





# THE PHILIPPINES

Kariton Klasrum

CASE STUDY

# **Abridged version**



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and

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# Acronyms

4Ps	Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program
ALS	Alternative Learning Systems
ССТ	Conditional Cash Transfer
DepEd	Department of Education
DOSE	Drop-out and Out-of-School Edification Program
DSWD	Department of Social Work and Development
DTC	Dynamic Teen Company
EFA	Education for All
JFIT	Japanese Funds-in-Trust
K4	Kariton, Klasum, Klinik and Kantin (Pushcart, Classroom, Clinic and Canteen)
K4K	Kariton for Kids
KBM	Kalingain Batang Mahirap Foundation
LEAP	Learner's Educational Aid Program
MCCT	Modified Conditional Cash Transfer
NAT	National Achievement Test
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SEAMEO INNOTECH	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Regional Centre for Innovation and Technology
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WH0	World Health Organization

# **Preface**

There has been significant progress towards the six EFA goals, however, all available indicators are pointing to a bitter reality that EFA will be an "unfinished business". The 2013/4 EFA Global Monitoring Report has concluded that with less than two years until the 2015 deadline, the world is not on track. Amidst the many challenges, many countries have demonstrated how achievements can be made with the commitment from government, expanded partnerships, innovative thinking and efficient use of resources. There are lessons to be learned.

At the Global EFA Meeting (GEM) in Paris in November 2012, Ministers, heads of delegations, leading officials of multilateral and bilateral organizations, and senior representatives of civil society and private sector organizations, including those from Asia-Pacific, committed to the "Big Push". The GEM participants called upon governments and EFA partners to identify successful initiatives and innovative practices and to adapt, replicate, or scale-up such initiatives to speed up EFA progress.

Subsequently, the 13th Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinators: The Big Push, which was organized in Bangkok, Thailand on 26-27 February 2013 as a follow up to the GEM, underscored the need for increased knowledge on innovative and creative ways of addressing EFA challenges so as to inform policy-making and programme development on EFA. To this end, the meeting requested UNESCO Bangkok to document innovative approaches and effective practices from countries that have succeeded in transforming EFA goals into concrete realities and to disseminate this knowledge for the benefit of all countries.

The Asia-Pacific region is full of successful initiatives, with stories of good practices in almost every country. Over the years, UNESCO has documented these practices to share them with a wider audience. These five country case studies provide in-depth understanding of promising initiatives that are critical in EFA acceleration in Asia-Pacific. While this research attempts to gather evidence on successful initiatives that have helped countries to accelerate EFA progress, it should be noted that these case studies are some examples selected from a vast pool of equally promising EFA practices in this region.

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## 1.1 Background

The Philippines is located in South-East Asia and is made up of over 7,000 islands. The country has a population of almost 97 million people, and over 34 per cent of the population is aged under 15 (UNdata, 2014).

Since 2011, the country has a system of 12 years of compulsory education. The compulsory education system has three levels: elementary (including pre-primary and primary), junior high school and senior high school. The Department of Education (DepEd) is responsible for the management of education in the Philippines.

# 1.2 Progress towards the EFA goals

Overall, the Philippines is on track to achieving, or even surpassing, some of its key Education for All (EFA) targets. To a large extent, significant improvements registered in many of the key indicators in recent years can be attributed to the intensified efforts to implement the nation's EFA catch-up plan (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2014).

Key to the gains that have been achieved so far were the substantial increase in the national budget allocation for education; the basic education development plans and programmes being anchored on the EFA agenda as seen in the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), also known as the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme, and the Philippine Development Plan; the complementary efforts by civil society; and the positive political will of the current leadership.

# 1.3 Challenges

While progress has been made towards the achievement of the EFA goals, there remains the risk that a number of targets will not be met by 2015. Drop-out rates and repetition rates in grades 1 to 3 continue to be high, while the secondary-level net enrolment rate and achievement in the National Achievement Test (NAT) hover in the low range. These bottlenecks indicate that there is an urgent need to re-strategize and sharpen focus on the existing disparities and inequalities.

In addition, the considerable number of out-of-school children and youth in the country remains a major concern. The National Statistics Office revealed in their 2008 Annual Poverty Indicator Survey that around 2.9 million children aged 5–15 years old were out of school. Likewise, the Department of Education data indicate that in 2008, 12 per cent of primary-aged children (6-11 years old) were not attending primary school, while 40 per cent of secondary-aged children (12–15 years old) were not in secondary school. The 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report took note of these figures and referred to the Philippines as one of the countries with a sizable number of out-of-school children. Many out-of-school children are 'street children'. UNICEF defines street children as 'minors whose home ties are so weakened that they essentially live on the streets, relying on their efforts to meet virtually all their basic needs' (cited in Lamberte, 2002). There are various 'types' of street children (WHO, 1995; OHCHR, 2012). Defining and categorizing street children is a complicated endeavour, however. Research has shown that there is considerable overlap among the categories and that these do not accurately reflect the children's experiences (OHCHR, 2012) and there is much debate over the terms (Thomas de Benitez, 2011; Soale, 2004; UP CIDS PST, 2003).

The large number of street children in the Philippines and the situations faced by these children has been a serious issue for many decades. It is difficult to establish the exact number of street children in the Philippines because of the difficulties in definition, the highly mobile and vacillating nature of this group, and because not all of these children are visible.

