RESEARCH PAPER

Children in conflict with the law management programs in Aparri, Cagayan

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Abstract

Children who have committed crimes are a vulnerable and distinct group within the criminal justice system. These individuals, referred to as Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL), are usually under 18 years old and have engaged in criminal behaviors such as theft, vandalism, and substance abuse. This study was conducted to investigate the implementation of CICL management programs and develop interventions to improve their implementation. The study employed a descriptive research design, and the primary tool for gathering data was a questionnaire-checklist. The respondents of the study included the MSWD officer of Aparri, the Chief of Police, the Women and Children Protection Desk officer (WCPD) of Aparri Police Station, and selected Barangay officials of Centro Barangays of Aparri. The study found that respondents had varying assessments of each variable. Ten (10) of the programs were often implemented, four (4) programs were sometimes implemented, and two (2) were always implemented. The test of difference in the assessments of the respondents showed a non-significant result. The study also revealed that lack of community participation in CICL management programs was the most significant challenge faced by the respondents. The respondents highly recommended promoting community engagement in managing CICL. In conclusion, CICL management programs are functional; however, their implementation varies. Some programs are implemented occasionally, some often, while only a few are implemented consistently. The study's findings highlight the need to promote community engagement in managing CICL and improve the implementation of CICL management programs.

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Introduction

Individuals who are below a certain age, as defined by the legal system of a particular jurisdiction, and who have committed actions that are considered offenses or crimes under the law, are known as children in conflict with the law. These minors also referred to as juvenile offenders or young offenders, have engaged in behaviors that are punishable under the legal framework of the society in which they live.

It is essential to recognize that children in conflict with the law are a vulnerable and distinct group within the criminal justice system. Their age, cognitive development, and life experiences can significantly influence their understanding of the consequences of their actions and their ability to make informed decisions. The legal treatment and handling of children in conflict with the law must consider their unique circumstances, focusing on rehabilitation, reintegration, and addressing the underlying factors that may have contributed to their involvement in criminal activities.

International and national laws often establish a separate legal framework for dealing with juvenile offenders, recognizing the need for specialized procedures and protections. This framework aims to balance accountability for their actions with the understanding that children possess the potential for growth, development, and rehabilitation. According to (Beralde, 2023) the modern criminal justice system even has a legal term for a child who has committed a crime; "JUVENILE DELINQUENT". In our country we seldom avoid this term by simply using Child in Conflict with the Laws (CICL), but whether we like it or not juvenile delinquency is a universal generic term for a person whose age is under minority who broke a law.

Efforts to address the challenges related to children in conflict with the law involve implementing preventive measures, providing support and guidance, promoting education and skills development, and fostering community-based alternatives to incarceration. It is crucial to work towards a system that prioritizes the best interests of the child, upholds their rights, and focuses on their successful reintegration into society to prevent further criminal behavior.

In Aparri, Cagayan, minors who have engaged in criminal activities or violated laws fall under the category of "children in conflict with the law." While this issue is not unique to Aparri, it is a concern in many communities worldwide. As a municipality situated in the northernmost part of the Philippines, Aparri faces its own unique set of challenges in addressing juvenile delinquency.

Children in conflict with the law are typically individuals under the age of 18 who have engaged in criminal behaviors such as theft, vandalism, substance abuse, and other offenses. Addressing this issue in Aparri, like in other areas, requires a multifaceted approach that balances accountability and rehabilitation, while also recognizing the vulnerability of these young individuals.

Efforts to address this issue in Aparri may involve a combination of legal, social, and educational interventions. This could include ensuring that the juvenile justice system is sensitive to the unique needs of young offenders, providing access to counseling and rehabilitation services, and working to prevent recidivism through various programs and community initiatives. It is crucial to remember that children in conflict with the law are still children, and it is society's responsibility to offer them opportunities for personal growth and rehabilitation to help them reintegrate into society as responsible and law-abiding citizens.

The municipality of Aparri, located in the province of Cagayan, is not immune to issues related to juvenile delinquency and vulnerability. Various factors contribute to the susceptibility of children in Aparri to engage in delinquent behavior, including peer pressure, family dynamics, and maternal physical health conditions. This has sparked the interest of the researcher to investigate

these factors and develop an intervention plan for managing children in conflict with the law management programs in the area.

