



## Barangay-Led Interventions for CICL: Current Practice and Ways Moving Forward

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### Abstract

This study examines the barangay-led interventions for Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) in the three barangays in Quezon City, Philippines, under Republic Act 9344. Using a multiple-case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 12 key stakeholders, direct field observations, and document analysis to examine how developmental, preventive, and remedial programs are integrated across intervention levels. Findings show that while barangays implement a range of programs for CICL, these tend to be programmatic rather than child-centered. The study found that the local government unit, through the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC), implements primary interventions centered on community development, including advocacy initiatives, curfew enforcement, security enhancement, and budget allocation for child protection programs. On the other hand, the secondary interventions involved direct engagement with children through structured dialogues, case management, educational support, counseling, parent education, and organized developmental activities aimed at strengthening protective factors and mitigating delinquent activities. Tertiary interventions that were implemented aimed to address legal concerns by facilitating monitoring, conducting feedback sessions, and implementing reintegration strategies to support CICL while also preventing recidivism. The study highlights the importance of a well-functioning BCPC and recommends capacity-building initiatives, professional practice enhancement, and policy reforms to strengthen community-based, child-focused interventions facilitated by social workers and paraprofessionals.

**Keywords:** children in conflict with the law, juvenile justice, Barangay Council for the Protection of Children, restorative justice

### Introduction

In Filipino culture, most families view children as gifts from God. This belief is reflected in the country's various laws, such as Presidential Decree 603, also known as The Child and Youth Welfare Code of the Philippines, which acknowledges them as integral members of society whose rights and welfare must be always safeguarded. This designation applies to all Filipinos under the age of 18, including those covered by the CICL (Cruz, Navarro, & Villanueva, 2025). Given their vulnerability, CICL requires urgent attention, particularly in ensuring their reformation and reintegration into society as engaged and contributing individuals. Various reports (Docena, 2022; Incleto et. al., 2024; Seger, 2021; *Situational Analysis on Children in Conflict with the Law and the Juvenile Justice System*, 2020) indicate that most CICL are between 14 and 17 years old, possess minimal education, are associated with families navigating adversities, and are often involved in property-related offenses—cases closely linked to poverty.

Recognizing this concern, the Philippine government launched a 25-year strategic plan called Child 21 (2000–2025). The plan aims to promote and protect children's rights while encouraging collaboration with families, communities, schools, and Local Government Units (LGUs). In 2006, Republic Act 9344, or the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act, was enacted. This law formalized protections for CICL and aligned national policy with international standards, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Beijing Guidelines, and the Riyadh Guidelines.

Beyond the Philippine context, ASEAN countries have also grappled with the challenges of juvenile justice implementation. Comparative studies (AICHR, 2023; Costello & Aung, 2015) reveal that while restorative justice and diversion are promoted regionally, case management practices vary widely. For instance, Myanmar highlights the need for stronger training among frontline social workers. Thailand underscores the importance of clear case management guidelines. Singapore demonstrates innovation by embedding social workers as triage officers within police divisions. These regional experiences provide a conceptual backdrop for understanding the strengths and limitations of barangay-led interventions in the Philippines.

RA 9344 mandates the implementation of restorative justice principles, emphasizing rehabilitation while ensuring the full protection of children's rights. Its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) define three levels of intervention: primary (developmental), secondary (preventive and protective), and tertiary (remedial), strongly stressing the implementation, if possible, of community-based initiatives rather than institutional placements of children. These interventions align with the findings of Castro and Hernandez (2019), which emphasize that proactive prevention measures and effective policy implementation are essential in safeguarding children and fostering their development toward a secure and promising future.

While RA 9344 sets some clear principles for rehabilitating children while ensuring accountability, its implementation remains uneven. At the barangay level, the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC)—the key body responsible for enforcing child protection policies—often struggles with limited capacity, unclear roles, and inconsistent functionality. And hence, these challenges hinder the effective application of restorative justice and community-based interventions envisioned by the law. At the same time, the social workers at the local government units, tasked with overseeing the implementation of RA 9344, face limitations in their reach and resources. These challenges impact the effectiveness of interventions for CICL, making it difficult to ensure that these children are guided back to becoming productive citizens and reaching their full potential without relapsing into further criminal behavior.