There are numerous factors that push children onto a life in the streets and each street child's situation is likely to be a unique combination of several factors. Some of the major factors that have been identified are poverty (low family income), homelessness, adverse family relationships (neglect or physical or sexual abuse), school failure, loss of parents due to armed conflicts and natural disasters, and peer influence (Soale, 2004). In Metro Manila and other urban centres where income inequality, rapid population growth, urbanization and migration have worsened over the years, poor children face greater risk of being thrown into a life where they need to eke out a living or fend for themselves on the streets.

In a recent report, four major risk factors for street children in the Philippines were identified (KidsRights, 2012). These factors are poor nutrition and an unhygienic lifestyle; dangerous working conditions; violence and abuse; and 'rescue operations' (the indiscriminate physical removal of a child from the streets by government agencies) (Bahay Tuluyan, 2009).

# 1.4 Government initiatives relating to street children in the Philippines

Legislation has been enacted to protect children from abuse, exploitation, discrimination, child labour and trafficking. There is, however, no specific law that addresses the special conditions and needs of street children. In 2013, a bill was filed in the Senate (Senate Bill 685) that aims to assist in providing street children the means 'to uplift their conditions and take them out of the street through programs that will equip them with livelihood, technical and social skills. This bill likewise mandates the establishment of crisis centres for street children all over the country. As of March 2014, the bill was still pending at the Senate committee level.

Various cooperative efforts between government agencies and non-governmental organizations have been implemented to address the situation of the growing number of Filipino street children. In this regard, the government established the Council for the Welfare of Children, an inter-agency institution for children that is mandated to coordinate issues pertaining to the rights of the child. It chairs the National Network for Street Children, which is charged with coordinating the initiatives of government and non-governmental agencies intended for street children. A key government agency providing services for street children is the Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD). International organizations, such as Save the Children, World Vision and UNICEF, and local NGOs such as Childhope Asia Philippines, Bahay Tuluyan and the Virlanie Foundation have also been active in improving the lives of street children.

A number of programmes and projects have been implemented with the aim of increasing access to education in the Philippines. One such initiative, and one that targets street children and outof-school youth, is the Kariton Klasrum (Pushcart Classroom). It was developed and implemented by Dynamic Teen Company, a non-governmental organization based in Cavite City, which is south of Manila. The initiative was later replicated and expanded in various locations in the Philippines and abroad.

## 1.5 Overview of the study

Recognizing that it is a highly promising and innovative initiative that has been critical in fasttracking EFA in the Philippines, the Kariton Klasrum programme was selected for study by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Regional Centre for Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO INNOTECH).

This study examined the background and rationale of the Kariton Klasrum programme, the programme's content, the profile of learners and volunteers, the factors contributing to its success and the challenges faced. The findings of the study were analysed to identify lessons learned through the implementation of the programme.

The Research Studies Unit of SEAMEO INNOTECH undertook this case study research between June 2013 and January 2014, using the following methods: a desk review; field observations (in Cavite City, Novaliches City and Bacolod City); focus group discussions; and key informant interviews.

# The Philippines: Kariton Klasrum

# Promising EFA initiative

## 2.1 Background and aims of the Kariton Klasrum initiative

The Kariton Klasrum is the core element of the K4 Project: Kariton, Klasrum, Klinik and Kantin (Pushcart, Classroom, Clinic and Canteen). The K4 Project began in Cavite City as a weekly intervention conducted over periods of six months among street children and out-of-school youth. It has now spread to underprivileged children in other areas of the country.

The K4 Project was born from the hearts and minds of a group of high school students led by a young man, Efren Peñaflorida, who experienced bullying at school. While tempted to drop out of school, Mr. Peñaflorida, along with his classmates, instead formed, in 1997, a youth group that they named the Dynamic Teen Company (DTC). Initially composed of 20 teenage members, the group made it its mission to provide youth with an alternative to street gangs and unproductive behaviour (DTC, 2012).

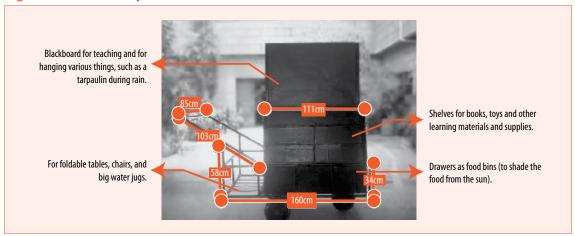
The DTC is one of the groups under the humanitarian arm of its mother organization — the non-profit, Christian youth organization, Club 8586, Inc. As the mother organization, Club 8586 provided yearly operational funds (sourced from monthly contributions of its members based in the Philippines and outside) and initial capacity-building activities for the DTC in support of the latter's literacy activities. The DTC's outreach activities in the depressed areas of Cavite City included forays to the dumps. These visits opened their eyes to the realities of a growing sector of the youth who were not in school.

Following a fire that razed the old headquarters of Club 8586, DTC was given a kariton (pushcart) that had been used for transporting materials to the new headquarters. Pushcarts of this kind, made of scrap wood, metal and rubber, are mostly used by bottle, newspaper and scrap collectors to eke out a living, but for others these pushcarts serve as a mode of transportation, a home, a bed and an occupational tool. The kariton was given a makeover and the DTC then used the kariton as their mode of bringing a mobile classroom to street children.

