

Child- focused Church & Community Mobilization (CCM)

CONCEPT NOTE

Rationale

During the previous years, the significant role of Christian churches in the Philippines were highlighted especially towards ensuring social justice and peace. Churches stood against extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations. They continued to work with the poor and in the forefront of humanitarian response.

In areas where government's social services are still lacking, local churches directly respond through its ministries for children, women, families, elderly and the needy. They organize and do social mobilization for the delivery of basic social services such as health, nutrition, livelihood and legal assistance, women and child protection, counseling and education. Services are provided either one-time or as part of their regular monthly or annual activities similar to the Vacation Church School, youth camps and other formation activities. Provision of services for the church and community members are in most cases dependent from the support of an external funding partner. Only few churches are mobilizing their own resources to support community projects. Furthermore, not all churches in the Philippines are into organizing and mobilization of church and community members to positively affect change and respond to various community issues especially those confronting women and children.

Among the nine denominational church members in the Lingap's General Assembly for instance, only the Protestant and the Catholic Church have long been into community organizing and community development (CO- CD) processes to respond to the issues and needs of marginalized sectors of the society. Around 7,000 local Protestant and Catholic churches are present in 70-90% of barangays (villages) in the country. This number does not include local Evangelical churches which are also growing in number and initiated community outreach programs/ ministries.

It is in this context that Lingap and its member churches become more convinced and appreciative of Church and Community Mobilization (CCM) as an approach to highly engage local Christian churches in the Philippines in community development and to contribute in building resiliency in the long term. The series of learning sessions, reflection, consultation workshops and the technical guidance being provided by Tearfund Netherlands and Tearfund UK on CCM in addition to the on-going review of our current child-focused community development programming paved way for crafting the Child-focused CCM in the Philippines. This approach will be developed by Lingap in partnership with seven denominational and independent local churches in Metro Manila and Visayas (Eastern Samar & Tacloban) through capacity-building, monitoring and learning, research/documentation and advocacy. The core team composed of Lingap staff and church partner representatives, will later on be trained as resource persons for Child- focused CCM.

Why Child- focused?

The Philippines is the twelfth most populated country in the world. An archipelago of 7,107 islands, it has 100.98 million people and is characterized by high numbers of children (almost 40% of the population is under 18), rapid urbanization, and ethnic diversity (with an estimated 14-17 million Indigenous Peoples (IPs) from 110 ethno-linguistic groups in the country). Around 92% of people are Christian, with most of the country's 5% Muslim population based on the island of Mindanao.

As a lower middle-income country with the tenth fastest growing economy in the world, recent economic advances have been marked by slow human development, persistent poverty, slow and uneven growth. Poverty rates vary significantly across the country, from 3.9% in the National Capital Region (NCR), to 53.7% in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Decentralization of governance affects socio-economic services needed by Filipino, especially children. Local government units (LGUs) from provincial down to the barangay levels are expected to raise revenue thru taxes, enact legislation and deliver services. And, a number of LGUs struggle to raise revenue, manage their financial resources, and to plan, budget and implement programs effectively. This situation was aggravated by natural disasters and conflicts, which have devastated communities and fueled poverty.

The country is prone to typhoons, flooding, drought, rain-induced landslides, volcanic eruptions, storm surges and earthquakes. Between 2000-2017 there were 273 disasters caused by natural hazards. We are also among the top five countries in the world in terms of vulnerability to climate change, with rising sea levels, mean temperatures and storm surges recorded in recent years. The Southern Philippines, particularly ARMM, has had a complex history of ethnic and armed conflict over the past decades. This has severe consequences for children including death, injury, displacement, sexual violence and recruitment into armed forces/groups.

This situation adds to the vulnerability of children and pushes them to further marginalization. Despite rapid economic growth in recent years, Unicef in the study on children revealed that:

- 31.4 per cent of Filipino children (and a staggering 63.1 per cent of girls and boys in Mindanao), live below the poverty line
- 33 per cent of children are stunted (short for their age) due to malnutrition, and immunization coverage fell sharply from 89 to 60 per cent between 2013 and 2015
- Access to sexual and reproductive health remains low, despite a rise of 230 per cent in newly diagnosed HIV cases among young people at risk
- An estimated 2.85 million girls and boys aged 5-15 years are also out of school
- 8 in 10 children experience some form of violence, including physical, psychological, sexual or online abuse.

In spite of all these, Lingap and its Christian member churches is convinced of the inherent capacities of children to participate and take active roles in addressing children and community needs in tandem

with their parents and other community members. They are the rights holder and we (adults) are the duty bearers. We as church people with community members must continue to unite and act for the benefit of the next generation. It is based on our profound belief that it is a sincere expression and application of the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ based on some Scripture of the Bible as Luke 18: 15-17 (To include children in the Kingdom of God.) and Luke 10: 33-35 (The life of the Lord's Kingdom is focused on loving the Lord and our neighbor).

