

I. TITLE

“HAKAB (HUBOG ALALAY SA KABATAAN) ng PLARIDEL”

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2009, the number of Out of School Youth in the town of Plaridel was estimated to have reached 1, 113 or 4.38% of its total youth population of 22,253 at the time. The data shows significantly more female than male for any given year after 2009. The identified pattern of increase in the number of marginalized youth was a reflection of the overall socio-economic circumstances of the country characterized by widespread poverty, inequality in regional development, a rapid population growth rate, high unemployment rate and sluggish economic growth worsened by a global economic meltdown at the time.

As Plaridel is agricultural by economic nature, there was a significant number of underprivileged youth working in farms to begin with who are members of farmer families mostly tillers but not owners of the land as identified by local agricultural extension workers. Moreover, there was an onslaught of urban poor people who migrate to Plaridel being the hub of five municipalities in the Province very near Metro Manila, in search of basic social services and employment continue to contribute to the number of underserved young people. Poverty is the overriding reason for Plaridel's youth dropping out of school as the direct and opportunity cost of education could not be afforded by low income families despite the fact that public school education is supposed to be free.

These marginalized youth faced enormous social and economic pressures. Aside from being unable to pursue formal schooling, they are almost always hard-pressed by their impoverished parents to either contribute to family income or bear the burden of household duties. In youth assessment surveys conducted by the local Municipal Social Welfare Development Office (MSWD), it was established that nearly all of the Out-of-School-Youth (OSYs)

respondents recognized the importance of an education and the majority were hoping to return to the fold of formal schooling but lacks the opportunity to do so. Their destitute lives would sometimes lead to desperation and there would be those who resorted to illegal activities to help their parents with some money for the family's basic needs. These kids have fallen under the category of youth juvenile offender or the so called CICL (children-in-conflict with the law).

It was projected that though these marginalized youth constitute only a small portion or about 4.38% of Plaridel society, being uneducated, they were at high risk of becoming victims of abuse, violence, unwanted pregnancy and diseases. Being out of school also adversely affects young people and their families. Overall, it limits the town's economic growth and undermines the stability of the community, the nation and the world, in many ways. While these young people are aware of the traditional national government initiated youth organizations but the rate of participation was low due to low self-esteem, lack of perseverance and a general lack of faith in the government's concern for their welfare.

In 2009, during the second term of Mayor Anastacia Vistan, the first woman Mayor of Plaridel, there was a resurgence of hope and renewed confidence in the local leadership. The Municipal Government of Plaridel was steadily making inroads to progress and public support was an all-time-high. There was progress in various fronts and all vital indicators of socio-economic progress. While there began good programs in place to support in-school youth, several consultations with the people revealed the need to address the issues and concerns of marginalized and vulnerable youth.

The local leadership recognized the correlations among high educational attainment, cognitive growth, and the consequent economic uplift and that at their core is literacy. The idea was to provide marginalized mostly out-of-school youth with opportunity to develop literacy skills and knowledge that lead to specific outcome identified as follows

1. Basic literacy skills
2. Employability Skills
3. Entrepreneurship Skills
4. Technical Skills
5. Life Skills
6. Cultural and Environmental Skills
7. Gender Responsiveness Skills

Through collaborative communication planning, the local leaders tried to build greater awareness of the global literacy crisis and allow participants to come together in various consultative forums where they unite to help improve literacy for marginalized youth in the town of Plaridel. Such renewed vision has spurred a major crusade spearheaded by the local chief executive and involving the local community including local and elective officials, employees, families, school systems, educational, cultural and religious institutions, libraries, the mass media, private enterprises social organizations and other citizen associations.

Strong political support provided both the resources and the motivation to overcome hurdles since program inception in 2009 under the leadership of Mayor Anastacia Vistan all the way though to its continued implementation today as spearheaded by Mayor Jocell R. Vistan. This represent milestones in transformational socio-economic and political change made possible by two women leaders who, “shattered the glass ceiling” and opened up an era of sustained progress through which the Municipal government unit reached out to provide citizens a literacy program built on the vision of positive change for the poorly educated youth population.

The ultimate goal is to mould the youth and place them on a more positive life trajectory by not only teaching basic reading and numeracy skills but by building knowledge that will have an impact on their ability to play key adult roles of worker, parent, citizen across all of the learning skills envisioned

to be important for the marginalized youth to be restored to a life of dignity and productivity.