These gaps underscore the need for deeper examination of barangays' capacity to fulfill their role as duty-bearers of children's rights, particularly in addressing the needs of CICL. Key questions remain: How have barangays advanced and sustained intervention programs for CICL since the enactment of RA 9344 nineteen years ago? To what extent have developmental, preventive, and remedial interventions been incorporated into barangay plans and practices? These areas remain underexplored in local research. To address this gap, the present study examined how barangay intervention programs operationalize the principles of RA 9344 and identified areas for improvement. By analyzing existing community-based interventions, the study seeks to propose practical, child-centered strategies to strengthen the capacity of BCPC workers in implementing restorative justice at the local level. Importantly, the study was conceptually informed not only by RA 9344 but also by comparative ASEAN juvenile justice literature (AICHR, 2023; Costello & Aung, 2015, Rahardjo, Perbawa, Permadhi & Suharyant, 2024, Suharto, 2021), which highlights regional themes such as diversion, restorative justice, and community-based case management. Each barangay case was analyzed using replication logic to test these themes, thereby situating local practices within ASEAN's broader juvenile justice discourse. By drawing on this comparative lens, the study proposed some practical, child-centered strategies to strengthen the capacity of BCPC workers in implementing restorative justice at the local level.

### **Research design and Methodology**

This study used a descriptive, multiple-case study design to examine barangay-level interventions for CICL. A qualitative approach was chosen to capture the complexities of implementation involving key stakeholders and local conditions. Instead of focusing on a single case, the design analyzed three barangays in Quezon City to identify patterns and variations. Each case was treated as a standalone unit but also compared with others to capture breadth and depth.

Three (3) barangays in Quezon City were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that participating communities have an active BCPC. Selection criteria included well-established BCPC operations, willing stakeholders to disclose and be interviewed, and accessible documentation from the

Barangay Council. The 12 key informants in the study are the BCPC members, the Barangay Council officials, and the Sangguniang Kabataan officials. The invitation letters were distributed to over 20 barangays, initiating formal dialogues to encourage participation. To further emphasize ethical standards in this research since it involved sensitive information, the barangays retained the discretion to withdraw at any stage of the data collection process, ensuring a flexible and voluntary engagement framework. This was the reason why, from the over 20 barangays invited, 10 initially indicated participation with the study, but only three expressed comfort and allowed full disclosure of their data and processes until the last day of data collection.

Data gathering was conducted through 12 semi-structured interviews, field observations on meetings, dialogues, and daily operations, and document analysis. A tickler system was utilized to document field notes and observations, while a mobile phone camera served as a supplementary tool to enhance the accuracy and reliability of recorded data. Interviews provided firsthand insights into intervention practices, while observations captured real-time interactions between BCPC workers and CICL. Official records, including BCPC plans and blotter reports, supplemented the analysis of this study.

Clearance was secured from Quezon City's Social Services Development Department (SSDD) and the barangay authorities to ensure strict compliance with the ethical conduct of the research. Given the sensitivity of the gathered data, strict confidentiality measures were maintained, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Research access was granted to observe BCPC meetings and intervention practices, though limitations arose due to some operational constraints, like evening activities of the BCPC.

An iterative process of data collection and analysis was adopted to identify recurring themes across cases. Thematic analysis was conducted using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. Codes were inductively generated from interview transcripts, field notes, and documents that were refined through constant comparison and grouped into broader categories reflecting barangay-level interventions. Manual coding matrices were used to ensure transparency and consistency of the analytical process. Data saturation was reached after the tenth interview, with no new themes emerging, and was confirmed through subsequent interviews as patterns were consistently replicated across the three barangays despite their uniqueness.

