

## St. Dominic College of Asia-Bacoor Alliance Of Pinagbuklod Pre-Kindergarten School: An Evaluation And Development

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### ABSTRACT

The benefits of early childhood education programs are evident in the academic readiness and development of a child, serving as an indicator of outstanding academic abilities in later years. However, the provision of an equitable and quality pre-primary education programs remains the challenge in fully realizing these benefits. To contribute valuable information in this area, this paper explored the collaborative Pre-Kindergarten School project between St. Dominic College of Asia and Bacoor Alliance of Pinagbuklod, to assess its quality in the aspects of implementation, efficacy, and sustainability. With the utilization of the CIPP Evaluation Model, the researchers employed a mixed-method design, combining surveys and interviews with the identified stakeholders: the parents, teachers, barangay officials, and SDCA officials. Findings reveal that while the project achieved its primary goal to foster academic readiness among the learners, concerns regarding the lack of funding and resources, support and involvement of the parents, and improved program management remains, which poses sustainability issues. Despite these concerns, the results show that stakeholders are grateful for the collaboration of SDCA and BAP and acknowledge its positive impact on them and the community. The researchers recommend increased responsible parental involvement, enhanced funding system, and structured program management for the continuity of a developed SDCA-BAP Pre-Kindergarten School. These findings express the significance of a sustainable community-based pre-kindergarten education program for better learning experiences.

**KEYWORDS:** Community-Based Partnerships; Pre-Kindergarten Education; Program Evaluation.

### INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education says that “At five years old, children start schooling and are given the means to slowly adjust to formal education,” starting with kindergarten education. With the development of preschool/pre-kindergarten education, parents have the choice to give their children an access to early learning. As the term suggests, it is intended to be a head start to learning, prior to formal kindergarten school, an outset for Early Childhood Education. Thus, participation in such a program could be an indicator of outstanding academic abilities in later years. Relatively, in a longitudinal study that examines the research variables over a period of time, highlighted that remarkable educational outcomes, even outdoing other learners in aspects of learning achievement, is evident among students with participation in ECE at age four, upon kindergarten entry and persisted over time (Ansari, 2018). This finding supports the report from UNICEF (2019), that in comparison to only 20% children without ECE experience, about 47% of children who participated in an ECE program progressed accordingly and excelled in early literacy and numerical skills.

While benefits of ECE are evident in academic readiness and child development as supported in the aforementioned study, the situation of ECE in the global context raised disparities on accessibility and participation. According to Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (2024) recent data, “globally, only around 4 in 10 children aged three and four attend ECE,” with participation levels varying across regions. This record simply implies that despite the increasing recognition of its significance, participation levels remain stagnant. Relatively, socioeconomic factors often determine whether countries can fully provide quality ECE and whether children can obtain quality education. Whereas children from developed countries with affluent backgrounds are highly likely to access and participate in ECE compared to children in less developed countries (McCoy, 2018, as cited in Raikes et al., 2023). Consequently, the global situation of ECE warrants attention on the need for a universally accessible, equitable, and quality ECE.

Henceforth, the long-term gains of this program have long been recognized and proven in several studies. Yet, in a developing country like the Philippines, participation in pre-primary education remains a challenge. Among the challenges encountered with pre-kindergarten programs in the Philippines, financial incapacity and accessibility to ECE programs are just some of the many premises of the parents about the program (Chi, 2024, as cited in Edcom II, 2019). It is reflected in the low participation rate of ECE in the country. UNICEF (2023) reported that in the Philippines, “78% of children 3 to 4 years old are not attending daycare.” Additionally, the current facilities for daycare centers are inadequate and short of around 33, 000, while day care workers are not properly trained and compensated enough in which both are significant components of effective delivery of ECE services.

Subsequently, the provision of a free pre-kindergarten education program is one of the crucial steps taken by the government to resolve the problem and to actually seize the benefits of ECE. Correspondingly, the introduction of free pre-kindergarten education in the Philippines is expected to increase access to early education, improve enrollment rates, and foster better educational outcomes for children. It addresses some of the disparities in educational opportunities and supports the government’s K to 12 programs, which provides ECE as a foundation for primary education. However, as of recent data, the participation rate in organized learning before primary education was reported to have decreased from 83.7% in 2017 to 72.4% in 2021 (Situation of Children, 2023), suggesting that despite efforts, challenges remain in fully realizing the benefits of free education.

Herewith, the key stakeholders of such initiatives play a significant role for the development of an enhanced free pre-primary education, reducing the challenges that hinder its successful implementation. As recognized in the paper of Rao, Cohrssen, and Bala (2024), the success of program execution lies within the resource-sharing and collaboration between the stakeholders, which results in better outcomes for the youngsters.

In line with that, St. Dominic College of Asia and Bacoor Alliance of Pinagbuklod started a partnership in 2013. In the span of almost three years, the bond between the two became a vital aspect of the Community Outreach and Extension Office (COEO). Their relationship rapidly made a project to institute a pre-elementary school. It was named the SDCA-BAP Pre-Kindergarten School, and in the same year, the two organizations partnered, the kindergarten’s first batch was made.

With the support of the SDCA, the COEO got to assist the selected pupils of the adopted school with free school materials. They were also provided with school uniforms, notebooks, pencils, and other school supplies. Aside from that, SDCA also hosts their Christmas party and Graduation Ceremony annually at the Doña Dominga Andaman Hall. These community outreach initiatives aided low-income families, who may be denied to

receive the support they needed from materials to celebrating important events. On that account, the program provides equal opportunity for children to have early learning and development. Moreover, it benefits the institution by offering professional development opportunities to service providers. The shared educational goals of SDCA-BAP and the community strengthen ties and develop the community as a whole, leaning toward the success of both pre-k learners and the community itself.

