



Challenges of MIMAROPA Youth Center, the Personal Experience of the Social Workers and House Parents

Raymond F Taladtdad

College of Criminal Justice Education, Mindoro State University, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines

* Corresponding Author: **Raymond F Taladtdad**

Article Info

ISSN (online): 2583-8261

Volume: 04

Issue: 02

March-April 2025

Received: 19-01-2025

Accepted: 14-02-2025

Page No: 30-32

Abstract

Interviews with five social workers and house parents highlighted several critical areas for improvement at the MIMAROPA Youth Center, which serves Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL). The physical facilities are in need of infrastructural modifications and additional security measures to ensure the safety and accommodation of these youth. Furthermore, there is a pressing need for more active and trained staff to effectively manage programs and uphold safety standards. While the youth center has sufficient annual funding allocated for rehabilitation programs, delays in financial planning over the past two years have hindered progress. The center also benefits from financial support provided by the local government unit, which contributes one-third of the daily expenses for CICL, alongside minimal donations and assistance from various non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Keywords: MIMAROPA Youth Center, house parents, personal experience, social workers

Introduction

The Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC) is a vital organization established under Republic Act (R.A.) 9344 in the Philippines. Its primary role is to serve as the policy-making, coordinating, and monitoring body responsible for implementing the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act. This framework was strengthened by R.A. 10630, which aimed to enhance the juvenile justice system in the country. A significant mandate of this law is the creation of Intensive Juvenile Intervention and Support Centers (IJISC) for children below the minimum age of criminal responsibility. Facilities such as Bahay Pag-asa serve as these centers, providing essential support and rehabilitation services (Del Rosario & Ballesteros-Lintao, 2018).

As outlined in Section 8 of R.A. 9344, the JJWC comprises a diverse group of agencies. These include the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), the Department of Education (DepEd), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Public Attorney's Office (PAO), the Bureau of Corrections (BUCOR), and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). Additionally, two representatives from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are included to ensure a broader perspective on child welfare. The Secretary of Justice oversees the JJWC, while an Undersecretary from the DSWD chairs the council (Arthur, 2015).

In line with the provisions of the JJWC, the MIMAROPA region (Region IV-B) has established the MIMAROPA Youth Center. This center is dedicated to serving Children in Conflict with the Law (CICLs) and children at risk throughout the region. Designed to provide a safe and supervised environment, the center focuses on the treatment and rehabilitation of these children. It offers programs aimed at skill development, counseling, and education, all crucial for the personal growth and reintegration of the youth into society. Despite the center's commendable initiatives, its effectiveness depends significantly on the resources and funding it receives from the government. There are ongoing concerns regarding inadequate staffing and facilities, which hinder the center's ability to meet the diverse needs of all children in the region.

Interventions at the MIMAROPA Youth Center commence as soon as a CICL is brought to the facility. The law stipulates that intervention should begin at the initial contact with the child, ensuring their best interests are prioritized. The duration of a child's stay in the center is based on their behavior and performance during rehabilitation. Social workers play a crucial role in monitoring progress and submitting reports to the court. When a child meets the rehabilitation objectives, the court may dismiss charges against them, facilitating their reintegration into their family or community. Aftercare services, which include counseling and community-based programs, are provided to support social integration and prevent re-offending (Shabani, 2019). The MIMAROPA Youth Center caters to children under 15 years of age who have violated the law and are in need of protection. It also accommodates older youth aged 16-18 who are in conflict with the law and lack parental or guardian support. Children from the provinces of Marinduque, Romblon, Occidental Mindoro, and Oriental Mindoro are served by this center. Statistics show that, on average, five CICLs are released and reintegrated into their communities each year. Efforts to enhance the center's capacity are ongoing, with partnerships and new initiatives being established. However, it is clear that more work is needed to ensure all CICLs receive the necessary support for successful reintegration into society. This study aims to assess the conditions of these children as clients and evaluate the institution's effectiveness in rehabilitating and reintegrating Children in Conflict with the Law into their communities.

