

It Takes a Village to Raise a Child:  
Enhancing Linkages for the Youth of La Trinidad

*Agnes, the charming, young lady from La Presa, sees the world very positively and loves so deeply. She was industrious and hardworking. And when a young man from the city broke her heart, she was embraced and supported not just by her father but also by her friends and folks in the neighborhood. Though the pain remained, her heart tried to move on and saw the sun rise again, with the people of La Presa on her back.*

It takes a village to raise a child, they say. And La Trinidad, Benguet believes that with strong linkage with other sectors in the society, they would be able to raise children to be good citizens of the community.

Sustained by a relatively peaceful environment and comparatively high socio-economic opportunities, La Trinidad, Benguet has been a popular choice for migration, thus the rapid growth of population in the area. Together with this, however, is the arising of problems and challenges confronting its residents especially children who gets more prone to being at risk (CAR) and in conflict with the law (CICL).

Without denying that these challenges exist, the local government of La Trinidad responds proactively by adopting measures that would address certain issues like lack of information on some guidelines in handling CAR/CICL, lack of reporting of cases concerning children, lack of participation from offended parties involved in these cases, and limited capacity-building opportunities for all involved CAR/CICL.

To make the interventions sustainable and effective, several ordinances were passed and adopted. These include: 1) Ordinance No. 1-2003 or the provision of a comprehensive Children's Welfare and Support Program of the municipality of La Trinidad and for other purposes; and 2) Ordinance No. 13-2012 or institutionalizing intervention and diversion programs, projects and activities for CAR/CICL in the municipality of La Trinidad and appropriating funds thereof.

***For the Children of Benguet***

Just like in La Presa, La Trinidad highlights the fact that children's welfare are not anchored only in the capacity of parents to raise them but also in the bigger environment they are in. In short, they acknowledge how other people or for this matter, other sectors of society, could contribute to ensuring a safer community for the children.

La Trinidad advocates a multi-sectoral approach in handling child welfare issues by working closely with the local police, the community, the barangays and civil society

organizations. The municipal government aims to achieve its goal of capacitating families and communities where children can grow and develop to become more productive, law-abiding, and responsible through a comprehensive intervention program.

The comprehensive program which is composed of primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions includes rigorous and regular information and education campaign on child related laws, spiritual and values formation, education, skills and sports development, and referral to other agencies and appropriate services. These programs are planned and implemented through the Local Council for the Protection of Children, where 50% of the total membership belongs to civil society organizations and other government agencies.

The civil society organizations and government agencies that are active partners of the LCPC include Consuelo Life Skills Center for Children, Save our School Children Foundation, Child Family Service Philippines, Inc., Filipina Foundation, Philippine National Police, Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, DepEd, DILG and the DOJ. The continued advocacy of local government officials to involve other stakeholders has motivated civil society organizations and other government agencies in actively participating in the activities of the LGU concerning children's welfare. In addition, civil society organizations prefer to establish their centers in the capital town of the province because of its proximity and accessibility. Also, client groups and LGU leadership are open to partnership and there is relatively a peaceful situation that helps their centers run suitably.

### ***Combining Efforts to Capacitate the Children***

In partnership with the Consuelo Life Skills Center for Children, 95% of our referred youth had acquired vocational trainings like carpentry, masonry and welding for reason that the center does not require educational qualification so long as the youth is interested to undergo and finish the training. So far, most of the graduates were employed locally and one graduate is an overseas worker in Japan.

Another partner, the Save Our School Children Foundation, extends educational assistance to our school children, who are not members of Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program or 4Ps. Other partner agencies volunteer their services as resource speakers during Life Skills Session, Parents Effectiveness Seminar and Information Education Campaign.

In spite of the many benefits the LGU gets from its partners, the Municipality of La Trinidad still regularly allocates funds for the programs and services for children's welfare making it clear that in a partnership, the cost is shared by both parties. This shows that the LGU does not totally depend on its partner agencies. Allocating local

fund for the programs allows assurance of its sustainability and continuity even when partner agencies and organization decide to divert its support.

*The success of raising a child like Agnes cannot just be associated with her Papang, Mang Buboy, and her nanay-nanayan, Mirasol, but also with how their fellow dwellers in La Presa provided support and make the environment she lives in an enabling place for self-reliance and growth.*

*It takes a village to raise a child. It takes an open-minded child to make a village his home.*