Materials and methods

Research design

This study utilized the Descriptive method to gather information about present existing conditions. Descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation or phenomenon. Descriptive research is an appropriate choice when the research aim is to identify characteristics, frequencies, trends, and categories (McCombes, 2019). The primary aim of employing this method is to use a systematic procedure to analyze *data* about CICL based from varied data collection procedures.

Respondents of the study

The respondents of the study are the MSWD officer of Aparri, The Chief of Police and the Women and Children Protection Desk officer (WCPD) of Aparri Police Station and Selected Barangay Officials of Centro Barangays of Aparri (Table 1).

Table 1. Respondents of the study

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
MSWD officer	1	2.33%
Chief of police and WCPD officer	2	4.7%
Barangay officials	40	93.02%
Total	43	100%

Data gathering instrument

The researcher of this study used questionnaire based from research article of Fabre *et al.*, 2016 with few modifications as a tool of gathering data from the respondents. Interview was also adopted by the researcher to ensure the reliability of the data gathered.

Analysis of data

After the data was gathered, it was collated, categorized, tallied tabulated and analyzed. The assessments of the respondents in the CICL management programs in Aparri, Cagayan was treated with weighted mean using Five-point Likert scale.

Mean range	Descriptive scale
4.20 -5.00	Always Implemented
3.40 – 4.19	Often Implemented
2.60 – 3.39	Sometimes Implemented
1.80 – 2.59	Seldom Implemented
1.00 – 1.79	Never Implemented

ANOVA was utilized to treat the data on the test of difference in the assessments of the three groups of respondents in the CICL Management programs of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development of Aparri and PNP Aparri Police Station.

The challenges encountered in the implementation of CICL management programs in Aparri, Cagayan was treated with simple frequency and percentage count.

The measures suggested by the respondents to address the challenges encountered in the implementation of CICL management programs in Aparri, Cagayan was treated with rank distribution.

Results and discussion

The data gathered from the respondents through the structured questionnaire and interviews were presented and discussed below.

Part I. Children in conflict with the law management programs of the municipal social welfare and development of Aparri and PNP Aparri police station

Table 2 presents the assessment of the Barangay official respondents in the Children in Conflict with the Law Management programs in the municipality of Aparri, Cagayan.

Table 2. Assessment of the Barangay officials in the CICL management programs in the municipality of Aparri, Cagayan

CICL management programs	Barangay officials	
	Mean	DR
1. Early childhood care and development	4.17	OI
2. Creation of Youth Resource Centers	3.65	OI
3. Institutionalization of activities on/for children and youth e.g. congress, camps, summits	3.27	SI
4. Health services/education	4.25	AI
5. Access of children to Child and Youth Organizations like SK, PYA and church-based organizations, Barangay Children Associations, Children Federations like the National Coalition of Children Association of the Philippines (NACCAP) and the National Anti- Poverty Commission – Children and Youth Sector	3.8	OI
6. Value formation activities	3.65	OI
7. Organization of youth, e.g. Pag-asa Youth Associations, faith-based organizations, children associations/federations	3.5	OI
8. Psycho-social interventions such as group/individual sessions by the social worker for children at-risk	3.6	OI
9. Involvement of former CICL in self-help groups as advocates	3.5	OI
10. Family therapy for families of children at-risk	3.5	OI
11. Organization of watch groups	3.9	OI
12. Development of foster families	3.2	SI
13. Establishment of Special Drug Education Centers	3.2	SI
14. Family Drug Abuse Prevention Program	3.9	OI
15. Institutionalization of Birth Registration in Barangays	4	OI
16. Barkada sa Barangay or Youth Facilitators	3.1	SI

DR – descriptive rate; SI –Sometimes Implemented; OI – Often Implemented; AI – Always Implemented

Table 3. Assessment of the PNP Aparri respondents in the CICL management programs in the municipality of Aparri, Cagayan