At the spearhead of this project is the former vice president for academic affairs from 2012 to 2023, Dr. Carolina P. Danao, with the support of the Basic Education Department. This act helped the school immensely during the past accreditation of Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA). The beneficiaries were interviewed by the accreditors, and the accreditors learned that the school had its game face on when it came to service. Former COE Officer Ronald Tomines, who held office until the year 2021, even considered the kindergarten as one of the top outreach activities of the COEO department. The program made a huge impact on the PACUCOA accreditors. That is why it is one of the strengths of our community outreach activities (Tomines, 2018). From then on, SDCA continues to capture an opportunity to share its vision and mission, revolutionizing the education of young pupils to prepare them for the real world that awaits them.

In pursuit of a quality early education, program evaluation is a crucial step to identify and address the insufficiency of ECE programs in the local context. With such, the evaluation responds to the query of "Did it work?". However, the implicit questions that underpin this focus are equally important. Questions like "Was the program implemented as planned?," "Do teachers use the offered pre-kindergarten curriculum guide?," and "What barriers were met in the program implementation?," play an important part in interpreting the observed program outcomes. In particular, program evaluations focus on assessing outcomes that correspond with the goals. Such evaluations emphasize the commitment to achieving these objectives. Therefore, institutions conduct evaluations to determine whether the program's performance and results meet the established standards and criteria. Accordingly, failure to adhere to this may lead to the program deviating from its initial goals (Johnson et al., 2018).

Hence, the researchers conducted this study to assess the SDCA-BAP joint project in terms of its implementation, quality, and efficacy. More so, this study is intended to gather valuable insights from the stakeholders regarding the project and use it as a basis for an enhanced free pre-kindergarten education program. The researchers sought to recommend initiatives for the improvement of the project to make it sustainable for the community in Barangay Talaba 2 in the city of Bacoor for future implementation.

This study focused on the stakeholders of the SDCA-BAP project, including officials from SDCA and Barangay Talaba 2, as well as the teachers and parents of pre-kindergarten learners, to address the identified issues and questions outlined in the statement of the problem.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Several influential factors empower early childhood development. One key factor is a supportive environment that promotes and provides quality education for all children. In as much, it is manifested in the form of collaborative projects between community and institutions. Hence, the purpose of this study is to explore the implementation, efficacy, and quality of the SDCA-BAP Pre-Kindergarten project. This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the result of the evaluation of the SDCA-BAP Pre-Kindergarten School project in terms of:

*1.1 Context**1.2 Input**1.3 Process**1.4 Product*

2. What do these results imply about the success in the development of the program?
3. What actions can be suggested to improve and sustain the implementation of the SDCA-BAP Pre-Kindergarten School project for the community in Barangay Talaba 2?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Implication of Early Learning in Children Development & Academic Readiness**

Early Childhood Education (ECE) consists of organized programs and structured learning experiences for young children before they begin formal school. These programs emphasize the value of high-quality settings and interactions in promoting early development and academic readiness. They are offered in various contexts, including preschools, daycare, childcare centers, and other early learning facilities, and are often regulated by governmental and institutional policies and regulations (Clifford et al., 2005). Henceforth, its importance cannot be underemphasized, given the rate of issues encountered by the new kindergarten children. It is stated that most new kindergarten children have difficulties in academics. The problems include difficulty following instructions, working independently, and lacking overall academic skills (Gratz & Larwin, 2024). These problems were found present in the study of Ramos & Vicera (2019), wherein kindergarten students in Leyte District 1 have a “significant delay in overall development” in the domains of socio-emotional, values, physical and motor, creative, mathematics, understanding of physical and natural environment, language, literacy, and communication. Given the problems encountered, the factor can be linked back to the kindergarten students' exposure to any forms of early learning. Subsequently, it may have heavily implied that ECE addresses these readiness deficiencies, eventually equipping the forthcoming kindergarten with the necessary foundational skills in learning. On this account, several research has been undertaken to support such claims. For instance, Gratz and Larwin's (2014) study on the effectiveness of a summer pre-kindergarten program on children's school readiness found that attendance to pre-kindergarten settings helps define the children's academic performance when they enter kindergarten, implying that such interventions promote success in the kindergarten. Withal, children who come to school ready to learn are anticipated to have higher academic results. Contrarily, the absence of early learning experiences results in early academic failures; exhibiting inattentiveness, disruptiveness, or reclusiveness in the educational setting (Gratz & Larwin, 2014; Williams et al., 2019).

In this regard, school readiness is inextricably linked to the child's development in cognitive, behavioral, and socio-emotional domains. They are interrelated and vital to portions of children's developmental capacity; particularly executive abilities, and attention regulation, which are necessary for learning in school (Blair & Raver, 2015). Indeed, ECE is foundational to children's developmental domains including physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, psychomotor, and linguistic, which carries from early childhood into adulthood (Kazu & Is, 2018; Burnham & Essa, 2019) – particularly highlighting the ages three to six, where development in these domains is important for creating a foundation in lifelong education. Hence, failing to capitalize on this timeframe results in difficulty compensating for it (Wildova & Kropáčková, 2015). Moreover, the study of Rao and others (2019) involves investigating several aspects of ECE: participation, intensity, duration, and total dosage. The results expressed that the preceding variables are positively associated

with early childhood development. At length, this points to and supports the relevance of a quality ECE in cognitive, socio-emotional, language, and literacy development. Thereupon, ECE is a growing field that addresses the issues of school readiness and childhood development using evidence-based interventions. This body of literature addresses developmental needs and educational gaps met at the introduction to kindergarten, eventually preparing children for lifelong learning. Accordingly, corresponding studies about ECE programs continue to shape practices and policies that support holistic child development and equitable education.