Children, with their evolving capacities, are confident to identify and express their issues and concerns, and are actively participating in various development efforts within their communities. They are the paramount consideration for all community initiatives, even if issues and concerns do not directly affect children. It recognizes children as among the marginalized sector alongside women, elderly and persons with disabilities (PWDs), having rights, capacities and valid concerns.

We also recognize children as a resource and partner in development work, putting children's rights at the center of church & community envisioning, planning, taking action and other processes for church and community mobilization. They are part of the mobilization processes, as they bind themselves together and have a collective voice in addressing threats and issues of their development.

The children and their families will benefit from all church and community mobilization work – as efforts are directed towards the resolution of community problems that perpetuates children's issues like child labor, human trafficking, sexual abuse and exploitation, street children, limited access to basic education, HIV/ AIDS and child protection issues as a result of emergencies.

During consultations with church partners, community leaders and children themselves, it was affirmed that the task of promoting and defending the rights of the child, rests primarily on the shoulder of their families and the communities, including the church as an institution in the community. We agreed to work together to strengthen the family and community so they could respond to the needs of the children. While the children are our focus, the needs of the family and the community is our priority target of intervention to effect long-term solutions to prevailing and emerging issues of children. It is also our dream that the community is resilient enough and has the ability to rebound from crisis – even has the ability to care for its children, who are one of the most vulnerable populations especially during emergencies.

Child-focused CCM at the grassroot-level (village/ barangay-level)

Child-focused CCM principles and approaches will be applied by current local church partners in Metro Manila and Eastern Visayas. This will serve as a pilot project which will run for two years in addition to the two previous years for transition and setting-up. These local church partners have their own partner community wherein they facilitate community (including children) organizing and mobilization, plan and implement community projects, and internally mobilize resources to support community-based initiatives. They can also initiate a Child-focused participatory action research to aid in

understanding community (especially children's issues) and to ignite collective action. Lingap's role in this area is capacity- building of Facilitators and Coordinators, mentoring and coaching, monitoring, documentation and learning. Local church and community experiences and learnings can be shared to have a more enabling environment for Child- focused CCM.

Lingap will also continue to conduct learning conferences, thematic learning sessions, monitoring and documentation to build a community of practice. The learning community, if established, will ensure that Child- focused CCM, as an approach, is relevant and appropriate among Filipino communities and churches, and is responsive to the current and emerging needs of Filipino children and other marginalized groups. The Annual General Assembly and the LPI National Children's Congress are two concrete platforms for mainstreaming and promoting Child- focused CCM.

Over-all goals and core indicators

Goal: Contributed to developing resilient communities in the Philippines in which the most vulnerable groups are empowered to realize their God- given potential.

Core Indicators:

- eight (8) independent and denominational churches are leading church and community mobilization processes towards transformation
- Local needs and issues are collectively addressed by economically productive members through community-led and managed projects
- A group of advocates can contribute in sustaining Child- focused CCM processes at the national and local (provincial) levels

Expected results / outcomes

Outcome 1: People feel worthy.

Indicators:

- Number of individuals becoming advocates and change agents.
- Number of individuals who identify themselves as part of a family/ peer.
- Number of individuals acquiring education, life skills and employment.
- Percentage of marginalized community members fulfilling basic needs (safety and physiological needs)

Outcome 2: Families experience well- being ('quality of life').

Indicators:

- Number of families shifting to sustainable household management practices and enterprise.
- Increasing number of family members promoting 'good or positive' communication.
- Increasing level of awareness among parents and other family members on the rights and issues of women and children.
- Number of families providing for the basic needs of its members, especially women and children.

Outcome 3: A caring community¹ life and action is visible.

Indicators:

- Number of community members engaged in lobbying and advocacy on issues affecting women and children.
- Number of communities mobilizing internal resources for its needs.
- Number of local churches and community groups planning together and taking actions to address issues affecting children and other marginalized groups.

Outcome 4: Systems, policies in the society ensures the basic rights and are able to experience well-being.

Indicators:

- Increasing representation of marginalized community members in decision and policy-making bodies.
- National laws are contextualized/ localized to promote community knowledge, systems and practices.
- Number of communities with long- term development plans for children.

Key activities

Activity no.	ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Key Result Area 1: Introduction & spreading child- focused CCM.	
1.1	Partners' orientation- workshops, meetings and consultations
Key Result Area 2: Enabling environment for child- focused CCM	
2.1	Training of Church Coordinators & Local Church & Community Facilitators on Child- focused CCM
2.2	Mentoring & coaching local church partners on the conduct of Participatory Action Research & project planning, implementation, management and evaluation
2.3	Conduct of reflection and learning sessions
Key Result Area 3: Building a community of practice	
3.1	Formation & capacity-building of a training and learning team
3.2	Conduct/ participation to Learning Conference
3.3	Conduct of monitoring and documentation

¹ A community is composed of families, institutions, community organizations, local churches and local government.

