

“Project to Strengthen the Support Systems for Children in Residential Care Facilities and Communities in 11 Regions in the Philippines”

PROJECT BRIEFER

ACTION, Inc. proposes to manage this capacity building project in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC). This project aims to build on the success of the project - *Ensuring Children's Potential for Development and Independence through Improved Residential Care Practices*, implemented by ACTION, Inc. and DSWD, under the auspices of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 2016-2019.

I. Overview of the Project

A. Project Overall Goal

Improved Capacity of RCFs¹ and Communities in the Philippines and Japan to respond to the developmental needs of children

B. Project Purpose

Promote the rehabilitation and development of Children in Need of Special Protection into good and well-rounded citizens through improved life skills intervention and capacity building for Houseparents

C. Project Duration

Three Years (March 2021 – February 2024)

D. Target Area

Philippines Regions, I, II, III, CAR, IV-A, MIMAROPA, V, VI, VII, VIII and NCR; Japan

E. Target Beneficiaries

[Life Skills Intervention]

Direct Beneficiaries – Social Workers and Houseparents (200), LGU Social Workers (27), Children in Conflict with the Law (96), Children at Risk (108)

Indirect Beneficiaries – Children in Conflict with the Law [CICL] (480), Children at Risk [CAR] (5000 – 6000)

[Training of Trainers for the Training on Houseparenting]

Direct Beneficiaries - Social Workers (225)

¹ RCFs : Residential Care Facilities

Indirect Beneficiaries – Social Workers and Houseparents (3000), Children in RCFs (40000)

F. Background Information

This project is an offshoot of two successful capacity building projects implemented by ACTION in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) under the auspices of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The first project, entitled “*Capacity Building Project for Child Caring Institution’s Personnel towards Children’s Well-being and Independence in Region 3*” (2012-2015), led to the development of the Training Manual on Houseparenting, a pioneering social technology that encapsulates a comprehensive training program for houseparents of Residential Care Facilities (RCF) for children. Although there are already training programs that are made available to some houseparents at that time, these only cover limited aspects of the houseparenting practice. The Training Manual on Houseparenting, is the first comprehensive training program specifically designed for houseparents in the Philippines. The Training Manual on House Parenting was institutionalized in Region III, through the Regional Administrative Order (RAO) 143, series of 2013.

The second capacity building project entitled “*Ensuring Children’s Potential for Development and Independence through Improved Residential Care Practices*” (2016-2019), built on the success of the previous project. It developed further the Training Manual on Houseparenting to accommodate the training needs of houseparents at the National level. The Training Manual on Houseparenting was revised and pilot tested for houseparents of select RCFs in the National Capital Region. Although limited, there were also houseparents from Visayas and Mindanao that were able to participate in the pilot test. Taking into consideration the results of the several pilot tests, and with due consultation with experts (from DSWD, and the academe), and stakeholders (Non-Government Organizations, Local Government Units, Other Government Agencies), the Training Manual on Houseparenting was finalized. The use of the Training Manual on Houseparenting, as the official training program of the DSWD for houseparents of RCFs for children was institutionalized through the Memorandum Circular no. 14, series of 2019, otherwise known as the *Guidelines for the Establishment of a Comprehensive Training Program for Houseparents of Residential Care Facilities for Children*. Along with the series of development of the Training Manual on Houseparenting and its institutionalization both in Region III, and later on, the Philippines, both projects were also able to create, by design, a pool of trainers on the Training Program for Houseparents in Region III and NCR.

While the Training Manual on Houseparenting has already been established as the official training program for houseparents nationwide, there are projected challenges in its roll-out, particularly, the lack of trainers in Regions other than Region III and NCR. The DSWD already has plans to implement Training of Trainers (TOT) on the Training Program for Houseparents in other Regions. However, due to limitations in terms of budget and human resource, the current targets are only limited to personnel of the DSWD. This would mean that RCFs run by Non-Government Organizations (NGO) and Local Government Units (LGU), will have to wait further to access the Training Program, while the social technology has already been made available since 2019.

This project, which was conceptualized in consultation with the DSWD and the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council, aims to augment the current efforts of the DSWD by implementing TOT for personnel of NGOs and LGUs, in conjunction with the TOT for DSWD personnel. The project is designed to create a pool of trainers for the Training Program on Houseparenting in Regions I, II, V, VI, VII, and VIII, as well as the Cordillera Administrative Region and MIMAROPA Region.