CICL management programs	PNP	
	Mean	DR
1. Early childhood care and development	5	AI
2. Creation of Youth Resource Centers	5	AI
3. Institutionalization of activities on/for children and youth e.g. congress, camps, summits	3	SI
4. Health services/education	5	AI
5. Access of children to Child and Youth Organizations like SK, PYA and church-based organizations, Barangay Children Associations, Children Federations like the National Coalition of Children Association of the Philippines (NACCAP) and the National Anti- Poverty Commission – Children and Youth Sector	5	AI
6. Value formation activities	4	OI
7. Organization of youth, e.g. Pag-asa Youth Associations, faith-based organizations, children associations/federations	3.5	OI
8. Psycho-social interventions such as group/individual sessions by the social worker for children at-risk	4.5	AI
9. Involvement of former CICL in self-help groups as advocates	4	OI
10. Family therapy for families of children at-risk	3.5	OI
11. Organization of watch groups	5	OI
12. Development of foster families	3	SI
13. Establishment of Special Drug Education Centers	3.5	OI
14. Family Drug Abuse Prevention Program	4	OI
15. Institutionalization of Birth Registration in Barangays	4	OI
16. Barkada sa Barangay or Youth Facilitators	4	OI

DR – descriptive rate; SI –Sometimes Implemented; OI – Often Implemented; AI – Always Implemented

The assessments of the barangay officials reveal that ten (10) or majority of the programs were often implemented; some were sometimes implemented; and there is recorded one (1) always implemented.

Further analysis shows that the Barangay official-respondents view Health services/education program as the mostly implemented among others and implies that health services/education is well

introduced to the children in Conflict with the laws in aparri.

Table 3 presents the assessment of the PNP Aparri personnel respondents in the Children in Conflict with the Law Management programs in the municipality of Aparri, Cagayan.

The assessments of the Aparri Police Personnel exposes that nine (9) or majority of the programs were often implemented; five (5) were always implemented; and there is recorded two (2) sometimes implemented.

Further analysis shows that the Aparri Police Personnel-respondents perceives that programs 1, 2, 4, and 5 were the mostly implemented among others and implies that Early childhood care and development; Creation of Youth Resource Centers; Health services/education; and Access of children to Child and Youth Organizations were strongly observed in Aparri, Cagayan.

Table 4. Assessment of the Aparri MSWDO respondent in the CICL management programs in the municipality of Aparri, Cagayan

CICL management programs	PNP	
	Mean	DR
1. Early childhood care and development	5	AI
2. Creation of Youth Resource Centers	4	OI
3. Institutionalization of activities on/for children and youth e.g. congress, camps, summits	5	AI
4. Health services/education	5	AI
5. Access of children to Child and Youth Organizations like SK, PYA and church-based organizations, Barangay Children Associations, Children Federations like the National Coalition of Children Association of the Philippines (NACCAP) and the National Anti- Poverty Commission – Children and Youth Sector	5	AI
6. Value formation activities	5	AI
7. Organization of youth, e.g. Pag-asa Youth Associations, faith-based organizations, children associations/federations	5	AI
8. Psycho-social interventions such as group/individual sessions by the social worker for children at-risk	5	AI
9. Involvement of former CICL in self-help groups as advocates	5	AI
10. Family therapy for families of children at-risk	4	OI
11. Organization of watch groups	4	OI
12. Development of foster families	4	OI
13. Establishment of Special Drug Education Centers	4	OI
14. Family Drug Abuse Prevention Program	5	AI
15. Institutionalization of Birth Registration in Barangays	5	AI
16. Barkada sa Barangay or Youth Facilitators	5	AI

DR – descriptive rate; SI –Sometimes Implemented; OI – Often Implemented; AI – Always Implemented

Table 4 presents the assessment of the Aparri MSWDO respondent in the Children in Conflict with the Law Management programs in the municipality of Aparri, Cagayan.

The assessments of the Aparri MSWD officer-respondent discloses that eleven (11) or majority of the programs were always implemented; and five (5) were often implemented.

Further analysis shows that the Aparri MSWD officer-respondent perceives that almost all programs were implemented as indicated in the above table. Hence,

implies that there is excellent observance of Children in Conflict with the Law Management Programs in Aparri, Cagayan.