### **Historical Context & Significance of Pre-K Education in the Philippines**

Early Childhood Education has been acknowledged as a part of human development for over 2,000 years (Burnham & Essa, 2020). In view of that, the ASEAN Member States has recognized its significance in developing individuals ages zero to five, leading the association to establish early childhood care, development, and education (ECCDE) in 2017 (ASEAN, 2017). Locally, the Philippines, as one of the AMS constituents, has a long history of early education enduring from pre-colonial to the present. Tracing back from the pre-colonial period, indigenous parents served as the children's first teachers, educating them with a pedagogy attributed to social values, spiritual beliefs, and life skills. In later years, during the 14th century, Muslims established schools or *Madrasahs* for children to learn the Qur'an where the curriculum included reciting the Qur'an and learning the Arabic language and Islamic values. It was in 1521 when the Spaniards colonized the Philippines that education shifted to learning Catholic prayers and practices. Whilst private schools were established, there are no records of preschool education that existed during the Spanish colonial era. It was not until 1923, under the USA's administration, that a formal early education curriculum was established in the Philippines. The program was patterned after USA early childhood curricula employing English as a medium of instruction with emphasis on early literacy, arithmetic, etc. (Davidson, 2015).

Following its independence in 1946, the Philippines pursued this notion which eventually led to the formulation of several acts and policies. The Republic Act No. 6972 of 1990 otherwise known as the *Barangay-Level Total Development and Protection of Children Act*, requires the establishment of daycare centers in every barangay (The Lawphil Project, 1990). Furthermore, R.A. 8980 of 2000, or the *ECCD Act*, establishes a national system for Early Childhood Care and Development where one of the main objectives of the act is to facilitate the effective transition from home and community-based education to primary education (The Lawphil Project, 2000). On top of that, the ECCD was further strengthened with the enactment of R.A. 10410 also known as the *Early Years Act of 2013*. This act follows the same system as the *ECCD Act* but also acknowledges the crucial role of early education in the development of children ages zero to eight (The Lawphil Project, 2013). Following this, the Commission on Higher Education enacted the CHED Memorandum Order No. 76, Series of 2017. This CMO mandated the establishment of the program *Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECEd)* in tertiary education, in which the goal is to educate children ages zero to eight at home, community, workplace, or school-based settings (CHED, 2017).

Overall, these acts and policies paved the way for the implementation of various pre-kindergarten programs in the Philippines. This notion led to the development of barangay daycare centers, the national system of ECCD, and a bachelor's degree specialized in teaching ECE. The provision of the corresponding initiatives serves as a stronghold in administering, studying, and evaluating ECE programs across the country. In particular, the implementation of these resolutions yields benefits that extend to the entire nation for ECE's impact extends beyond academic benefits, influencing higher graduation rates in

high school and tertiary education, increased workforce participation, enhanced family stability, and reduced crime rates—contributing significantly to the nation's overall progress (Sandoval, 2024). Consequently, the emergence of pre-kindergarten programs is a great instrument for addressing the issues of poor and disadvantaged families in the nation. As stated in the R.A. 6972, every barangay has to have a government-funded daycare center. This substantially stretches out as an advantage for families who cannot afford private preschool, wherein they are given equal opportunities for proper pre-kindergarten education. However, UNESCO stated that the inadequacy of pre-kindergarten programs remains an issue within rural areas, especially accounting for the ratio of the establishment and the population. Despite these inadequacies, the acts and policies of ECCE remain significant in impacting vulnerable, poor, and disadvantaged families in the form of functional literacy classes, wherein programs focus on illiterate and neo-literate parents and indigenous communities in rural areas (UNESCO, 2006).

### **Role of Community-Based Partnerships in Pre-K Programs**

Community is among the many significant elements in the educational context. Strong communities offer a nurturing and welcoming atmosphere that fosters children's social-emotional development and sense of identity. At large, a community-based participatory partnership (CBPP) is a collaborative body of individuals and organizations working together on a common goal or issue of importance to the community (Giachello, 2007), each of which have shared obligations, privileges, and power in this mutually beneficial relationship (Connors, 2003, as cited in Giachello, 2007). Particularly, community-based partnerships in the context of early childhood education programs involve collaboration between schools, families, local organizations, and other stakeholders to enhance children's learning and development. Seemingly, in the country of Malawi in part of South-Eastern Africa, there is a provision of Community-Based Childcare Center, which at first only provides protection and nutritional needs among vulnerable children. But with the increasing recognition of the significance of early learning in Malawi, its focus now shifted to children development and early learning. This has been made possible with the collaboration of CBCC board, including parents and involved residents with community-based organizations (Shallwani, et al., 2018). Similarly, in the Philippines, there is also a community-based initiative for ECE in disadvantaged communities funded by a private entity named Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (Asian Development Bank, 2017). The collaboration between community members, teachers, schools, and LGUs were also observed in this project. Yet, these collaborations make use of shared local resources to establish a nurturing atmosphere that caters to the many requirements of young children and their families.

Community-based pre-kindergarten partnerships are crucial for ensuring equal access to ECE for children who might otherwise be deprived by it, particularly those who belong to low-income families. Take for instance the previously mentioned studies, these programs were directed at vulnerable children and poor communities, designed to give them early educational assistance in the value of appropriate children development. According to Isaacs (2012), children in the U.S who belong to low-income families are put in an unfavorable position concerning school readiness, with roughly 48% were ready compared to the 75% from moderate/high-income families. This situation may lead to greater inequalities for disadvantaged children which prompts larger academic gaps among children of different socioeconomic backgrounds. The goal of these community-based collaborations is to reduce these learning gaps and provide equal opportunity for all. A study shows that through the provision of a high-quality universal Pre-K program, achievement gaps were reduced in Reading at 41% and Math at 27% between children

coming from low income and high-income backgrounds (Krauss, et al., 2016). With such, community-based programs strengthen the essence and purpose of pre-kindergarten programs, which is to give access to learners to an equitable education in aid of kindergarten school readiness that can be sustained for the benefit of children and families of different socioeconomic status.

Moreso, these collaborative efforts tailored for ECE contribute to enhancing the quality of pre-kindergarten programs. Partnerships in the context of pre-kindergarten education programs significantly have the potential to increase program quality, make better use of resources, and better align goals and curricula by strengthening, empowering, and even transforming individual partners (Harvard Family Research Project, 2010). This signifies that each stakeholder can produce positive outcomes on pre-kindergarten if they were to work closely and efficiently together. Partnerships make use of both programs' resources and knowledge. These factors were highly observed in the study of Alverson and others (2019), which reported that the collaboration through the Preschool Partnership Grant initiative has “fostered quality, systematic preschool programming”. Hence, working cooperatively is the path towards the common good, which is to sustain the advantages that ECE can bring forward. These forms of community-based partnerships played a major role in developing pre-kindergarten programs that are responsive to the changing needs in the field of ECE that affects the progress of both children and society.