The second Capacity Building Project also succeeded in the development of another pioneering social technology – the Life Skills Intervention Modules for Children in RCFs. A total of thirty-one (31) partner RCFs have adopted the Life Skills Intervention Modules as part of their regular intervention for their child residents.

Experts and the global community agree that the acquisition of life skills are integral components of individual development and lifelong learning. According to International Bureau of Education, Life Skills *“are not just a set of skills, nor are they equal to survival skills, livelihood skills, or vocational skills but are part of these skills.”* (UNESCO 2004a). However, an unintended result of placing children in RCFs is institutionalization. Due to the controlled and predetermined structure of the physical and social environment within the RCFs, many residents are deprived of opportunities to develop necessary life skills. This leads to lower rates of success in life when the children eventually leave the RCFs. The Life Skills Intervention Modules were developed to help address this situation.

The Life Skills Intervention Modules were pilot tested with the 31 partner RCFs during the second capacity building project. During this period, although the project has produced stellar results, the project team noticed that a different approach worked better for residents of RCFs for Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL). CICL that participated in the program were also observed to respond better to some topics, compared to the majority of the participants from other RCFs.

During initial consultations, the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC) expressed that life skills intervention is both necessary and absent in many Bahay Pag-asa (BPA). BPAs are LGU-run residential care facilities for children. Moreover, in the initial findings of the JJWC in their BPA Profiling, they learned that majority of the BPAs lack intensive juvenile intervention, while the same is already required by law. They learned that activities are very limited and are heavy only on Alternative Learning Sessions and Spiritual Activities. On the other hand, the Revised Rules and Regulations Implementing Republic Act No. 9344, as amended by R.A. 10630, specifically mandates the inclusion of life skills intervention in diversion and intensive juvenile intervention programs.

This project proposes to remedy the situation by developing a Life Skills Intervention Toolkit, customized for CICL and Children at Risk (CAR). The customized LSI Tool Kit will be pilot tested in select RCFs in NCR and Region III.

Another finding from the BPA Profiling is that many BPA residents do not even have court cases, which would mean that their interventions should have been community-based. Among the challenges cited is the limited interventions that are being implemented at the community level. As such, the project will also design the Customized LSI Tool Kit for community-based intervention. A pilot test will also be conducted through Local Social Welfare and Development Offices for select CICL/CAR who have not been admitted to a BPA.

The project aims to institutionalize the use of the LSI Toolkit in intervention and diversions programs implemented by the BPAs and LSWDOs, for CICL and CAR, through policy development and lobbying with the JJWC and the Council for the Welfare of Children.

II. Project Outputs and Activities

1. Customized Life Skills Intervention Toolkit for CAR and CICL
 - 1-1 Conduct Needs Assessment on Life Skills for CAR and CICL
 - 1-2 Customization of the LSI Modules for CAR and CICL Groups

2. Personnel of select RCFs and LSWDOs² acquired knowledge and skill in implementing Life Skills Activities for CICL and CAR
 - 2-1 Conduct Trainings on Life Skills Intervention
 - 2-2 Implement Life Skills Intervention in select RCFs and Communities by the Trained SWrs and HPs
 - 2-3 Monitor the results of RCF-based and Community-based LSI by Houseparents and Social Workers

3. Draft policies to institutionalize the Life Skills Intervention Program for CAR and CICL are developed
 - 3-1 Conduct consultation meetings with JJWC and CWC
 - 3-2 Conduct Consultation Forum with various stakeholders
 - 3-3 Prepare draft policies to institutionalize Life Skills Intervention for CICL and CAR
 - 3-4 Conduct advocacy campaign for the institutionalization of the Life Skills Intervention for CICL and CAR

4. Pools of Trainers on the Training on Houseparenting has been developed in select Regions
 - 4-1 Conduct Training Needs Assessment for TOT participants
 - 4-2 Conduct preparatory activities for the TOT Training Team
 - 4-3 Conduct Training of Trainers on the Training on Houseparenting
 - 4-4 Conduct Monitoring Visits

5. RCFs in Japan deepen their understanding of Life Skills Intervention Program
 - 5-1 Life Skills Intervention Program Management Training for Consultants and Japanese Personnel of ACTION Inc.
 - 5-2 Cutomize Life Skills Intervention Modules for Japanese Children
 - 5-3 Create a Life Skills Intervention Handbook in Japanese Language
 - 5-4 Conduct Training of Trainers for Japanese RCF Staff

² LSWDOs : Local Social Welfare and Development Offices