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Implications for Study and Practice

With the presentation of Mountain Province's early child care and development best practices, this paper made an attempt to pave the way for better services in the field of health, social welfare and education. To close this paper, implications for further study and practice are then laid out in the succeeding pages.

Implications for Further Study and Practice

This final section presents topics relating to further research and potential activities for practitioners. We make suggestions as to further research on early child care services in Mountain Province in particular, and knowledge management and best practices documentation in general. For those who are currently providing health, educational and social services in the various provincial, municipal and barangay offices and facilities, there is a list of practical recommendations with supporting examples from our research. These rules-of-thumb are based on an analysis of the experiences gathered on the field with direct observation and archival readings set as a counterpoint.

Implications for Further Research

As an exploration of best practices of early child care services in Mountain Province, this document can be seen as a rather raw overview of what has been accomplished, and how were things done. Further research and documentation is a welcome continuation of whatever has been started in this activity.

Effectiveness of Practitioners in Coordinated Sharing of Knowledge and Practices

Local executives and line agencies, especially at the provincial level, have the crucial role of coordinating the storage and sharing of knowledge and practices. Adoption strategies for storage and sharing are very much needed to advance government programs in times of financial difficulties.

Future research should examine the effectiveness of provincial agencies in facilitating the development and implementation of knowledge and practice storage and sharing within and between municipalities. While the importance of provincial meetings can not be underestimated, there is a need to identify strategies that would motivate barangay and municipal practitioners and organizations to participate in a provincial wide knowledge management program.

Role of Religion and Culture in the Success of CHTs

One of the activities covered by of community health teams is the promotion of family planning. It would be interesting to assess how religion affects the implementation of the CHT concept by comparing Besao and Sagada, which are predominantly Anglican, with the other municipalities, which are predominantly Roman Catholic. It would also be interesting to compare melting-pot municipalities like Paracelis and Bontoc with that of Besao and Sadanga, which do not experience much in-migration.

Compilation of Indigenous Children's Songs, Stories and Games

Taking into consideration that use of one's first language facilitates learning, and that immersion in one's local culture is a right of children, a compilation of indigenous children's songs and stories in the vernacular would be a valuable contribution of local governments to the development of their children. Re-introducing local games to children would also be a worthwhile task to accomplish.

Evaluation of IRA and Non-IRA Budgeting for Social Services

A more detailed comparative study of how local governments allocate for social services from their IRA and non-IRA income would show in terms of percentages how municipalities fare with each other in spending for health, social welfare and education.

Implications for Practice

Can we learn anything useful from this documentation? Surely, we need to share problems, failures and success stories gained from the delivery of health, educational and social welfare services in order to learn.

In the spirit of sharing, we can make the following suggestions for those interested in participating empowering young children. Our ideas are anchored on the experiences of those who are on the field – parents, workers and other participants. Such experiences are confirmed or questioned by direct observations and archival data. Most importantly, the challenge to move on is most important, and moving on by delivering better services will be most appreciated by the children and their primary care providers.

Utilize existing community infrastructure

The life of day care centers, preschools and barangay health stations are dependent on the willingness of the neighborhoods and towns in which they are located to accept the services they are offering. Maintaining communication lines with the elective leaders, parents and elders will help them see the importance of caring for the children. The strength of a network of friends and extended family should never be underestimated. Informal agreements may jumpstart new endeavors

Allow for Piloting or a Trial Period

Preschool learning is activated in at least one school per municipality almost two decades earlier before universal preschool education is mandated. Strategically located day care centers are identified as pilot centers and got complete material support from UNICEF. Newer day care centers would base their material requirements on these pilot centers.

Provide Permanent Facilities

While certain services can be rendered with the absence of facilities, the quality of service improves when permanent facilities exist. In day care centers, quality time is saved if DCWs do not have to store their materials each time class is over, as in the case of those using multi-purpose rooms. Midwives would also be able to provide better service if a birthing clinic is accessible.

Mentoring

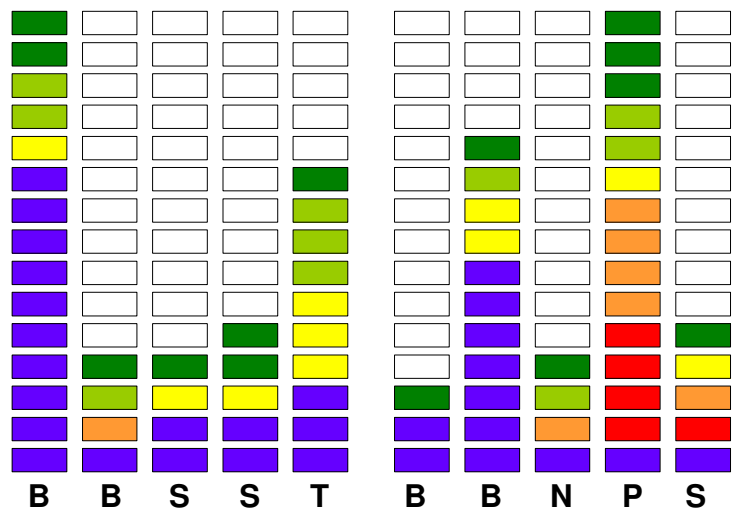
Mentoring programs can be implemented as part of an overall program for the storage and development of best practices. A mentoring program can be implemented as a method to help new employees gain valuable information from experienced workers. Mentors can be responsible for the development of skills of employees who may not be their subordinates, such as in the case of day care workers and barangay health workers.