A dumpsite in Cavite, a landfill owned and operated by the local government, was chosen as one of the first sites of Kariton Klasrum because it was a magnet for out-of-school children and youth who scavenge in the dump to find items to sell or trade. Many of the children who joined the programme in its early years were scavengers from the dump.

The kariton slowly evolved into its present design complete with shelves and drawers (see Figure 1). With its improvised engineering and construction, the kariton has come to symbolize not just poverty but also Filipino ingenuity (de Gracia, 2012).

Figure 1: The anatomy of the Kariton Klasrum



For the founders of the K4 project, the Dynamic Teen Company, the kariton serves not only as a means to house and transport all the materials needed by the children, but also symbolizes both the destitution and the hope that constantly consume these children's lives.

The mission of the K4 programme is: 'After the six-month programme, learners should be able to relate Kariton Klasrum learning and experiences to what they will experience in an actual school setting, to become adaptive and responsive pupils and students' (DTC, 2012). The focus is on developing the life skills and civic skills necessary to becoming lifelong learners.

While the K4 programme provides an alternative to formal schooling, it is not envisioned as replacement for formal schooling. Instead, it provides alternative learning opportunities for disadvantaged children and youth with the aim of reducing illiteracy and instilling a love for learning, with the long-term goal of encouraging them to later return to formal schooling. Thus, the K4 programme serves as a bridge to formal education for children who have dropped out, who have never been to school, or who have lost interest in attending formal school.

The K4 programme has two other components besides the klasrum. These are the klinik and the kantin. Thus, aside from education, the K4 programme also provides healthcare and food to disadvantaged children and youth.

**Clinic.** A separate kariton, stocked with basic first aid and medical supplies, is deployed with the classroom kariton to serve as the klinik (clinic). The staff use the supplies to treat children's

wounds and injuries, as well as for monitoring the progress of children's health. In the event that a child is in need of immediate medical attention, she or he may be pulled out of class and taken to a medical facility. The staff also use the clinic kariton as a venue for demonstrating hygiene-related activities. A quarterly medical mission is also conducted to monitor the health status of the children.

**Canteen.** The kantin (canteen) involves the preparation and provision of hot meals as incentives for children to attend classes. The



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meals are prepared using mostly donated ingredients, and are cooked in various ways to ensure the children do not tire of the taste. The amount of food that is given to the learners depends on how many learning segments they have attended. A food chip is awarded to the learner after every learning segment is completed. One chip is equivalent to either a certain type of food or a drink. Two chips earn a food and drink combo. Three chips mean that students can get a full meal, including some or all of the following bread, soup, biscuits, oatmeal and juice. This system encourages learners to attend all of the learning segments of each class. This system also aims to teach responsibility and to teach the children that actions have consequences.

The kariton became famous on the world stage in 2009 when the Kariton Klasrum initiative earned Efren Peñaflorida the distinction of 'CNN Hero of the Year'. According to Mr. Harnin 'Bonn' Manalaysay, Club 8586 founder, the CNN Hero saga started with a Youtube post about the Kariton Klasrum that got the attention of Oprah Winfrey's Angel Network and eventually of the CNN, which invited Mr. Manalaysay to nominate one of the founders of Kariton Klasrum for the award (personal communication, 11 December 2013). Mr. Manalaysay chose to nominate Peñaflorida as the representative of this collective effort.

As the CNN Hero, Mr. Peñaflorida received prize money of 25,000 United States dollars (USD), the bulk of which went towards establishing the present headquarters of DTC and towards scholarships for underprivileged children. This award led to greater commitment to the Kariton Klasrum programme, particularly among the children, who saw this award as concrete proof that hard work and a committed heart can bring you recognition and fulfilment (H. Manalaysay, personal communication, 11 December 2013). Receiving this distinction was also a catalyst for donations and other support (e.g. books, pushcarts, a photocopier, computer, drinking water, food, etc.) from the government, private sector and civil society, both locally and globally. It eventually led to the entry, in 2011, of the Philippine Department of Education as a partner, when the DepEd decided to adopt and replicate the Kariton Klasrum concept in the various areas of the country.

## 2.2 Operation of the Kariton Klasrum initiative

The Kariton Klasrum programme has several key components, as described below.

#### 2.2.1 Recruitment of learners

Recruitment of learners occurs a few months before the November start of the Kariton Klasrum. The mapping of the locations is undertaken by DTC staff and volunteers. With the help of barangay (village) captains or leaders, they identify the communities that have a high number of out-ofschool youth. A survey is then conducted to ask which children aged between 5 and 15 are not attending school. Such children are invited to enlist in the K4 project. Parental approval is sought when the children are still living with their families.

#### 2.2.2 Schedule

The K4 programme is for six months, beginning in November and ending in April. The November start avoids the rainy season, which is at its heaviest during the period July to September. The rainy season brings with it the possibility of illnesses and of floods that make navigation of the pushcarts difficult.

Each class, held weekly over the six-month programme, is two hours in length. Several classes (for different groups of children) are conducted simultaneously at each site, handled by one volunteer educator and one assistant educator per class.