Thus HAKAB was born. HAKAB is an acronym that stands for (Hubog Alalay sa Kabataan ng Plaridel) which roughly translated means Moulding and Supporting Plaridel's Youth. To make it more meaningful, "hakab" is also a Filipino term which means "mould" or "shape" to a perfect fit. True to its name, the main goal of HAKAB (Mould) is to mould young adults specifically Out of School Youth (OSYs) from once being regarded by society as laggards and burdens into active productive and dignified participants in community and nation-building.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Specific Objectives:

HAKAB – An Integrated Literacy Program for Marginalized Youth (Plaridel, Bulacan) aims to:

- Provide interventions that would enhance the marginalized youth's coping capabilities, life strategies and socially desirable behaviour through an integrated approach to literacy;
- Help the youth's parents and family members understand youth behaviour and enable them to strengthen parenting roles and capabilities. This includes the provision of immediate interventions for financial assistance as well as the extension more sustainable support through micro – lending targeting the underprivileged out of school youth's parents;
- Harness the community through the utilization of youth volunteers themselves as support group in carrying out interventions for other disadvantaged youth and by increasing

recognition of the community that youth development is one of the smartest investment that both public and private sectors can make;

- Increase youth participation and partnership in the affairs of the local government and institutionalize mechanisms for youth participation in decision – making processes, Support youth-led organizations and initiatives to enhance their contribution to society, Strengthen networks and partnerships among Governments, youth-led organizations, academies, civil society organizations, the private sector, and all available media channels to enhance commitment and support for holistic youth development; and
- Increase global competitiveness and inter-cultural understanding among underprivileged youth through ICT and empowering and supporting out of school youth to become evangelist for social inclusion and sustainable development.

B. Outreach

Main target groups are Out – of – school Youth (OSYs) who may never attended school, or may have left school before they acquired strong literacy skills. More specifically, the program targets impoverished Out of School Youth, Children in Conflict with the Law, Street Children, Children and Youth at risk with emphasis on women and girls.

The program covers all 19 barangays targeting the Municipality reaching out to approximately 1,500 number of OSYs and other marginalized youth. The program reaches an average of 1,000 beneficiaries annually since its inception in 2009.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

Given its very structure, an integrated literacy approach covers various segment of the population and different categories of literacy skills. It was therefore imperative to the tailor the delivery system, thus encompassing both the conceptual and operational details of the various literacy initiatives covering the different skills that were envisioned to be achieved. HAKAB utilizes diverse delivery mechanism under various agreement and collaborations.

As a critical important step during program planning, literacy program proponents are queried on the what, why and how of the project, that is, what they wish to achieve through the program, who they wish to educate, what information they want to impart, in what environment to present it, and which media to use.

HAKAB Plaridel is a response to the needs of children who are under special circumstances. The main interventions are Child and Youth Counselling. For CICLs, it is an intervention which enables the youth/child become more aware of the factors which caused their defiant behaviours, and their roles and responsibilities in order to improve their coping capabilities and relationship with others. For children who are victims of abuse, this project will provide them free counselling to identify and enhance their coping capabilities. Lastly for street children and out of school youth to benefit from the Alternative Learning System.

This is a tie-up project of the Municipality of Plaridel, Bulacan through the MSWDO Plaridel, and Bulacan State University (BSU), College of Education (COED) Extension Program Services.

The BSU-COED shall undertake the following:

- Select qualified counsellors from student group (Guidance Major Association) and faculty of the College of Education.
- Conduct counselling services and ALS to identified children and youth handled by the MSWDO, Plaridel.
- Do other guidance related task as the need arises.

The MSWDO Plaridel shall undertake the following:

- Identify the social worker/resource person who will be the counterpart of/ and work with counsellors from the student group (Guidance Major Association) and faculty of the task force.
- Share in their responsibilities in providing the needed logistical and other facilitate support for the projects.
- Identify and select the minor who will be the beneficiaries/ participants for the project through coordination with PNP Plaridel (Women and Children's Desk Officer) and Barangay Councils.
- Provide Parent Effectiveness Services to encourage the proper performance of the duties and responsibilities of the parents of the participants minors, provide learning opportunities on the adequate rearing of children and positive parent-child relationship.

The keys to program success had been the collaborative project management- committed leadership strongly resolved to prioritize the literacy agenda and competently execute its program; time, resources and top level commitment allocated to the projects; an empowered Local School Board chaired by the Local Chief Executive; and an informed citizenry's democratic participation.

- **TEACHING LEARNING METHOD**

The typical module includes a combination of lecture coupled with individual, small, and large group discussions and activities. The medium of instruction is generally in Tagalog with a mix of English terminologies. The

youth are also involved in creative project that requires them to integrate what they have learned and experienced during the course and express their knowledge to their classmates.

- **TEACHING LEARNING CONTENT MATERIALS**

The teaching/learning content is suited to the participant's level of competence and support in the defining and reaching higher level of proficiency. It also emphasized interactive and informal relationships between facilitators and participants that encourage participation discussion and cooperative learning.

The program also took into account the specific development characteristics and needs of youth. Best features of the modules is the fact that they include the principle of having a choice, acquiring a voice, positive social interaction and the development of both self-confidence and self-efficacy in all of the training materials.

