation efforts. This theme also emphasizes the role of community engagement in fostering positive impacts on young offenders.

Among the facilities visited include the Bahay Pag-Asa for male offenders, the Silungan Center for temporary shelter or admitting units, the Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth (RRCY) situated at Sablan, Benguet for male CICL, the Child and Family Service Philippines Inc. (CFSPI) for abused females, the Saint Louis University (SLU) Half-way Home for abused male children, and lastly, the Regional Haven of the DSWD Cordillera for abused women and children.

Trial Reintegration and Successful Community Integration

This theme focuses on the success of community-based programs through regular visits to facilities housing young offenders and abused individuals. It illustrates how these visits help donors understand clients' needs, leading to increased donations and support for rehabilitation efforts.

As Informant 3 states, *“Centers like RRCY practice trial reintegration, allowing for a testing period in the community before entering the Aftercare Program, facilitating successful integration.”*

This theme highlights the success of community-based programs, particularly in centers like the Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth (RRCY), in facilitating trial reintegration for young offenders. It underscores the importance of providing a testing period in the community before entering the Aftercare Program, contributing to successful integration and long-term rehabilitation outcomes for young offenders in Baguio City.

Educational and Skill Development through Alternative Learning System (ALS) Programs

Restorative justice also plays a significant role in reforming youth offenders. In Baguio City, data gathered by the researchers revealed that restorative justice practices play a role in the rehabilitation processes for young offenders. This involves educational and skill development through Alternative Learning System (ALS) programs, which empower young offenders to make positive changes and reintegrate into society. Informant 1 stated that *“meron tayong ALS or yung Alternative Learning System. Isa yun sa duties natin na tulungan din natin talaga sila when it comes to educational programs”*.

This theme highlights the role of restorative justice practices in facilitating the rehabilitation process for young offenders through enrollment in Alternative Learning System (ALS) programs. It emphasizes the importance of educational and skill development opportunities in empowering young offenders to make positive changes and reintegrate into society.

Borela's (2020) study further found that once juvenile delinquents undergo the programs, they are given new hope and a new direction in life to pursue their dreams, hence reducing recidivism.

Holistic Support through Life Skills Training and Family-Centered Counseling

Allied offices also provide supportive services and seminars, such as counseling, vocational training, and life skills seminars, which aid in rehabilitation and promote positive behavior change.

As attested by Informant 2, *“Regular life skills training sessions are convened to meet their needs. Family Task-Oriented Counseling (FTOC) involves parents or families to ensure awareness and a family-centered approach”*.

This theme highlights how restorative justice practices promote accountability, healing, and reintegration into the community by providing holistic support to young offenders. Regular life skills training sessions address their needs, while Family Task-Oriented Counseling (FTOC) involves parents or families, ensuring awareness and a family-centered approach to rehabilitation. This approach fosters personal accountability, facilitates healing, and promotes successful community reintegration.

In the Philippines, several aftercare programs for children conflict with the law. One is the intervention program, which aims to promote sustainable development. This program involves various activities designed to help reintegrate these children back into society and equip them with the skills they need to lead productive lives (Fabre et al., 2016). In addition, The intervention program may include counseling, skills training, education, and other activities that will enhance the child's psychological, emotional, and psycho-social well-being (Herradura, 2009). Effective Restorative Justice Practices like Family-centered counseling have been vital in reforming the rehabilitation of youthful offenders. Family treatments have played an essential role in aiming to change the risk factors in home situations in several intervention programs (Henggeler et al., 1992).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Implementing current juvenile justice policies and practices is highly effective, as the referral system is very efficient, which leads to a success rate of recidivism. However, these policies and practices are only effective if implemented by the Barangay alone and with the help of courts.

Implementing any program or project often encounters various challenges and issues, and in the research provided, there are several issues to address. One of the primary challenges faced by implementers was the resistance of clients and their families to cooperate with the proposed activities or interventions. This non-cooperation could be due to many reasons, such as lack of understanding, skepticism, cultural barriers, or simply resistance to change. Non-compliance may also arise when clients or their families must follow the recommended actions or adhere to the established protocols or guidelines. Overcoming this challenge requires effective communication, building trust, providing education, and addressing any underlying concerns or barriers contributing to the resistance.

The use of customers' finances to pay for necessary services or interventions is another major obstacle. This dependence on personal finances may lead to several issues, such as financial hardship for clients and their families, unequal access to services for individuals with low incomes, and possible moral

dilemmas when using personal cash for public services. A lack of outside support or insufficient budgetary allocation may cause this dependency on one's resources. To address this challenge, securing adequate funding from external sources, including government grants, individual donations, and charitable organizations, is essential. This approach will ensure that necessary operations can be conducted without imposing undue financial burdens on clients and their families.

One of the biggest challenges to successfully implementing the programs is the need for more employees. When employees are faced with overwhelming work, the quality of care can decrease, and burnout among staff members can occur. This can lead to delays in service delivery and hinder the ability to provide personalized attention and support to each client, ultimately resulting in less effective program output. In order to overcome this challenge, it is crucial to take action. Whether recruiting additional staff, providing training and support to existing staff to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness, or implementing technological solutions to streamline processes and alleviate the workload, decisive action must be taken to ensure the program can run smoothly and effectively. We can only provide our clients with the best possible care and support.

Overcoming the challenges of non-cooperation and non-compliance among clients and their families, reliance on personal funds for activities, and shortage of workforce requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses underlying issues, secures adequate resources, and enhances the capacity and capabilities of the implementing team. Effective communication, strategic planning, and collaboration with stakeholders are essential elements in navigating these challenges and ensuring the successful implementation of the program or project.

Innovative strategies are being implemented to enhance the rehabilitation outcomes for youth offenders, including the extensive use of criminology interns. These interns support the primary staff in managing juvenile cases effectively. Additionally, integrating technological advances ensures that activities related to these cases are conducted and completed more efficiently.

Recommendations

1. Collaboration of City Government Unit, Private sector, Barangay, Community, and the City Social Welfare and Development Office to craft and implement proactive strategies that will respond to the call for service to initiate action. Specifically, the following strategies are now recommended: (a) Case conferencing, (b) House Visitation, (c) Family Counseling, (d) Provision of Financial Assistance, (e.) Skills Training.
2. The Social Welfare and Development Office, concerned with implementing intervention and rehabilitation programs in line with restorative justice, should have the necessary information and technical skills. Training is one of the most critical factors shaping one's behavior, while behaviors ultimately drive community outcomes.
3. The Social Welfare and Development Office should preemptively address clients' concerns and social functioning. An information education campaign should be conducted to raise awareness of the programs and services that address CICL concerns.

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