#### 2.2.3 Class groupings

The Cavite Kariton Klasrum programme originally grouped the participating children by age, with four groups: 5–7 years old, 8–10 years old, 11–12 years old and 13–15 years old. As of November 2013, however, the grouping is no longer based on age but on literacy level. Similar to the system adopted by the Bureau of Alternative Learning Systems (ALS), the children are categorized based on their level of literacy regardless of age. The four



levels are as follows: basic literacy, lower elementary, advanced elementary and secondary. The age limit for learners to be admitted remains 15 years old. The group assignment is determined based on the children's scores in the Functional Literacy Test<sup>1</sup>, a screening assessment borrowed from BALS. Under the new system, the DTC started utilizing the ALS teaching-learning materials developed by the DepEd.

#### 2.2.4 Curriculum

The Kariton Klasrum curriculum is primarily life-skills-based. The content includes topics that the children can easily relate to and appreciate given their conditions and experiences in life. However, the competencies to be learned are also intended to help address the lack of literacy among these children.

The curriculum and competency guide to be used for every group has four main units: Self-care and development (personal); Relating and being one with others (inter-personal); Knowing and living in one's community; and Love of country (nationalism). The themes discussed each week are based on the syllabus prepared for each group.

The completion of each unit requires six meetings (classes). The curriculum is under ongoing review and therefore changes over time.

#### 2.2.5 Class structure

A typical two-hour class begins with the children being gathered for the flag ceremony. This is followed by a group singing activity that aims to increase the children's interest in the rest of the class activities. The volunteer teachers then divide the children into the different groups (e.g. advanced elementary, secondary) and each group has a class comprised of three segments, namely:



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The Functional Literacy Test consists of five key parts, namely: 1) the Personal Information Sheet (PIS), which measures the learner's ability to write basic information about oneself, 2) the reading test, which measures understanding of written selections, 3) the numeracy test, which assesses learner's ability in basic mathematical operations, 4) the writing, test which gauges learner's ability to compose a few sentences and a paragraph, and 5) the speaking and listening test, which assesses the skills to listen and evaluate critically oral messages and respond appropriately to ideas through verbal means.

- 1. Let's Play! (Games and Recreation 20–25 minutes) This segment introduces games and play activities to help increase the motivation of students for learning. This section also serves as review of previous lessons.
- 2. Let's Explore! (Laboratory and Exploration 20–25 minutes) By using a variety of teaching strategies (e.g. storytelling and film), the competencies outlined in the curriculum are taught to the learners.
- 3. Let's Think! (Reflection and Application 15–20 minutes) This segment allows for integration and application of the concepts learned.

An example is the hand-washing lesson. Under 'Let's Play', a play activity involving pictures might be implemented. Under 'Let's Explore', washing of hands is demonstrated. Under 'Let's Think', there may be a discussion about the consequences of not washing hands properly.

After all three segments have been completed by each group; all of the groups combine for a class prayer. Food is then served to the learners, the quantity of which depends on the number of segments attended (see the Canteen section below).

#### 2.2.6 Assessment

The Kariton Klasrum programme makes use of some assessment tools, such as checklists and observations. As of 2013, no formal learning assessment tools were used, however. The initial rationale for this was that the lack of quizzes and exams would allow the children to enjoy learning more. This strategy is now under review, however. There is now growing recognition that because formal schooling has assessment activities, the kariton learner should perhaps be prepared for such a learning system. Thus, there are plans to strengthen classroom-based and performancebased assessment in the succeeding kariton periods as a strategy to both better monitor learning progress and to provide a bridge to school learning environments.

#### 2.2.7 Learner profile

Initially, the programme targeted the street children of Cavite City. According to the DTC's Education Head, Randie Salonga, the beneficiaries have since expanded from street children to include all kinds of out-of-school children (personal communication, 25 October 2013). One reason for this was the necessity to meet the needs of the large number of formal-school drop-outs, who dropout as early as the third month of the school year.

In the beginning years of the K4 project, the beneficiaries included street children who were attending school. These children were seen as needing additional support due to their difficulties in formal school. The DTC Board later decided to focus the K4 services on school-aged children who are not in school (i.e. those who have dropped out and those who have never been to school) because these children have needs that are perceived to be more urgent. Those who are already in school but need additional support to cope with school are now referred to a new DTC programme, the Learner's Educational Aid Program (LEAP).

In the past, the DTC did not keep records of the number of learners that have passed through the kariton classrooms since the programme began. This was because they were unequipped to do so. In the most recent kariton period, however, they were able to compile figures covering two sites in Cavite (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of kariton learners, by age group and sex (2013/14)

Age group	Male	Female	Total
5–7	13	12	25
8–10	4	1	5
11– 12	3	0	3
13–15	6	4	10
Total	26	17	43

Source: Dynamic Teen Company, 2014

According to the figures provided by the DTC, there are more males than females. The data reflects the observed gender disparity in Philippine education where more females than males tend to persist in the formal education system. Thus, more males are found among the drop-outs and among the street children (Lamberte, 2002).

According to the DTC Education Head, the total number of learners in 2013/14 was lower than in previous years. This drop in participants is believed to be due to the following factors:

- Lack of support from some parents Education is not valued by some parents.
- Improvements in formal schooling Fewer children at secondary-level are dropping out of school as a result of changes made in recent years in the formal education system.