Augmentation of Workers' Honoraria

Provincial and municipal augmentation of day care and barangay health worker honoraria motivates workers to perform better. Incentives, even though minimal, are enough reminder that the work that barangay workers do are important to the community and its leaders.

Distribution of Permanent Preschool Teachers

Suggested Permanent Preschool Teacher
Distribution and Prioritization



The very fast and successful simultaneous opening of a lot of preschool classes in such a short time can be partly attributed to DepEd's support for volunteer teachers even as it continues to open permanent items for deserving schools. To ensure stability in the program a suggested distribution and prioritization scheme for permanent preschool teachers is shown in a diagram found on the previous page. The blue rectangles represent existing permanent teachers. Bauko has the largest number, followed by Bontoc. In terms of need, Paracelis, Tadian and Sadanga are identified to be the major targets. The five red rectangles indicate that Paracelis immediately need four permanent teachers while Sadanga needs one. The seven orange rectangles indicate the next batch, with Paracelis again getting four and Sadanga, Natonin and Besao getting one each. The next batch is represented by ten yellow rectangles, with Tadian getting three, Bontoc two, and Bauko, Sabangan, Sagada, Paracelis and Sadanga getting one each. The succeeding batches are the yellow green and green rectangles. While Besao and Barlig would be getting the least number of permanent teachers, they should still have the appropriate number of volunteer teachers so that pupils in their localities would not experience a delay in entry.

Provincial Level Knowledge Sharing

The limited resources and generally small size of most rural local government units make it ineffective to develop a mechanism for the storage and sharing of knowledge and practices per municipality. The most helpful mechanism would be one that serves the entire province, and one that could also be utilized by other actors in the country and the rest of the world.

Because of the trust-based relationship between funding agencies and local governments, it would appropriate for a neutral third party to facilitate initiatives in knowledge and practice storage and sharing. This would downplay perceptions that documentation and sharing are a coercive effort that measures participation levels to determine future funding. This way, a trusting environment is maintained and information is made available to other interested stakeholders while reducing resource wastage among all actors.

Adopt an Integrated ECCD Knowledge Management Strategy for Mountain Province

To facilitate the documentation of best practices across the different agencies and geo-political subdivisions, an integrated knowledge management strategy might come in handy for the province. This strategy must encourage the acquisition, transfer and application of knowledge in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of barangay, municipal and provincial projects or programs.

In the succeeding diagram, one can see that a project or program could be in one of the following stages: planning, implementation and monitoring, or evaluation. The project or program could cover a barangay, a municipality or the whole province.

Regardless of the stage of the project or the geo-political coverage, the acquisition, transfer and application of knowledge (best practices) should take place. At the planning stage, a barangay project could borrow ideas from its municipal and provincial coordinators/implementors, or vice versa. These ideas are stored and retrieved via written and verbal communication, which could be formal or informal. After the communication or exchange has been internalized, the actors would then apply the knowledge. The same should be applied in the implementation/monitoring and evaluation stages.

In a way, this is already being done. The actors, however, whether government employees, private sector partners, or community volunteers, may not be aware that what they are doing is part of knowledge management. Because of this, knowledge initially stored in people's minds or on pieces of paper end up getting forgotten or lost. Such forgotten or lost knowledge could no longer be shared and other actors would have to start learning from scratch instead of taking advantage of a practice that has been proven to result in success at less cost and less time.

This documentation then, is an effort to establish a starting point for knowledge management and to offer some limited suggestions for those interested in starting and maintaining services catering to young children. There is an attempt to examine how practitioners render health, social welfare and education services to young children and their current and future care providers. Admittedly, there are limitations: With the short documentation period, a lot of gaps had to be tolerated. Had the research period been longer, the study might have produced a more detailed compilation and rigorous validation, resulting in solid findings. Our understanding of problems and successes encountered in other programs and endeavors, especially in the area of health and education services, would have been included.

A more refined procedure would have generated an authoritative standpoint of the success of early child care service delivery in Mountain Province. Yet even with these shortcomings in mind, we hope this study will be of use to others who are interested in providing better service by making knowledge generated and fine-tuned on the field more accessible for replication, revision and innovation.

Mountain Province ECCD Knowledge Management Strategy