### **Barriers in Implementing Community-Based Pre-K Programs**

Acknowledging and addressing the barriers to implementing community-based programs is crucial to the program's success. Before the implementation and even conceptualizing of the community-based pre-k program, it is important to consider the internal and external factors that hinders a successful program execution. In the case of Greenberg and others (2016), suburban regions like communities located near mountain ridges, lack accessibility for the stakeholders to easily implement the pre-k program. The lack of transportation options may reduce enrollment rates and regular attendance for both students and teachers, especially in isolated rural communities, while acquiring high-quality educational resources is crucial as well. Resource barriers like books, learning tools, and developmentally suitable materials require sufficient funding, which are frequently met because of inadequate financial support. Consequently, a lack of varied high-quality resources makes it more difficult for teachers to provide interesting learning experiences for students, making these programs less effective (Hunter & Biernam, 2021). Likewise, to meet the academic and developmental requirements of young children, pre-kindergarten programs usually require specific facilities such as age-appropriate classrooms, outdoor play areas, access to essential services, life safety features, bathrooms, etc. Failure to meet these requirements may result in overcrowded classrooms, limited resource access, and numerous poor and undesirable learning conditions (Adams & Daniels, 2012).

Dependently, these barriers lie within the internal barriers. These in-program challenges focus on the teaching and learning experiences presented by the pre-k programs. In line with that, a complete implementation of universal pre-kindergarten necessitates the hiring of professional teachers in school-community programs, which imparts the significance of the educator's role. This is a highly valued requisite before fully accrediting and greenlighting the proposed pre-k project. Despite this fact, low-funded community programs may fail to obtain or retain these teachers who prefer teaching in high-salary school-based jobs (Ewen et al., 2005). Hence, these setbacks do not end with that and extend to the teaching conditions as well. Program teachers and directors claimed that overly demanding work and high stress levels persist inside the program, leading to demoralization and decreased job satisfaction and commitment (Hunter & Bierman, 2021).

Regardless of the flexibility of pre-k programs for educators across schools and centers, the absence of explicit alignment with curricula poses challenges as well for certain teachers with its implementation. Teachers reported that while certain implementations aligned well with their curricula, others did not. This highlights the need for mechanisms to ensure curriculum alignment across settings and between pre-k and kindergarten for successful implementation. Therefore, pre-k curricula must consider the wide range of developmental phases that young children go through. An effective program curriculum must be adaptive to accommodate the diverse holistic development requirements of young students. It can be challenging to strike a balance between this spectrum of development and standardized learning objectives, especially given that children come from diverse backgrounds with various financial statuses, familial conditions, and language proficiency. Hence, the successful implementation of pre-kindergarten programs depends heavily on the effective implementation and maintenance of appropriate learning plans (Cowhy et al., 2018).

Furthermore, addressing the barriers to ECE implementation goes beyond identifying the program's external and internal factors; it also includes the stakeholders' personal, societal, and cultural backgrounds. Parents' lack of knowledge about ECE affects the community's participation rate in pre-k programs. Some parents consider early-year development to be unimportant. As a result, parents and caregivers do not enroll their children in pre-k programs, believing that they are too young for educational activities (Altun & Kucuktur, 2017; Casas et al., 2024). In addition, the lack of flexible ECE program hours poses challenges, particularly for low-income families with nonstandard work schedules. According to Greenberg and others (2016), inflexible hours often push families toward informal care, while half-day programs may not meet the needs of working parents or maximize children's learning outcomes compared to full-day options. This prevents many families, particularly those in rural areas, from participating in or benefiting from ECCD programs. Low participation rates in formal childcare and early education programs may stem from the inability of families living in poverty to afford costs associated with registration, transportation, or additional support services. In the same manner, the existence of cultural barriers to Philippine preschools includes deeply ingrained values, beliefs, and lingual systems (Pardue, 2020). When it comes to ECE initiatives, ethnic communities can encounter major linguistic and cultural obstacles. Effective communication and involvement may be hampered by the limited English proficiency (LEP) of many households, some of whom are linguistically isolated. Larger language groups are usually given priority in outreach initiatives, leaving smaller communities without the necessary cultural sensitivity and assistance (Greenberg et al., 2016). Recognizing the underlying issues outside and inside the pre-k program, as well as the personal and communal barriers aids in understanding the measures required for the implementation of effective and sustainable pre-kindergarten programs.

### **Impact and Sustainability of Community-Based Pre-K Project**

Research suggests that school-community collaborations for early learning “can benefit families, communities, ECE providers, and school districts” (Wilinski, 2017), which expresses its significant effects on early childhood education and the quality of experiences of the concerned stakeholders. For instance, in the United States, the initiation of a collaborative state pre-kindergarten has been one of its notable efforts in promoting early childhood education. This scheme is a public-private collaboration between the state, community-based centers, and school districts set to offer grants to implement pre-kindergarten programs (Wat & Gayl, 2009). Whereas this form of early education is built on developing children early in life. Central to its essence lies in its impact on children's development. Brinkman et al. (2015) on their evaluation of a

community-based pre-kindergarten program funded by the Indonesian government, reported that the period of ECE exposure relatively influenced children development; and that those with three years up exposure in ECE showed favorable outcomes in terms of social competence, emotional maturity, and language and cognitive development. Correspondingly, community-based programs with the likes of state-funded pre-kindergarten were found to be beneficial on children's learning upon their transition to kindergarten in all aspects (Barnett et al., 2018). Thus, this research-based evidence demonstrates the effect of ECE partnerships on children development and how it directly influences children's academic readiness upon transition to kindergarten.