Key Result Area 4: Strengthening networks for women and child protection

4.1 Initiating meetings towards forming multi-sectoral groups or local special bodies addressing concerns of women, children, youth, PWDs.

4.2 Facilitating workshops to review and strengthen policies, programs and services towards community-based prevention and response to women and child protection concerns

Target participants

Primary target groups are:

- Denominational church leaders, church and community workers
- Community members participating in groups, including children
- Community leaders
- Local church, local government and social development networks/ organization members

Through its community projects, capacity building and mobilization work, this project aims to provide end benefits to church and community members who are the most vulnerable. These community members or project participants may belong to the categories of:

- Children in Need of Special Protection and Children-at-risk
- Indigenous peoples
- Elderly
- Families belonging to the poorest of the poor
- Persons with Disabilities
- People affected by disasters

Other community and church members may also benefit through the various advocacy, capacity-building and learning sessions.

Stakeholders

Children leaders, their siblings and other children-at-risk in the community

Children comprise 40% of the total population of a community or barangay. Children-at-risk and children in need of special protection due to disaster, marginalization, urbanization and other factors, in general, comprises around 30% of the children population in each of the targeted barangay. However, children have inherent talents and skills. Given opportunities and support, they can serve as resource and catalysts for change. They are very dynamic and eager to participate in meaningful activities, especially those affecting them. They have God-given talents and potentials that can be shared to fellow children and to the community. Aside from being rights-holder, they are identified in the Philippines as a basic sector, with programs and policies that promote their welfare and development. The project recognizes children as active partners especially in church and community transformation.

Parents and adult community members

Parents are duty-bearers, primary responsible for the welfare and development of their children. They have inherent rights and responsibilities over their children, hence, should be mobilized to ensure that children are protected from abuse and exploitation. More than a hundred parents are already mobilized and actively participating in various activities of the local church partners and Lingap-initiated activities. Some parents are also formed into small groups, initiating livelihood

	<p>activities and group savings. They have the interest in participating and engaging in community organizing and community development activities. There are also community members who serve as volunteers in various church and community work. Given proper training, coaching and mentoring, they can be Local Community Facilitators, advocates and primovers for socio- economic, child protection, DRR and other development programs. They also provide dynamism to church activities and passion for its mission work.</p>
<p>Denominational and local churches</p>	<p>Lingap works with the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, Episcopal Church in the Philippines, Jesus Christ the Strong Foundation Community, United Church of Christ in the Philippines, Jesus The Word of Life and The Wesleyan Church for the pilot implementation of Child-focused CCM . They have established structures, governance and minimal resources to start CCM processes.</p>
<p>Local government units (Barangay & City- level)</p>	<p>Lingap and its local church partners have close coordination with City Governments through its line agencies and have actively engaged the Barangay Council at various levels. For one, Lingap is the non- government organization representative to the Quezon City Council for the Protection of Children and an active partner of Barangay Council for the Protection of Children in each of its targeted barangays. In addition to providing community counterparts, local government units have the capacity to enact policies, allocate resources, and establish programs for street and street working children and their families, through the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children as well as to Barangay Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.</p>
<p>National agencies and their Local counterparts, and other organizations</p>	<p>City Social Welfare and Development Office, Philippine National Police- Women & Child Protection Desk, Barangay Operations Center, Public Employment & Service Office, City Health Office, Department of Trade & Industry, Department of Labor & Employment, Department of Education, Child Protection Units and Technical Entrepreneurial Skills & Development Authority are among the agencies that the project is working with. These agencies are implementing programs and facilitating services for children-at-risk and their families. They also have the technical expertise that can be extended to our targeted communities.</p>
<p>Schools, universities and other institutions in the community</p>	<p>The project has actively engaged university students from Ateneo de Manila University, Ateneo de Manila University's – TUGON, Ateneo School of Medicine and Public Health, University of the Philippines- Diliman, UP-Diliman College of Law – Movement for Youth's Legal Education [UP-MYLE], Trinity University of Asia, De La Salle- College of St. Benilde through its service learning programs, engaging in community organizing, participatory research and documentation, and other community extension services. To some extent, they are also involved in advocacy, capacity- building and project development. Public elementary and high schools in each of the targeted community are also involved in the project through education service delivery.</p> <p>Other organizations and institutions such as the Center for the Prevention & Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse, International Justice Mission, Philippine Against Child Trafficking, Philippine Educational Theater Association and networks such as the National Council for Social Development and Philippine Children Ministries Network are also included for referral, coordination and networking.</p>