Table 5 presents the assessment of the three groups of respondents in the Children in Conflict with the Law Management programs in the municipality of Aparri, Cagayan using a five-point Likert scale.

It can be deduced from the table that the assessments of the respondents vary in each variable. CICL Management Programs 3, 12, 13, and 16 were sometimes implemented; Programs 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,

11, 14, and 15 were often implemented while Programs 1 and 4 were always implemented. Further analysis shows that the three groups of respondents assessed that the health services/education mostly implemented program among others.

The analysis of the Children in Conflict with the Law management programs in Aparri, Cagayan indicates that these programs are functional, but their implementation varies. Some programs are implemented occasionally; some are implemented

often, while only a few are implemented consistently. Overall, the results suggest that there is room for improvement in ensuring the effective and consistent implementation of these programs.

The result runs parallel to the findings of Fabre *et al.*, 2016 that Children in conflict with the law in Northern Mindanao have been continuously monitored by the concerned agencies in close coordination with DSWD. Hence, their CICL intervention programs were also well implemented.

Table 5. Summary assessment of the respondents in the CICL management programs in the municipality of Aparri, Cagayan

CICL management programs	Barangay officials		PNP		MSWDO		Composite mean	
	Mean	DR	Mean	DR	Mean	DR	Mean	DR
1. Early childhood care and development	4.17	OI	5	AI	5	AI	4.2	AI
2. Creation of Youth Resource Centers	3.65	OI	5	AI	4	OI	3.7	OI
3. Institutionalization of activities on/for children and youth e.g. congress, camps, summits	3.27	SI	3	SI	5	AI	3.3	SI
4. Health services/education	4.25	AI	5	AI	5	AI	4.3	AI
5. Access of children to Child and Youth Organizations like SK, PYA and church-based organizations, Barangay Children Associations, Children Federations like the National Coalition of Children Association of the Philippines (NACCAP) and the National Anti- Poverty Commission – Children and Youth Sector	3.8	OI	5	AI	5	AI	3.8	OI
6. Value formation activities	3.65	OI	4	OI	5	AI	3.6	OI
7. Organization of youth, e.g. Pag-asa Youth Associations, faith-based organizations, children associations/federations	3.5	OI	3.5	OI	5	AI	3.6	OI
8. Psycho-social interventions such as group/individual sessions by the social worker for children at-risk	3.6	OI	4.5	AI	5	AI	3.7	OI
9. Involvement of former CICL in self-help groups as advocates	3.5	OI	4	OI	5	AI	3.5	OI
10. Family therapy for families of children at-risk	3.5	OI	3.5	OI	4	OI	3.5	OI
11. Organization of watch groups	3.9	OI	5	OI	4	OI	3.9	OI
12. Development of foster families	3.2	SI	3	SI	4	OI	3.2	SI
13. Establishment of Special Drug Education Centers	3.2	SI	3.5	OI	4	OI	3.3	SI
14. Family Drug Abuse Prevention Program	3.9	OI	4	OI	5	AI	4	OI
15. Institutionalization of Birth Registration in Barangays	4	OI	4	OI	5	AI	4	OI
16. Barkada sa Barangay or Youth Facilitators	3.1	SI	4	OI	5	AI	3.2	SI

DR – descriptive rate; SI –Sometimes Implemented; OI – Often Implemented; AI – Always Implemented

Part II. Difference of the assessments of the three groups of respondents in the CICL management programs

The Table 6 below shows the test of difference in the assessments of the three groups of respondents in CICL Management programs in Aparri, Cagayan using the Analysis of Variance F-test of the computer-aided statistics at a level of significance, alpha 0.05.

Based on the above Table 6, the computed probability (P) is 0.36 which is greater than the given level of significance alpha (A) at 0.05. This led to the acceptance of the null hypothesis, which indicates that there is no significant difference in the assessments of the three groups of respondents in the CICL Management programs of Aparri, Cagayan.