Aside from children's development, it can implicitly influence the stakeholders in manners of parental involvement, the community's quality of life, and the ECE workforce in astounding ways. In as much, community-based pre-kindergarten partnerships: (1) It has every potential to increase parental involvement and participation on ECE, which underscores the broad gains of the parents through these programs. A study by Humphries et al. (2024) revealed that state-funded pre-kindergarten annually increases a parent's salary at 21.7% and is expected to continue after pre-kindergarten for the following six years. In such, community-based programs can help ease the financial worries of the parents and boost their trust and confidence in their child's ECE experience. (2) It improves the community's quality of living, especially the disadvantaged ones by giving more educational opportunities for them. The idea is supported in the key findings of Riley (2024), which shows the poverty reduction rates in the U.S is associated with the increase of pre-kindergarten grants of the state per child. (3) It strengthens the ECE workforce. For instance, in the developed "*Grow Your Own ECE*" framework by Wong and Hibbard (2024), highlights that ECE educators can be provided with a strong backbone by maximizing ECE partnerships, which is at the essence of the said framework. This form of partnerships enables each involved entity to share resources and allow them to fill in each other's insufficiency.

However, maintaining community-based projects of this sort remains a challenge. Program sustainability is an indicator of how these initiatives will serve its target beneficiaries in the long run. It is the key to the development of a quality program with promising outcomes. As Ceptureanu and others (2018) stated, "when such a program is no longer sustainable, its impact decreases". With that, he goes on to highlight the top-ranking sustainability factors that should be observed in community-based programs, according to the data he gathered from non-profit and community-based organizations consisting of 188 samples. The study reported that in program related factors, the five highest factors are namely: program champions, staff involvement and integration, program funding, program effectiveness, and coordinator competence. This report expresses the intricate relationship of the stakeholders in collaborating effectively. Whereof, a sustainable program is framed upon the established trust between the coordinators and target community, with implementation standards being met, such as adequate funding, attainable outcomes, and appropriate professional training for involved personnel. Relatively, in the local context, a community-based ECE project for the poor communities in the Philippines is assessed to be "likely sustainable" in the aspect that the learners were provided with high-quality establishments within existing schools and that a legal basis requires them to participate in the program (Asian Development Bank, 2017). This evaluation demonstrated some of the significant sustainable factors for a community-based ECE program. Correspondingly, the discussion in this part was deemed to be relevant and insightful that may contribute to gaining an in-depth outlook of community-based pre-kindergarten programs.

Generally, this literature review section has emerged key themes relevant to the study, which includes areas like the implication of early learning in children development and academic

readiness, the historical context and significance of pre-k in the Philippines, the role of community-based partnerships on pre-k programs, the barriers, impact and sustainability of its implementation. These were discussed with the intention to reveal its connection among each other and how these collectively support the queries in this study. The literature analyzed in this chapter broadly contends that while early learning is inextricably linked to children development and academic readiness, it constitutes a significant effect on academic performance; and through a community-based pre-kindergarten program, its positive impact can extend to reach the wider community as far as reaching the disadvantaged, eliminating achievement gaps among children from different socioeconomic background, and benefit the stakeholders, which can contribute to the nation's overall progress (Gratz & Larwin, 2014; Blair & Raver, 2015; Rao et al., 2019; Krauss et al., 2016; Brinkman et al., 2015; Sandoval, 2024). Yet, these benefits are not fully realized due to existing barriers and sustainability factors that hinders a successful implementation, which generally underscores the importance of adequate fund allocation, sufficient teaching and program workforce, ECE participation, and program efficacy (Ceptureanu et al., 2018; Hunter & Biernam, 2021; Altun & Küçükturan, 2017). This literature review contributed meaningful knowledge on the study within the context of community-based pre-k partnerships. With these claims, the goal of this paper is to frame this study from a similar perspective regarding the evaluation and development of the SDCA-BAP Pre-Kindergarten project.

## METHODOLOGY

### **Research Design**

This study utilized a mixed method design, particularly the convergent parallel design as different methods of assessment were administered to the respondents. For this reason, it was determined that this approach is the appropriate model that enables the researchers to accurately obtain the data with convenience.

Accordingly, the data was examined through the comparison or association of the collected responses from the qualitative and quantitative methods, followed by the interpretation in adherence to the convergent parallel design. This strategy allows the researchers to evaluate the data and draw a thorough conclusion.

### **The Sample**

The sample for this study comprises the stakeholders of the SDCA-BAP project, including officials from both SDCA and Barangay Talaba 2, as well as the teachers and parents of pre-kindergarten learners.

Through purposive sampling, the researchers identified 10 parents, three barangay officials, three SDCA officials, and one teacher as the study's primary source of data considering their profiles' correspondence to the aim of the study.

### **Sampling Procedures**

The researchers used purposive sampling as the sampling method in this paper for it determines qualified respondents who are capable of providing necessary information. This is in acknowledgement of the goals of the study which is manifested in the statement of the problem.

This method was regarded as essential as it enabled the selection of participants based on their availability, level of participation, and relevance to the study. Accordingly, a sample size of 10 parents, three barangay officials, three SDCA officials, and one teacher was determined sufficient for obtaining the required data.

Furthermore, ethical considerations were carefully observed to protect the participants' rights and welfare, including securing informed consent from the stakeholders of the program.

**The Instruments**

The researchers utilized survey questionnaires and interviews as the data collection instrument. Specifically, Daniel Stufflebeam’s CIPP Evaluation Model was adapted as the category for the questionnaire employing the Likert scale. Then open-ended interview questions were given which allowed respondents to provide unrestricted and direct answers. Furthermore, the survey questionnaire was designed to ensure the collection of reliable data necessary to address the research questions outlined in the statement of the problem.