Methodology

The qualitative approach was utilized to explore the issues and challenges impacting the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs, particularly focusing on the experiences of rehabilitated children in conflict with the law (CICL) and the social workers who assist them. Ishtiaq (2019) emphasizes that qualitative research seeks to uncover the deeper meanings that individuals or societies assign to social and human challenges. This method involved systematic data collection, aligning with Siedlecki (2019) description of descriptive research, which outlines situations and phenomena to provide a clearer understanding of a topic. The study took place at the MIMAROPA Youth Center in Poblacion, Bansud, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines, where participants were purposefully selected. Through this research, valuable insights were gained into the complexities surrounding rehabilitation efforts, contributing to a broader understanding of social issues within these programs.

Results and discussion

The MIMAROPA Youth Center plays a crucial role in the rehabilitation and support of Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL). Based on interviews conducted with five social workers and house parents, several key areas have been identified that require immediate attention to improve the overall effectiveness of the center. This literary nonfiction piece seeks to highlight the essential infrastructural modifications, security enhancements, and personnel needs that have emerged from these interviews (Luna, 2021).

Infrastructural Modifications

The physical facilities of the MIMAROPA Youth Center are in need of significant infrastructural modifications.

Currently, the layout and condition of the facilities do not adequately support the rehabilitation efforts for CICL. The interviews revealed that the environment must be conducive to both safety and growth. Upgrading the physical infrastructure includes improving living quarters, communal spaces, and recreational areas. These enhancements would not only provide a more comfortable living situation for the youth but also promote positive interactions among them, fostering a sense of community and belonging.

Increased security measures

Security is a paramount concern for any facility housing vulnerable populations, particularly those involved in the juvenile justice system. The social workers expressed a pressing need for additional security measures within the center. This includes both physical security enhancements, such as better surveillance systems and secure perimeters, as well as trained personnel to monitor and respond to any incidents effectively. A safe environment is essential for the well-being of CICL, enabling them to focus on rehabilitation rather than live in fear of external threats or internal conflicts.

Personnel needs and training

Another critical aspect raised in the interviews is the necessity for more active and trained staff members. The current personnel are overstretched and require additional support to manage the implemented rehabilitation programs effectively. It is essential for the youth center to have a sufficient number of staff members who are not only well-trained but also dedicated to the rehabilitation process. This includes providing ongoing professional development for staff to ensure they are equipped with the latest knowledge and techniques in youth rehabilitation and crisis management.

Financial planning and resource allocation

Despite having sufficient funds allocated annually for rehabilitation programs at the MIMAROPA Youth Center, there have been notable delays in financial planning over the past two years. This inconsistency in financial management can hinder the implementation of necessary improvements and programs. It is crucial for the center to streamline its financial planning processes to ensure timely access to resources.

The center receives substantial financial support from the local government unit, which contributes one-third of the total daily expenses for CICL. This partnership underscores the importance of community involvement in the rehabilitation of youth. However, the center also relies on minimal donations and support from various non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Expanding these partnerships could provide additional resources, allowing the center to enhance its programs and facilities further.

Conclusion

The insights gathered from the interviews with social workers and house parents provide a clear roadmap for the MIMAROPA Youth Center's future development. By addressing the infrastructural modifications, security measures, and personnel needs, the center can create a more supportive and safer environment for CICL. Additionally, improving financial planning and resource allocation will ensure that the center can effectively carry out its mission.

The collaboration between government units, NGOs, and the community will be crucial in realizing these changes. Ultimately, the goal is to foster an environment where CICL can heal, learn, and grow into positive contributors to society.

References

1. Arthur R. Recognizing children's citizenship in the youth justice system. *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*. 2015.
2. Del Rosario VAB, Ballesteros-Lintao R. Investigative interviewing: Assessing questioning strategies employed to children in conflict with the law. *International Journal of Legal Discourse*. 2018;3(1):51–76. doi:10.1515/ijld-2018-2004
3. Luna G. Status of educational and social welfare services for children in conflict with the law at Bahay Pagasa: Input to intervention program. *Journal of Philosophy, Policy-Making and Criminal Justice Education*. 2021;2(2).
4. Ishtiaq M. Book review: Creswell JW. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. *English Language Teaching*. 2019;12(5):40. doi:10.5539/elt.v12n5p40
5. Siedlecki SL. Understanding descriptive research designs and methods. *Clinical Nurse Specialist*. 2019;34(1):8–12. doi:10.1097/nur.0000000000000493
6. Shabani R. The effects of the rehabilitation centers on the children in conflict with the law in Burundi: Case study of the Rumonge Rehabilitation Center. 2019.