

Annie Ruth Quines
Cluster Head
Mandaluyong City

DOCUMENTATION OF BEST PRACTICES IN MANDALUYONG CITY

I. Project T.E.A.C.H. (Therapy, Education, and Assimilation of Children with Handicap):

A Public-Private Partnership Program for Persons with Disabilities

II. SUMMARY

Mandaluyong City lies in the heart of Metro Manila, the eighteenth largest metropolis in the world. Surrounded by highly urbanized cities, business centers, and service institutions, Mandaluyong is the ideal place to live and do business. Being at the crossroads of major transportation networks such as EDSA, Shaw Boulevard, Ortigas Avenue, and the Metro Rail Transit System (with three stations in the city), it takes less than hour to travel even to the farthest ends of Metro Manila, including the Ninoy Aquino international Airport. Mandaluyong City has rolling terrain that gently slopes down from spot heights along Pasig River three meters above sea level, and sits on a bedrock foundation that can support heavy structures, and is not prone to heavy floods and liquefaction. Climate is generally regular, with the hottest temperature recorded at 36.5 degrees Centigrade.

The latest official population count is 328,699 (NSO 2010 Census), which swells up to about 1.4 million during daytime. Between 2000 and 2010, its population grew at an annual rate of 1.67, with a male-to-female ratio of 95:100 and a large percentage of the population belonging to the 5–39 age range.

With a total land area of 1,126 hectares, the city has an urban density of 306.83 persons per hectare. Owing to the large variation in barangay land areas, including pockets of informal settlements and commercial districts, barangay population densities range from 28.74 PPH in Barangay Wack-Wack to 1,766.03 PPH in Barangay San Jose, a strip of land formerly occupied by the Philippine National Railroad.

Based on the Labor Force Survey Report of the Department of Labor and Employment, Labor Force Participation Rate is at 63.80 percent, in which Employment Rate is 89 percent, Unemployment Rate is 11 percent, and

Underemployment Rate is 12.50 percent. The latest NSO Quick Stat for NCR (2008) also shows a Functional Literacy Rate of 94 percent

Public safety and protection services are provided by the Bureau of Fire and the Philippine National Police, both with headquarters within the city hall compound, and three substations and seven community precincts, respectively, in strategic locations in the city. The city government has four fire trucks in operation and 2.41 police outposts for every 100,000 population. These facilities are augmented by barangay-owned fire prevention facilities with 17 fire trucks in total, and tanod outposts.

The executive branch of the Mandaluyong City government operates through 21 departments under the Office of the Mayor, supported by special bodies as mandated in the 1991 Local Government Code, with the Local Development Council supported by technical working groups and special committees. The City Council, on the other hand, serves as the legislative body and is composed of 12 elected councilors, six from each of the two political districts of the city, and two ex-officio members: the president of the Liga ng mga Barangay and the president of the SK Federation. The city is also powered by 4,771 personnel, including consultants and service contractors, majority of whom are bona fide residents of the city.

Computerization of city government services is now in various stages of implementation, with the end goal of linking interrelated systems on real property, business permits, engineering fees, and others. At present, the computerization program links local regulatory offices such as the City Assessor and Treasury Departments, including the Tax Mapping Division and the Information Management System. This facilitates real property tax assessment and collection and thus helps improve revenue generation.

For the socially disadvantaged, majority of whom are women and children in extremely difficult circumstances, there are ten facilities operating in the city: six facilities are owned by the government, and four are owned by nongovernment organizations.

Children 0–17 years old share 37 percent or 127,350 of the total population of the city. One of the top priorities of the city is human investment, with special consideration for the pregnant women and children. The city has been a consistent recipient of awards for the implementation of programs, projects, and activities on nutrition, and for children, especially those with disabilities.

Children with special needs are the primary concern of the city. One of the proofs is that as of today there are PWDs enrolled in the public schools under the SPED Program, with a total enrolment of 406 for the school year 2013–2014.

The city government continuously strives to excel in governance. As rated by the LGPMS (now the SGLG), Mandaluyong City consistently rated excellent in the various areas of transparency, participation, development planning, human resource management and development, financial accountability, health services, as well as freshwater ecosystems management.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Mandaluyong is the first city in the Philippines to establish the Persons with Disability Affairs Division (PDAD), an office that caters to the needs of and provides various services for Persons with Disability (PWDs). With the creation of the PDAD in 1998, the city was honored as an Apolinario Mabini Awardee—Local Government of the Year with the best programs and projects for disabled persons.

Due to the high cost of medical, rehabilitation, and educational services for youth with special needs, many families cannot afford to avail quality intervention for them. Individuals with disabilities need these services to be more independent in self-care, school, play, and work activities. The shortage of competent professionals such as developmental pediatricians, special education teachers, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech therapists makes access to these services even more difficult. Moreover, local government units seldom subsidize comprehensive and integrated services for youth with special needs.

Former Mayor Benjamin “Benhur” C. Abalos Jr. identified **Project T.E.A.C.H.** as one of his monumental projects for the benefit of children with special needs. He spearheaded the conceptualization and implementation of **Project T.E.A.C.H., a community-based rehabilitation (CBR) program** that directly benefits youth with disabilities residing in depressed areas. It is a joint project with the **Rehabilitation and Empowerment of Adults and Children with Handicap (REACH) Foundation**, a nonstock, nonprofit organization based in Mandaluyong City.

Through the city's Project T.E.A.C.H., a total of 697 children were assessed and found out to have developmental conditions and were identified as direct beneficiaries of the various projects of the city for PWDs.