#### 2.2.8 Profile of volunteers

The K4 programme relies mainly on the work by a dedicated group of volunteers. The volunteers receive no compensation or allowances. While the positions vary depending on the needs at each site and the number of learners enlisted, the kariton sites may have the following staff (DTC, 2012):

- Outreach coordinator Supervises and manages all the functions and events related to the outreach programme.
- Site head Oversees the entire site operation, and for regularly meeting with the site volunteers and disseminating information to them.
- Site education head Responsible for carrying out and evaluating the educational objectives of the programme, and of monitoring the educators and learner progress.
- General site volunteers These volunteers take on various roles, such as educators, assistant educators, first aiders, supplies managers, food distributors, marshals, programme coordinators and song leaders, timekeepers, helpers and kariton pushers. These sub-categories are not mutually exclusive. Usually volunteers take on multiple roles and they all undergo the trainings for each role.

As well as not keeping records of learners in the past, the DTC also did not keep any systematic records of the numbers and profiles of the volunteers that had taken part in the K4 programme over the years. Following a recommendation from a team of SEAMEO INNOTECH observers, however, the DTC began in November 2013 to keep track of the volunteers. The DTC counted 91 volunteers in 2013/14, including those for the LEAP and Drop-out and Out-of-School Edification Program (DOSE) programmes (also known as Kariton Open High School educators). Table 2 shows the number of volunteers for each assigned position in the various DTC programmes.

Table 2: Number of DTC Volunteers by Position/ Work (as of January 2014)

Volunteer position	Number
BOT (Officers)	5
Unit Heads	9
Mentors (Mentoring Class)	2
DOSE Teachers	5
K4 Educators	18
LEAP Educators	16
Cooks	3
Supplies Staff	3
Volunteer/ Helper, etc.	30
Total	91

Source: Dynamic Teen Company, 2014

The records show that there are more female volunteers (57 per cent) compared to male (43 per cent). A significant proportion of the volunteers are aged between 15 and 18 (45 per cent). Many are high school and college students (52 per cent), while a third of the volunteers are college graduates who are working (38 per cent).

Every year, volunteers are sought out and invited to join the K4 programme. The DTC makes the rounds of high schools, universities and colleges, particularly whenever the number of volunteers has dwindled in the previous year. Interested students sign up. Before a school year starts, the volunteers are gathered and given orientation training about the programme.

On Sundays the DTC provides training and mentoring sessions to volunteers about various topics, including the situation of street children, facilitation skills, leadership skills, the development of big books or visual aids, and personality development. These sessions allow the volunteers to become more confident about their capacity to teach the children.

As of 2013, there was a plan under consideration to have the volunteers sign a six-month contract so as to ensure a steady roster of volunteers working in every Kariton Klasrum period. In return for this commitment, the volunteers would receive privileges such as the opportunity to join special outings and Christmas events (e.g. Pangarap na Pasko).

### 2.2.9 Profile of partners

The partners of DTC in the implementation of the Kariton Klasrum programme come from the government and the private sector, both local and international. One of the programme's biggest partners is the Department of Education, which encourages the replication of the kariton programme, and which allows the use of their materials and resources, including modules and tests. The DepEd Division of Cavite City, in particular, has been supportive of DTC's requests for resources.

The DSWD recently became a partner. The inclusion of the Kariton Klasrum in the DSWD's Modified Conditional Cash Transfer (MCCT) programme promises to be a significant boost towards increasing access to education. Social protection measures such as the conditional cash transfer as implemented in the Philippines have been shown to increase school enrolment among younger children (3–11 years old) and to improve school attendance among 6–17 year olds of poor families (World Bank, 2013). Once the Kariton Klasrum becomes fully integrated into the MCCT programme, larger numbers of children will have the opportunity to benefit from this alternative mode of education and eventually return to formal schooling.

Private sector partners include academic institutions, which have provided services and scholarships, and companies that have given donations in the form of school supplies, food and cash. International organizations, such as SEAMEO INNOTECH, have provided technical assistance for some aspects of the programme. An international bank gave a grant for the purchase of some equipment. Many private individuals have also contributed supplies, food and expertise (e.g. medical) to the programme.

## 2.3 Replication of the programme

The benefits of the Kariton Klasrum programme in terms of increasing access to education have attracted various groups to replicate the programme. This led to the expansion of the kariton programme to cover sites in other cities in the Philippines (Bacolod City, Novaliches City, Caloocan City, Pasig City and Manila) and two sites abroad (in Indonesia and Kenya).

The local and international programmes are true to the vision of the original Kariton Klasrum initiative in that these programmes have a common goal of providing education to poor children and disadvantaged children and youth with the aim of encouraging them to stay in school or return to school.

The main elements of the K4, namely, the classroom, canteen and clinic, are present in some form or another, in all of the local replications of the programme. There are notable variations in the way these elements are implemented, however. Also, the duration of the kariton teaching period varies across the sites, because of the variation in financial and human resources available.

Bacolod City's Kariton for Kids (K4K) programme has made key changes to the original model. For instance, the use of the pushcart is merely symbolic. Furthermore, the focus of the curriculum is on catechism and academic subjects, rather than on life skills. The K4K classes are dominated by in-school children who need learning assistance in order to stay in school. In this sense, the K4K is akin to a drop-out reduction programme, rather than being a programme to increase access to education for out-of-school children.

Adaptations of the Kariton Klasrum initiative have also added the requirement of formative and summative tests. And some adaptations have added additional services. For example, the Bacolod site also provides livelihood training sessions for parents while their children are in class.