Table 6. Test of difference in the assessments of the three groups of respondents in the CICL Management programs in Aparri, Cagayan

Item	F-Test		Analysis	Decision	Remarks
	Probability (P)	Alpha (A)			
CICL management programs	0.36	0.05	P > A	Ho is accepted	There is no significant difference

Part III. Challenges encountered by the respondents in the implementation of the CILC management programs

The data shows the rank distributions of the challenges encountered by the respondents in the implementation of the CILC Management Programs.

The result reveals that lack of community participation in the CICL management programs rank as first; Uncooperative Parents rank as second; Insufficient Correctional Youth Facilities rank as third; Educational Engagement of CICL rank as fourth; Insufficient funds for CICL management Programs rank as fifth; while Insufficient manpower to implement CICL Management Programs is the least challenge encountered. It implies that the lack of community participation in the CICL management programs is the challenge mostly encountered by the respondents (Table 7).

Table 7. Rank distributions of the challenges encountered by the respondents in the implementation of the CILC management programs

Challenges	Rank
1. Educational Engagement of CICL	4
2. Insufficient manpower to implement CICL management programs	6
3. Lack of Community Participation in the CICL management programs	1
4. Anti-social behaviors of children in conflict with the law	3
5. Uncooperative parents	2
6. Insufficient funds for CICL management programs	5
7. Insufficient correctional youth facilities	3

Table 8. Rank distributions of the measures suggested by the respondents to address the challenges in the implementation of CICL management programs

Measures	Rank
1. Educational Activities	5
2. Recreational Activities	6
3. Community Involvement	1
4. Prenatal and infancy home visitation by nurses	5
5. Parent-Child interaction Training program	3
6. Bullying prevention programs	4
7. Prevention program within the Juvenile Justice System (Correctional Youth Facility)	2

The findings complement the study of Irene *et al.*, 2011. They state that parental neglect is the primary cause of Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL). This matches the result that uncooperative parents are among the challenges in implementing CICL management programs.

Part IV. Measures suggested by the respondents to address the challenges in the implementation of CICL management programs

Table 8 shows the rank distributions of the measures suggested by the respondents to address the challenges in the implementation of CICL management programs.

It can be deduced from the table that Community Involvement rank as first; Prevention program within the Juvenile Justice System rank as second; Parent-Child interaction Training program rank as third; Bullying prevention programs rank as fourth; Prenatal and infancy home visitation by nurses, and educational activities rank as fifth; and Recreational Activities rank as the least among suggested measures. The result implies that the best measure

suggested by the respondents is the Community Involvement in addressing the challenges in the implementation of CICL management programs. The result complements to the study of Fabre *et al.*, 2016 which emphasizes that community involvement is one of the primary interventions to address issues that caused the child to commit an offense.

Conclusion

After analyzing the discussion's findings, it is evident that the Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) management programs in Aparri, Cagayan are operational, but their execution varies. While some programs are implemented frequently, others are only occasionally implemented, and only a few are consistently implemented. The respondents' evaluations of these programs do not significantly differ across groups. However, a major obstacle faced by respondents is the lack of community participation in the CICL management programs. To overcome these implementation challenges, the respondents highly recommend promoting community engagement in managing CICL.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study on the Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) management programs in Aparri, Cagayan, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

1. To enhance consistency in CICL management programs, it is crucial to establish standardized guidelines and procedures for their implementation, ensuring consistent and effective execution.

2. Aparri MSWD officer in collaboration with Aparri Police Station is encourage to foster active community participation in CICL management programs through close coordination and communications with Barangay officials of Aparri to enhance community engagement in the implementation of CICL programs. Communities can play a pivotal role in rehabilitating and reintegrating CICL by providing them with a supportive environment and opportunities for personal growth.

3. Investing in training and capacity building for the personnel responsible for implementing these programs is highly encouraged. Equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills will enhance the quality and effectiveness of the programs.

4. Implementation of a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track the progress and outcomes of CICL management programs. Regular assessments will help identify areas for improvement and measure the impact of these programs over time.

5. Partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders with expertise in child welfare and rehabilitation is encouraged. These collaborations can bring additional resources, knowledge, and support to the CICL management programs.

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