**Data Analysis Procedure**

In line with the goal of the study to evaluate the fundamental themes transpired from the SDCA-BAP pre-kindergarten program, the researchers applied thematic analysis to interpret the gathered data from the stakeholders. This identified approach aids the researchers and the study in exposing themes and patterns that exist in the responses collected from the interviews and surveys conducted by the researchers through an extensive analysis. Correspondingly, through the analysis guide demonstrated in the paper of Maguire & Delahunt (2007, as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006), which included a step-by-step guide in the order of the following: be informed about the data, decoding information, look through existing themes, examining these themes, outlining the themes, leading to composing the results. Respectively, to eliminate the subjective nature of thematic analysis in regard to the perspective of the researcher’s interpretation of the data, sources from existing literature or theories were utilized in support of the findings. This process allowed an objective interpretation and discussion all throughout the writing process of the study.

Furthermore, the analysis of the Likert scale instrument was done with tabulation. The tables include each CIPP component with its Weighted Average Mark (WAM) and verbal interpretation while the interview responses were analyzed through the thematic analysis guide mentioned. This was made to properly illustrate and organize the data gathered from the SDCA-BAP program stakeholders.

RESULTS

This chapter presents the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the findings derived from this study. The data analysis and interpretation are conducted in two phases. The first part is based on the results of the CIPP evaluation and then the second part is based on the open-ended questionnaire administered.

**CIPP Evaluation**

**Table 1. Context (Goals)**

Context	5	4	3	2	1	WAM	Verbal Interpretation
The project is significant in realizing the Vision, Mission, and Goals of both the barangay and St.	17	0	0	0	0	5	Very High

Dominic College of Asia.							
The project adheres to the sustainable development goals of the government in providing quality education.	16	1	0	0	0	4.9	Very High
The project gives an opportunity for the barangay and SDCA to maintain its reputation as a community that strongly supports the education for all.	17	0	0	0	0	5	Very High
<b>TOTAL</b>						4.97	Very High

The data presented in the Context category provides insights into the environment or the goals of the project. Among the 17 respondents, a significant 4.97 mean score as shown in Table 1 reveals that all respondents agree Very highly that the SDCA-BAP Pre-kindergarten School is significant in realizing the Vision, Mission, and Goals of both the barangay and St. Dominic College of Asia, the project adheres to the sustainable development goals of the government in providing quality education, and the project gives an opportunity for the barangay and SDCA to maintain its reputation as a community that strongly supports education for all. This implies that the stakeholders agree that this project is well aligned with the SDCA and the Barangay – up to the reach of the government's objectives and strategies in promoting education.

**Table 2. Input (Plans)**

<b>Input</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>WAM</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
The project is supported by a manual or module that guides the operation of the project.	1	1	12	2	1	2.9	Average
The teacher shows appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitude for teaching and facilitating the project.	16	1	0	0	0	4.9	Very High
The project shows strong qualities and support from the officials, and officers of both parties.	16	1	0	0	0	4.9	Very High
<b>TOTAL</b>	4.23						High

In terms of Input, the mean score of 4.23 as shown in Table 2 shows the lowest score of all the criteria. This gives the impression that the project does not seem to be supported by a manual or module that guides the operation of the project. However, there is a Very High response that the teacher shows appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitude for teaching and facilitating the project; as well as the project shows strong qualities and support from the officials, and officers of both parties. The project may have been lacking in terms of the resources needed to execute the program. But it does not lack support from the project organizers as well as in the provision of qualified teachers.

**Table 3. Process (Actions)**

<b>Process</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>WAM</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
The communication between the teachers, parents, barangay officials, and SDCA officers is professional, and being done regularly to monitor and evaluate the success of the project.	15	0	2	0	0	4.6	Very High
The project shows positive response from the beneficiaries, with less problems or challenges encountered.	15	2	0	0	0	4.8	Very High
The project is sustainable, which continuously helps the intended beneficiaries.	10	0	7	0	0	4.2	High
<b>TOTAL</b>						4.53	Very High

Table 3 presents data regarding the SDCA-BAP Pre-K project's process. The table revealed that among 17 respondents, a very high overall mean score of 4.53 portrays positive responses concerning the project's actions. The respondents showed a Very High level of agreement that the communication between the teachers, parents, barangay officials, and SDCA officers is professional and being done regularly to monitor and evaluate the success of the project. Also, it is Very High that the project shows positive response from the beneficiaries, with less problems or challenges encountered. However, having only a high agreement that the project is sustainable, which continuously helps the intended beneficiaries, with a 4.2 mean score which is the lowest in this category. These results indicate effective communication among the project stakeholders, and the project was seen by the beneficiaries in a positive outlook despite it not being sustained in the community of Barangay Talaba 2.

**Table 4. Product (Outcomes)**

<b>product</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>WAM</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
The officials of both parties were able to continue their support to the organization even after the project, which makes the project sustainable and life-long.	8	7	1	1	0	4.1	High
The graduates of the project show higher academic and social skills which makes them more prepared for Kindergarten and future success in life.	16	1	0	0	0	4.9	Very High

The project shows significant impact to the family, officials, and community and is recommended to continue.	16	1	7	0	0	4.9	Very High
<b>TOTAL</b>						4.63	Very High

In terms of the product, Table 4 shows that the mean score of 4.63 reveals a Very High agreement in the outcome of the project. It reveals that most respondents do not commonly agree there that officials of both parties were able to continue their support to the organization even after the project, which makes the project sustainable and life-long. However, it shows Very High response that graduates of the project show higher academic and social skills which makes them more prepared for Kindergarten and future success in life; and the project shows significant impact to the family, officials, and community and is recommended to continue. This expresses that the benefits of the project were realized and that there is a need to develop it in a manner that can be maintained within the community.

**Table 5. CIPP Evaluation**

<b>Category</b>	<b>WAM</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
Context	4.97	Very High
Input	4.23	High
Process	4.53	Very High
Product	4.63	Very High
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4.59</b>	<b>Very High</b>

As the result of the evaluation of the SDCA-BAP Pre-Kindergarten School project based on the CIPP framework, the findings revealed a 4.59 overall mean score. With such, the stakeholders Very Highly agree that the SDCA-BAP Pre-kindergarten school was successfully and effectively implemented. Specifically, the data shows that the project is Very Highly appreciated in terms of its Context as it garnered a total of 4.97 mean score, which is the highest score among the others. Next to it was in terms of Product with the second highest mean score of 4.63; while ranked as third highest was in terms of Process, which both are Very Highly regarded by the stakeholders as well. However, in terms of the Input, the stakeholders merely agree to it Highly with 4.23 mean score, the lowest out of all the categories. Despite that, it shows that the stakeholders generally agree that the overall of the project was a success as reflected in the overall mean score.