In general, however, the sites implement programmes that are similar in key ways. These similarities include:

- The role of the DTC in the training of the organizers and volunteers.
- Each site conducts community mapping prior to the start of the classes to identify the children who may benefit most from the programme.
- Each site relies on volunteers. These volunteers do not receive any compensation for their services, but they get to enjoy incentives during the course of their service, such as trainings, transportation allowances and snacks.

Among the more successful adaptations, two factors emerge as vital to their success. One is the core of volunteers whose dedication to service has allowed the programme to continue and thrive. Second is the commitment and support of other stakeholders, including the DepEd, the DTC, local governments, academe, the church, parents and other government agencies and non-governmental organizations. The assistance they provide in the form of capacity-building, funds, food, materials, venues have sustained the programmes beyond the launching.

# The Philippines: Kariton Klasrum



# Findings and conclusions

## 3.1 Impact of the Kariton Klasrum programme

Since the Kariton Klasrum programme began, hundreds of children and youth have experienced the alternative system of learning that it offers, and dozens of volunteers have participated in the programme. Interviews and focus group discussions with a sample of learners and volunteers have identified the impact of this initiative, as outlined below.

#### 3.1.1 Impact on learners

#### *Increase in knowledge and skills*

Learners reported that they have acquired literacy and numeracy skills. Some learners reported having better reading and drawing skills as a result of the kariton programme, while others reported that their writing skills have progressed.

#### Increased politeness and respect for others

DTC staff and volunteer educators were as one in saying that learners have grown to become more respectful of others, which is particularly manifested in their more frequent use of 'po' (a Filipino term expressing respect) and 'opo' (polite 'yes') and 'excuse me'.

#### *Increased interest in learning*

Learners expressed greater interest in going back to school as a result of participating in the programme. Some volunteer teachers observed that many learners who made known their disinclination for formal schooling tended to change their minds about school towards the end of the Kariton Klasrum period. And, although formal records are not kept, the volunteers reported that quite a number of these children have actually gone back to school. Furthermore, those who did re-enter formal school after participating in the programme showed more persistence in battling the challenges related to attending school (e.g. getting up in the morning, boredom) than previously.

#### Less disruptive behaviour

Some learners have been observed to display less unruly and anti-social behaviour as a result of participating in the Kariton Klasrum. For instance, according to the volunteer teachers, those who had bullying tendencies at the start were later perceived to have reformed their ways.

#### Increased observance of rules

Volunteer teachers noted that learners had greater readiness to follow rules in class towards the end of the programme period. Whereas some learners started out as undisciplined and headstrong, they learned to behave better in class, seemingly more mindful of the rules.

#### 3.1.2 Impact on volunteers

#### Improved leadership, communication and social skills

Volunteering in the programme has provided opportunities for the volunteers to enhance their skills in many areas such as leadership, communication and social relations. The mentoring and training sessions have helped the volunteers learn more about what it takes to be a good leader. Having to teach children has also helped hone their public speaking skills, particularly for those who described themselves as inherently quiet and shy. Following this experience, some volunteers have been asked to speak at seminars or other public events. The volunteers also reported that they have become more comfortable with relating to other people (pakikisama) and have gained friends and acquaintances in the process of their volunteer work.

#### Opportunities to continue their studies

The dedicated among the volunteers have been offered scholarships in college through the Kalingain Batang Mahirap (KBM) Foundation, a non-profit organization associated with DTC. These volunteers who have shown the commitment to help others learn have been themselves given the support they needed to further their own learning.

#### 3.1.3 Impact on the EFA goals

Some general observations can be made in view of the four Philippine EFA 2015 Goals:

# Goal 1: Universal coverage of out-of-school youth and adults in the provision of basic learning needs.

It is clear that by providing out-of-school children with literacy and numeracy skills, the Kariton Klasrum programme has increased access to education, thus assisting efforts towards achieving universal coverage of out-of-school youth.

# Goal 2: Universal school participation and total elimination of drop-outs and repeaters in grades 1 to 3.

By equipping learners with skills and encouraging the learners who have completed the kariton programme to attend school or return to school, the programme is contributing to achieving universal school participation and to preventing future drop-outs and repeaters.

# **Goal 3:** Universal completion of the full basic education cycle with satisfactory annual achievement levels.

The skills gained through the kariton programme assist students who return to school to achieve better grades.

# Goal 4: Total community commitment to the attainment of basic education competencies for all.

The community-based nature of the kariton programme builds commitment at the local level for the attainment by all citizens of basic education skills.

These findings are not substantiated by data, however, because the kariton programme has until recently not collected monitoring data that would help to precisely evaluate the impact and the effectiveness of the programme in terms of the EFA goals.

# 3.2 Factors promoting and hindering the programme

Since its inception in 2007, the Kariton Klasrum programme has helped numerous underprivileged children. The factors that have contributed to the programme's success are listed below, followed by factors that have hindered the programme's progress.

#### 3.2.1 Factors promoting success

#### Warm relationship between teachers and students

The kariton classroom is a non-formal setting that is characterized by a more relaxed and warm atmosphere relative to classes held in under the formal education system. The teachers deal with the children in a way that makes the latter feel at ease in class. These learners tend to view their teachers as older sisters (ate) or brothers (kuya), people who can be easily approached for help and support. The teachers are responsive to the children's needs and care about the children's progress, as evidenced by the tendency of teachers to conduct follow-ups with their students whenever possible. The relatively small age difference between kariton teachers and the learners may also contribute to the good relations between teachers and learners. The volunteer educators are mostly young students themselves, and they are therefore people that the learners may more easily relate to.