Volunteer educators became the content designers and took into considerations the characteristic of OSY participants. This targeted approach has impacted the way they deliver training and profiling of instructors or educators. They looked at the age, gender, education level of the participants and recommended courses for them.

- **FUNDING**

The Local Government of Plaridel allocated budget for the conduct of the program HAKAB CICL. The contributions from the private sector and other stakeholder are in form of financial assistance, technical support and provision of supplies, equipment and facilities.

V. PROJECT RESULTS / IMPACT

- Participants attained an expanded vision of their lives with significant number able to enter primary or secondary schools through scholarships provided by the LGU or the gained employability skill that meet the requirement of local business for entry level employment.
- The youth participant's mothers are given the access to a small loan through the Kaagapay sa Pag-asenso (Partners in Progress) which enabled them to start and sustain small businesses and contribute to the economic and social well-being of their families. The repayment scheme has been high due to the guidance of community workers on ways to run the business and the encouragement of savings mobilization. This has meant less burden and pressures on the youth and gave them hope to re-enter formal schooling or be empowered to attain other employable or entrepreneurial skills.
- Majority of the OSY's targeted participated in social governance goals. Through HAKAB CICL a significant number were reintegrated into normal family life and community life after a period of conflict. Plaridel being an agro-industrial town also has youth working in farms identified by the Municipal Agricultural Office at around 300 working to help their parents till the soil or do the marketing of produce.
- The program built a general sense of empowerment, dignity, independence and efficacy, which links to motivation for further success.
- Overall stronger literacy skills in Plaridel are associated with higher income, better health and greater social and civic engagement for citizens in and out of the formal education system.

- Spearheading the universalization of literacy in the Municipality with emphasis on infant health, early child development, gender concerns digital literacies and cultural/environmental literacies as foundations for a global context learning action planning that impacts the town's overall progress and development.

VI. ANALYSIS / LESSONS LEARNED

The program intends to educate the participants in the different aspect of learning. This however brought about several challenges to the working team and some of them are as follows:

Financial Aspect

- Some participants needed to be fetched from their homes, through as days went by, we have taught them of having a little walk going towards the learning area and just transport them back after the sessions.

Cultural

- The teaching method has somehow evolved into a more lax manner to accommodate their lifestyle and help them enjoy the discussions.

Social and Economic

- It was a battle to make them participate in the learning process, the lack in their social inter-action and economic status in life was bounded to be the greatest challenge for the facilitators. To early validate the things they have grasped, homework were given and associate it with the module in the recapitulation process.
- We were fortunate that they always came in class dressed properly and neatly groomed.

The project made us conclude that a simple interaction among fellow learners has given them sufficient self-esteem and confidence. These things were greatly observed during the commencement exercises, when members of their family were present to witness simple success and how proud they are of their achievement.

We are looking forward that they may continue the spark we have started through the alternative learning system's educational offers. And to adjust our technique and applied ideas according to group profiles and match it applicable styles. It is also worthy to note that not giving them the luxury of conventional classrooms is better that they may feel a local environment and make them feel less away from their places.

Generally, almost all local government units (LGU) can replicate this practice. A little creativity and resourcefulness for lower class LGUs would probably do the trick. When the effort is high, the results are tremendous.

- **CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS**

- ✚ Pressure on the local government to level up ways of improving program reach and effectiveness as the number of marginalized youth grows in direct proportion to population growth as well the rate of urban poor migration.
- ✚ There was a need to strategize activities and attain the least possible cost so as not to unduly burden the government and affect other basic services.
- ✚ Insufficient funds for completers to start a business was answered by the micro-lending scheme of HAKAB's Kaagapay sa Pag-asenso (Partners for Progress)

- ✚ Lack of employment opportunities for completers remain one of the greatest challenges.

- **SUSTAINABILITY**

The program is sustainable as it rooted in the community, thus harnessing the power of those in the formal school sector to help OSYs and other marginalized youth come back to the fold of mainstream society.

The literacy program of the municipality is financially sustained through local budget legislation. The local government unit being at the helm of the Local School Board as well as the Municipal Literacy Coordinating Council, the municipality is mandated by law to allocate funds for education and literacy initiatives.

Sustainability is also ensued through strategic partnerships with academic institutions, private sector corporations, youth and women – based NGOs and other civic – oriented organizations. The program harnesses community collaboration to raise a continued and sustainable source of funds.

The biggest piece of the economic sustainability is on the number of marginalized youth parents provided micro – loans to start their own small businesses through the Kaagapay sa Pag-aseño Program of the municipality.

VII. APPENDICES

- **Team Action plan**
- **Schedule/ List of Activities undertaken**
- **Pictorials**

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