### **Interview Questions**

To answer the first question from the interview, which asked “Do you think or believe that the joint project of SDCA and LGU creates an impact on the community? If yes, in what aspect do you think the project has been helpful to you or to or to the community?” The common responses shared regarding the impact that the joint project has brought to the community, or the stakeholders themselves, has something to do with free education, as Stakeholder 2 said “grateful ako kay doc J and doc Danao dahil sa free education sa bata”; *while*, Stakeholder 4 said “pinakaimportante sa lahat, libre”. For that reason, this program was also of big help to some parents who cannot afford the expenses of sending their children to pre-kindergarten as Stakeholder 7 shared that “big help to parents who cannot support children to pre-kindergarten”. Aside from that, some responded that the project had influenced them personally in manners that as Stakeholder 1 said “may self-fulfillment

kasi nakakatulong sa mga bata at sa magulang”; while for Stakeholder 2 is a “sense of self responsibility”. Specifically, this project benefited the parents by saying “nagkaroon ng magandang relationship at bonding sa ibang parents”, according to Stakeholder 3. Meanwhile, for teachers and the aspiring ones, this project as responded by Stakeholder 6, “become a training ground for SDCA students for microteaching”. Most importantly, as the primary goal of this project, this also “helped students prepare for Kindergarten”, Stakeholder

5 answered. These patterns collectively support the findings that the SDCA-BAP Pre-Kindergarten School has impacted the stakeholders on a personal level which correlates to the effect it has brought to the community.

Meanwhile, the second question asked, “What were the problems you encountered while being a part of the project?” The data shows several problems that were encountered by the stakeholders upon the implementation of the project. Most problems stem from the lack of funds and resources available to make learning effective and comfortable for children. Five of the stakeholders share similar responses pertaining to funds and resources that have “no budget or income to sustain or maintain the school like paying the bills, repair roof, etc.” (Stakeholder 1), “hot inside the room if there's no aircon” (Stakeholder 3), “no school supplies” (Stakeholder 6), “not all parents can buy uniform” (Stakeholder 9), and “what SDCA provides is not enough to maintain the school” (Stakeholder 16). All of which affects the quality of the project, including sufficient support needed for the implementation and an effective teaching-learning process. Respectively, several teaching-learning problems were encountered. Stakeholder 2 stated that “there are no written guidelines to follow”; Stakeholder 14 said “if there’s SDCA community service, my lessons with children are interrupted since the SDCA students are teaching not related to the school’s lesson plan”; and Stakeholder 15 answered “classroom management – Regulate or establish behavior of the students at the start of the class”, which affects the quality of instruction and learning. This supports the response of Stakeholder 12 that “the project is not sustainable”. There are also problems faced regarding the collective support and recognition needed to make the project be valued and successful. Stakeholders 4 & 5 voiced that “some parents do not show strong support for their children’s studies” as well as there’s “no support from the new barangay captain”. Along with that, Stakeholder 13 expressed that “there is no recognition and appreciation given to us” despite the hard work and efforts given for this project. Stakeholders 7 and 8 remarked that “don't get poorest of the poor since they will just depend everything to you” and “some parents are illiterate”. With all that being said, Stakeholders 10 and 11 believed that the “CESO coordinator should prioritize BAP and not the barangay and CESO coordinator should be systematic and be true to his word”.

As a follow up, question number three asked “Was the problem solved? How?” Stakeholder 5 answered that “most problems were not solved” as Stakeholder 4 expressed that “paano maso-solve ung financial eh wala na kaming income”. But on the brighter side, some problems were still addressed through “Wearing of uniform is optional, teacher just informed the parents that students can wear any civilian clothes if they cannot afford to buy uniform” (Stakeholder 1), “ask sponsorship from mayor and congressman” (Stakeholder 2), and “the teacher was able to manage the whole class” (Stakeholder 3).

When asked with the fourth question, “What aspect of the current project they think should be given more attention to avoid future problems?” Three stakeholders commonly agree that parents should also be held responsible for the success of the project. Stakeholder 4 stated “dapat may counterpart from the parents”, seemingly agreeing upon the statement of Stakeholder 3 “wag lang puro ayuda – dapat maging responsible din ang mga magulang”. Similar to that, the response of Stakeholder 2 suggests that there should

be “orientation with the parents or guardians”. Meanwhile, other stakeholders’ focus is directed on “proper classroom management” (Stakeholder 1) and “improve CESO leadership” (Stakeholder 5).

Lastly, the fifth question asked, “If the program would pursue its implementation in the future, what will you suggest for its improvement and better achievement?” For future implementation, the stakeholders seemingly share the same idea about the program’s room for improvement. Similar to their answer in the previous question was to hold parents responsible by encouraging them to participate willingly without certain conditions in “such wag puro ayuda” (Stakeholder 1), “make parents responsible” (Stakeholder 2), and “don't choose ‘poorest of the poor’ because they will just depend everything to school” (Stakeholder 3). For some, they believed that a conducive learning environment and sufficient teaching workforce is the key for a successful pre-kindergarten school program as Stakeholder 7 said “bigger and spacious classroom”; for stakeholder 4, “pagusapan kung paano ma-maintain ang school”; meanwhile Stakeholder 8 suggested “Educ students can assist the main teacher to cater all the students’ needs” and all of it will be beneficial for each student, who is the primary target of the project. In terms of partnership, Stakeholder 5 suggested that they “avoid politics”. On the other hand, Stakeholder 9 shared that it has to be about leadership as the latter expressed to “improve or change CESO leadership”. All the more, one respondent is sentimental about the remarkable project and the good it has done to the community and the institution as well as the respondent shared that “sana hintaying may makagraduate muna na scholars kahit sa Elementary para may maiwang legacy si doc J” (Stakeholder 6).