#### Fun teaching-learning methods

In an effort to make learning more attractive to the children, kariton teachers employ teaching-learning methods that are enjoyable. Teachers organize games and give out small rewards that add enjoyment to the learning process. This not only enhances learning but helps to retain students throughout the yearly session.

#### Feeding programme

One of the highly anticipated parts of the Kariton Klasrum programme for the participating children is the food that is provided to learners. As residents of low-income communities, the learners understandably look forward to the food, including hot meals, provided at the end of each class.

#### Core of committed leaders and volunteers

This study observed that volunteers are at the core of the Kariton Klasrum programme. Without volunteers, the programme would not have become viable or sustainable. Although many

volunteers do come and go, Kariton Klasrum maintains a nucleus of leaders, staff and volunteers that are steadfast in their commitment to the ideals and operations of the programme. The passion that this core has expressed for the cause serves as the motivational force for them to get involved and stay involved. Such commitment has inspired many other volunteers to contribute their time and skills to the initiative.

The majority of the volunteers appear to be teenagers who are studying in high school and college. This seems to be the age group that is most attracted or most available to volunteer in such a set-up. Interviews with volunteers confirmed that intrinsic motives (desire to be of service to others, commitment to the cause) and motives related to self (sense of satisfaction, work experience, self-improvement) are the ones that most sustain their interest to volunteer. These are similar to the motives cited in a broader study on volunteerism among Filipinos (Aguiling-Dalisay, et al, 2004).

#### Support from partners

The partners of the programme have expressed their support in a variety of ways, including material, financial and moral – this support has proven critical in sustaining the programme. As noted during the interviews conducted, even simple encouragement and words of support have motivated the group to continuously improve the programme.

#### Sense of community

The DTC as an organization has been recognized for its strong sense of community in which members treat each other almost like brothers and sisters. This strong bond among the members — leaders, staff, and volunteers — is anchored on faith and has helped them push on with their programme despite the challenges.

#### Mentoring

Related to the previous factors, the sense of community and passion for the cause has spawned mentoring sessions every Sunday during which the DTC veterans, led by Efren Peñaflorida and his own mentor, Harnin Manalaysay, hold discussions about leadership, volunteerism and other topics. These brownbag sessions allow the less experienced volunteers to learn from the leaders.

#### Support programmes for learners

The learners have benefited not only from the kariton classes but also from other DTC programmes that assist them to go further in their education. For instance, the 'Balik-Eskwela' programme that takes place in May of every year, in which learners are not only recognized for their accomplishments during the Kariton Klasrum period but also receive school supplies that they can use for the formal school should they choose to enrol. For those who do re-enrol in formal school, they have the option to take advantage of DTC's LEAP, which provides tutorial lessons, health check-ups, free school supplies and other assistance to help the children stay in school and finish their education. All these extension services aim to increase the probability that learners continue their schooling and succeed in the formal education system.

#### 3.2.2 Hindering factors

A number of factors have been identified that tend to limit the operations of Kariton Klasrum.

#### Lack of assessment skills

As volunteer educators are mostly high school or college students themselves, they often do not have skills in the implementation of learner assessment. The DTC's plan to introduce assessment activities will therefore be challenging for the volunteer educators.

#### Volunteer sustainability is low

Typically, the Kariton Klasrum teaching-learning period starts out with a high number of volunteers offering their services, but the numbers dwindle significantly by the end of the period. Also, volunteers tend to come and go during the course of the kariton classroom period since there is no required number of hours or contract to bind them to the programme. Volunteers cite a variety of reasons for their inconsistent participation or for quitting the programme. Reasons include conflict of the Kariton Klasrum schedule with their school activities and dissatisfaction with the practices and systems within the organization (such as the need to design and provide their own teaching-learning materials).

The issue of volunteer sustainability is a major challenge that requires ongoing attention, because a high rate of attrition among the volunteers compromises the effectiveness of the programme. Organizations that largely depend on volunteers may have to re-examine their policies and practices that tend to push volunteers away from the service, and should design organizational policies that promote a positive and healthy work environment, which would help retain volunteers.

#### Lack of support from some parents

Despite the high number of out-of-school children in the areas targeted by the programme, not many children register in the programme. One cause of this is that many parents are reluctant to enlist their children in an activity that might compete with their children's time for work. There is also the possibility that some parents do not see much value in non-formal educational activities. The lack of appreciation of parents may be due to the parents' own lack of education. There is a need to strengthen advocacy work in this area.

#### Lack of flexibility among some school principals

There have been a few instances that former kariton learners wishing to re-enter the formal system. were denied enrolment due to the absence of a birth certificate. If principals could be more flexible and facilitative of the process, then learners would not have to endure difficulties that may discourage them even more. This lack of flexibility may be linked to the lack of recognition of the programme at the division or regional level.