The beneficiaries were initially catered at the Lingap Karunungan Center in Hardin ng Pag-asa, Barangay Addition Hills. To further intensify support for the program, former Mayor Benhur Abalos initiated the construction of another building beside the previous one. This building serves as the institution for the implementation of Project T.E.A.C.H. and is used as a venue to conduct assessment and therapy for the children with disabilities, as well as other programs, projects, and activities for children who need special care.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

The PDAD implements and monitors the Accessibility Law and Magna Carta for PWDs in the city. The office also identifies individuals who will benefit from the free assistive devices.

Through the PDAD and Project T.E.A.C.H., various programs and projects are implemented, such as the profiling of PWDs and assessment of PWDs according to the type of disability. As of today, registered children with disabilities have the following percentage distribution: **4 percent have multiple disabilities; 5 percent, learning; 5 percent, visual; 13 percent, communication; 22 percent, mental; 9 percent, psychological; and 42 percent, orthopedic disabilities.** (Please see attached service Framework for the detailed process of the project).

After diagnosis, it was determined that the 600 child beneficiaries with developmental conditions have the following percentage distribution: intellectual deficiency, 18 percent; cerebral palsy, 16 percent; autism, 15 percent; Down Syndrome, 14 percent; Global Developmental Delay, 11 percent; Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, 10 percent; Communication Disorder, 7 percent; learning disability, 4 percent; and others, 5percent. The numbers are expected to increase through information campaigns and with the project's full implementation and expansion.

Playing a crucial role in Project T.E.A.C.H. are 27 lay Community Rehabilitation and Education Workers (CREW) who underwent rigorous training to help professionals implement therapy and educational programs for special children. They receive a monthly allowance of PHP4,000, which significantly

augments their family's income. The CREW are composed mostly of lay women who reside in depressed areas of Mandaluyong City, 37 of whom are related to a special child.

To sustain these initiatives, an interagency committee was formed to develop an innovative and cost-effective service delivery framework that effectively streamlined services that are pertinent to youth with special needs. This committee meets at least once a month to evaluate Project T.E.A.C.H.'s programs and discuss ways to enhance these accordingly.

Together with other committee members of Project T.E.A.C.H., the city was able to evaluate the educational needs for PWD children and thus ensure that they receive the utmost support they need. After assessment, deaf children are referred to the University of Santo Tomas Center for Audiological Services if fitting of a hearing device is recommended by the Special Education teacher. Children with Disability (CWDs) in Mandaluyong schools that are found to be in need of therapy are enrolled in therapy centers or in Mandaluyong CARES. In cases wherein they are not yet ready for the existing centers that the city has, the children are recommended to institutions that will be able to accommodate their needs so that they can learn in the most appropriate mode and environment to maximize their development.

Percentage of CWDs enrolled in different Special Education Schools in Mandaluyong

- 7 percent— Jose Fabella Memorial School
- 14 percent—Nueve de Febrero Elementary School
- 19 percent—Pedro P. Cruz Elementary School
- 20 percent—Isaac Lopez Integrated School
- 33 percent—Eulogio Rodriguez Integrated School
- 7 percent—Day care centers

In summary, the following programs, projects, and activities are implemented through PDAD and Project T.E.A.C.H.

(Please see attached photos for more information on the various projects and activities implemented by PDAD and Project T.E.A.C.H.):

- Access to Assistive Devices
- Communication Accessibility
- Access to Operative Procedures: Oplan Balik Ngiti, Lingap Paningin, Cataract Operations
- Access to Education
- Development of Seminars and Symposia: Convention on the Rights of a Child; Draw Disability; Read Along Program for the Deaf; and Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program

- Anthropometric Assessment for Children with Disabilities
- Dental Evaluation
- Employment and Livelihood Services
- Livelihood Assistance Program from DOLE and Partner Agencies
- Inclusion in the Special Program for Employment of Students (SPES)
- Advocacy Activities
- Sports and Sociocultural Activities
- Summer Clinics

V. PROJECT RESULT/IMPACT

As of December 2015, there are 2,182 PWDs registered who were issued with IDs and booklets, 721 or 33 percent of which are children.

To date, PWDs are given free wheelchairs (standard, supportive, or roughrider), walkers, or crutches.

In the Oplan Balik Ngiti Project, 363 smiles were restored to children's faces. Another project, the Lingap Paningin Project, sponsored free eye operations that benefitted 3,795 children and adults (including PWDs) with cataract. Both projects were cosponsored by the Mandaluyong City Medical Center and the Kababaihan Kakaiba ng Mandaluyong.

Overall, the enhanced capabilities of all the beneficiaries greatly contribute to a better quality of life for them and for their families.

In return, the City of Mandaluyong and former Mayor Benjamin "Benhur" C. Abalos Jr. recently received the prestigious UN Public Service Award for implementing Project T.E.A.C.H.

Other awards and citations received by the city government for establishing the Persons with Disabilities Affairs Division and for implementing Project T.E.A.C.H. are:

- 1998 Apolinario Mabini Award— Local Government Unit of the Year
- NCWDP Citation
- 2003 DepEd Regional Literacy Search
- Civil Service Commission—Presidential Lingkod Bayan Award

VI. ANALYSIS/LESSONS LEARNED

The dream is for Project T.E.A.C.H. to inspire other individuals, organizations, and/or local government units to establish similar CBR programs in their respective communities.

The Municipality of Carmona, Cavite, and the City of Dipolog, Zamboanga del Norte, located in Southern Luzon and Mindanao, respectively, have established their own community-based rehabilitation programs after being inspired by Project T.E.A.C.H. This clearly demonstrates the effectiveness and replicability of the program.

Through Project T.E.A.C.H., the administration of Mayor Benhur Abalos has opened doors that will allow Local Government Units, in particular, and our country, in general, to contribute in the creation of a global movement toward a more inclusive society for differently abled individuals.