## DISCUSSIONS

What these results imply about the success of the project is that the primary goal was achieved, which is to help students be prepared for kindergarten and have a smooth transition while also inclusively influencing the society and the stakeholders. The project's objective alignment from both entities, SDCA and Barangay Talaba 2, paired with effective teaching and communication between the stakeholders, poses the program’s potential success and positive impact brought out by the partnership. Although the project lacked in the aspects of sustainability, the respondents still generally agree that the project must be continued as this significantly affects the academic performance of students upon kindergarten transition.

Particularly, when the respondents were asked about the impact of the project on them or the community, the common answers shared was its provision of free education, which helped the parents who could not afford the expenses of pre-kindergarten education. Meanwhile, the others responded that the project influenced personal fulfillment for the stakeholders, increased the engagement among parents, served as the SDCA students’ training ground for microteaching, and effectively prepared the students for kindergarten. In terms of the challenges encountered, their sentiments are commonly about the lack of funding and resources such as maintaining the school and classroom conditions. The other concern about the project is the absence of a written guideline, disruptions in delivery of lessons, lack of parental support and participation, classroom management, and unrecognized efforts. When they were asked if these problems were solved, they shared that the educators made adjustments for effective teaching despite the limitations and resources. Also, uniforms were made optional for parents who cannot afford uniforms and sponsorship from local leaders were also initiated.

For future implementation, the stakeholders suggested areas for improvement which can be the basis for the actions that can be undertaken to develop the SDCA-BAP

Pre-kindergarten School. The stakeholders recognized the need for the support and involvement of the parents to the project holding them responsible for their participation. The responses also highlighted the need for developing better infrastructure and resources to improve the learning experiences of the students. They also called out for a change in leadership and to maintain the project to serve as a legacy.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

The findings show that most program stakeholders are grateful for the collaboration of SDCA and BAP. Despite the problems encountered by the parents, teachers, students, barangay officials, and SDCA officials, the evaluation shows that the program created a positive impact to all stakeholders. This demonstrated the potential of the SDCA-BAP Pre-Kindergarten project as a significant approach to promoting ECE by providing accessible and free pre-kindergarten education in Barangay Talaba 2 needs to realize the gains of the programs fully.

This project also marked an impact to the students' educational attainment in later level of schooling, because those who attended the SDCA-BAP Prekindergarten school shows higher level of school performance in reading, and other areas of learning. Aside from that, the program's ability to provide high-quality pre-kindergarten teachers and education aligned with sustainable development goals, in addition to effective professional communication among program stakeholders, facilitates the achievement of its primary objective: providing free, quality education to develop kindergarten-ready learners, which is especially beneficial to low-income families. This also supports fulfilling the institution's and barangay's vision, mission, and goals.

Although the program continues to face challenges, including limited project sustainability, a lack of comprehensive project manuals and modules, and inadequate parental support, these will most likely be addressed through enhanced alternative programs to avoid the same from happening again. As the saying goes, *it takes a village to raise a child*, which emphasizes that all members of the community should be involved in a child's development. This also suggests that nurturing children requires the support and positive interaction of a whole community, not just their parents or guardians. So, with positive participation and regular meeting of all stakeholders of the SDCA-BAP Prekindergarten school, the school will be maintained until there will be more scholars to St. Dominic College of Asia to finish, which will make the project truly sustainable.

Therefore, the SDCA-BAP Kindergarten School was found beneficial among stakeholders, which highlights the utmost participation and support of the school, local government unit, parents, and students. In return, the institution benefits from having school-ready learners equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to learn in K-12 education settings.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, conclusions, and restrictions revealed from the study, the researchers outlined the following recommendations:

#### ***School Officials***

As the outcomes in the study highlighted the need for a conducive learning environment, written manual, sufficient funding for infrastructure and resources, continuous professional training, and support of all stakeholders to make the program sustainable. The researchers recommend that the school officials as the main operator of a community-based project, like that of SDCA, should consider focusing on these aspects and identify

best strategies to address the sustainability factor of the program.

### ***Barangay Officials***

In a collaborative project targeted for the benefit of the community, the role of the barangay officials as cooperator cannot be disregarded. Recalling the responses of the stakeholders, some shared that barangay officials showed little support upon the implementation of the project. On that account, the researchers recommend that barangay officials acknowledge the value of their full cooperation by putting forward a systematic partnership with other cooperating entities to aid the effective and sustainable implementation of community-based projects.

### ***Future Researchers***

For future researchers who wish to explore or develop the same study, the researchers suggest that they consider expanding the scope of the study by incorporating the exploration of ECE variables over a period of time, which focuses on the changes that occurs, to evaluate the long-term impact of the pre-k programs on children's holistic development as this paper did not dwell on these factors. Also, they can also consider the extension of area scope by conducting similar study applied in diverse communities as this paper focused only to a particular community. Doing so will enable future studies to provide valuable insights in strengthening community-based pre-kindergarten projects applied in diverse communities.

### ***Continuation of the program***

For future implementation/continuation of the program, the researchers outlined the program's areas for improvement which can be the basis for the actions that can be undertaken to develop the SDCA-BAP Pre-kindergarten School. The study highly regarded the active and responsible participation of the parents, the need for funds to develop infrastructure and provided resources for better learning experiences, as well as effective leadership and program management. Thus, the following actions are suggested: (1) For the parents, the lack of participation stems from the lack of awareness about the lifelong impacts of pre-kindergarten education. Hence, initiating programs with empowering talks from professionals could aid in informing the parents about the gains of the project. (2) To resolve the issues on program and teaching-learning resources as well as infrastructures rooted by lack of funds, sustainable fund-raising programs should be developed to aid the project. (3) A systematic management monitoring should be established to assess the leaders and change positions accordingly as per the result of the assessment.

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