#### Lack of a monitoring and evaluation system

Until recently, one gap in the Kariton Klasrum programme's operations was the lack of a database that compiles information and data regarding the learners, volunteers and outcomes; and the lack of a mechanism for the gathering of such data related to the project. As a consequence of this gap there are no records or of the number of learners and volunteers that have been part of the initiative through the years which would have been useful information for estimating future numbers of participants and ensuring each age group and learning level receives adequate support.

In addition, there is no system for tracking the 'graduates' of the programme and where they went after they completed the kariton period. The DTC is only aware of those who have joined their other programs, LEAP and DOSE. This information would have been useful for identifying any gaps in the content of the programme and how the programme could be improved so as to ensure the best possible outcomes for students. The DTC has belatedly realized this gap, and thus put a system in place at the start of the 2013/14 kariton period. The data collected from now on will provide the DTC with a more informed picture of the impact that the programme has on the learners.

#### Coordination problems with DepEd and DSWD

Communicating with DepEd has sometimes been quite a challenge for the DTC staff. Although the two parties formalized their partnership through a Memorandum of Agreement, there have been some issues that remained unresolved. The difficulties were partly due to the fact that there is no particular unit at the DepEd division level that is assigned to oversee the kariton programme. While some DepEd staff have been assigned to the programme, these staff have busy schedules. A spate of disasters in the latter half of 2013 has also been a hindering factor as it has kept the DSWD busy and thus delayed the implementation of activities related to the Kariton Klasrum programme.

#### Lack of support from local government

Although DTC has hoped for ongoing participation by the local government in the Kariton Klasrum programme, as of 2014 this has not been the case. There had been some occasional support in the form of materials and the use of classrooms, but a more substantial and consistent contribution had not been forthcoming. It has been surmised that education projects may not be a top priority of the local government (R. Salonga, personal communication, 13 December 2013). Having new administrators at the helm as a result of the local elections has also been cited as a factor for the inconsistent support. The quality of relationship between incumbent local government unit officials and DepEd division officials may also be a factor in the progress – or the lack thereof – of a project or activity. If these two parties do not get along well, lesser assistance can be provided for education-related projects.

### 3.3 Conclusions

Bringing education to out-of-school and other marginalized children is a key component in ensuring all children have access to education. The innovative Kariton Klasrum initiative shows that for a country to fast- track its progress towards achieving the EFA goals it is no longer sufficient to use the conventional system. Alternative methods are needed when addressing the education needs of marginalized children in disadvantaged settings.

The Kariton Klasrum approach recognizes the need for initiatives that are tailor-made for vulnerable groups such as street children and out-of-school youth. This approach also underscores the reality that government alone cannot do the job and that, given the enormity of the EFA challenge, the non-governmental sector and non-school system play a critical role.

The use by the Kariton Klasrum initiative of a life skills-based curriculum that aims to develop 'knowledge and competencies necessary for the effective participation in solving real-life problems and in functioning effectively in society' (BALS, n.d.), has provided the children with education that is relevant to their needs, and which increases the children's chances of becoming functionally literate and returning successfully to formal school.

As well as providing education that is relevant to the learners, the Kariton Klasrum programme seeks to make learning fun. This engages children in learning and encourages a love of learning, thus enabling them to become lifelong learners.

A factor essential in the success and sustainability of the Kariton Klasrum programme is the participation of partners and other stakeholders, including local government units, other government agencies, non-governmental organizations, corporate groups and parents. The Cavite site, while having some minor issues with LGU support, continues to enjoy broad support from many sectors. Other replication sites would do well to look for more partners who can champion the programme.

#### 3.4 Lessons learned

Analysis of the findings of the case study highlight lessons learned on how the Kariton Klasrum model might be strengthened, as listed below.

Standardize the curriculum being used across all the local sites. The existing ALS curriculum developed by the Department of Education may be a good starting point because it is also lifeskills-based and has benefited much from the knowledge and expertise of the specialists at the DepEd. This curriculum could be further adapted to specifically suit the time-frame and the beneficiaries of the Kariton Klasrum.

**Develop appropriate assessment tools.** It is important for children to be exposed to assessment methods so that they are prepared for them when they return to formal school.

Strengthen support to volunteers. For example, provide teaching-learning materials that they can use, instead of relying on the volunteers' own resources. Moreover, ensure that the conditions within the organization (policies and activities) create a nurturing and positive environment for the volunteers.

Review and professionalize the volunteer programme. While there are already existing trainings and mentoring sessions being provided to the kariton volunteers, a more professional training programme is needed.

Strengthen advocacy among parents and communities. Parents' orientation at the outset may increase their understanding of the programme and help reduce their resistance.

Seek sheltered teaching-learning venues. The heat, rain, noise and pollution may influence the capacity of the children to absorb and learn. Areas or venues that are accessible to the children but are more protected from the elements could produce better outcomes.

**Consider children's participation.** Children possess the most knowledge about the factors that keep them away from school and help them to survive on the street. There should be increased efforts to listen to them and to encourage their participation in the programme design, implementation and evaluation.

**Develop an effective monitoring and evaluation system.** Establish a credible and systematic data and information-gathering system. In line with this, create a database of learners, volunteers and partners. Disaggregate data according to variables such as sex, age, literacy level, number of siblings, whether working or not, and whether living with parents or not. Then train staff to gather and analyze the data. Once an M&E system has been put in place – founded on the principles of transparency, objectivity, and accountability – an assessment should be conducted of the kariton programme in terms of its impact on achieving the Philippine EFA goals.

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