The study was limited to three barangays that permitted full access to their BCPC operations. While this small sample restricts generalizability, the multiple-case design allowed for in-depth exploration of diverse contexts and practices. The findings therefore provide analytic rather than statistical generalization, offering insights into how barangay-led interventions operationalize RA 9344, while recognizing that further research across more barangays is needed to strengthen external validity.

## Results

### ***General Characteristics of the Barangays***

To grasp the distinctiveness of each community within a barangay, it is essential to present the profiles of each barangay. This provides an understanding of the overall characteristics of the three study areas found in Table 1. The profiles include the total population in the barangay, the number of barangays that share a border with the participating barangays, the head, the composition of the respective BCPCs, and the linkages these BCPCs have with other institutions in helping the CICL.

**Table 1:** Profile of the three barangays

Barangay	The population in the barangay	Number of adjacent barangays(sharing border)	Head of the BCPC	Number of BCPC workers	Identified existing linkages to help the CICL
Case 1	90,290	5	Wife of the barangay captain who heads the Gender and Development Committee, which BCPC is under	1 GAD focal person 1 Team Leader 3 BCPC workers *3 GAD/VAWC workers who also work with BCPC Total: 8	Family Elementary and High Schools Hospital BCPC of other barangays Police station NGOs
Case 2	45,520	9	The barangay councilor who heads the Peace and Order Committee which the BCPC is under	1 councilor as BCPC chair 1 SK chair as BCPC vice chair 1 BCPC project head 4 BCPC focal persons 9 facilitators 3 Visitors Information Personnel (VIP) Total: 19	Family Hospital BCPC of other barangays Police station Church Student Organizations from a university Universities and Colleges (student practicumers)
Case 3	15,381	5	Barangay councilor who heads BCPC as a major committee of the barangay	1 councilor who acts as the BCPC head 5 BCPC workers Total: 6	Family Elementary and High Schools Hospital BCPC of other barangays Police station Business owners (computer shops) NGOs Universities and Colleges (student practicumers)

It is worth noting that the number of adjacent barangays, shown in the third column, represents the extent of each barangay's shared boundaries. This factor is significant because the mobility of residents often leads to cases involving individuals from neighboring areas. As explained by the barangay councilor overseeing the BCPC, the BCPC not only serves CICL within its own jurisdiction but also extends assistance to those from adjacent barangays to address cross-boundary cases effectively.

"We are surrounded by numerous barangays and public schools. The barangays surrounding us have issues with their youth. We will extend help as long as the other barangay gives us consent. We

really must do our best in the BCPC. Because the problem with our neighboring barangay is also our problem." **NO1-Line 21-25**

The heads of the BCPCs in all participating barangays were interviewed and served as the primary data sources. Since there are no clear provisions or guidelines on who should lead the BCPC, two of the three barangays appointed an incumbent councilor as head. In contrast, one barangay designated the barangay captain's wife, who also leads the Gender and Development (GAD) Committee under which the BCPC operates.

Table 1 includes the count of individuals employed in the respective BCPCs. Each barangay's distinctiveness lies in the varied organizational structure and composition of its BCPC. It is worth mentioning that the minimum number of BCPC workers is six, while the maximum is 19. The last column of Table 1 displays the different linkages that the BCPC partners with when handling and implementing intervention programs for CICL. Linkages to community entities play important roles in facilitating intervention programs for CICL at the barangay level. Linkage with the schools mainly involves enrolling the CICL in an educational institution, particularly by availing the Alternative Learning System (ALS) program as part of the child's intervention plan.

#### ***Intervention for CICL at the Barangay Level***

Support for CICL involves community-based initiatives led by the barangay. During the data collection process, respondents identified specific activities in semi-structured interviews. Table 2 shows that many of these activities are implemented in the three barangays. The activities designed to assist the CICL are categorized into primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions. This categorization is based on the intervention outlined in RA 9344 for the CICL. Overall, the research conducted in the three barangays has identified four primary intervention activities, eight secondary intervention activities, and two tertiary intervention activities.

**Table 2:** Activities implemented by the barangay for the CICL

<b>Primary program/ activities</b>	<b>Secondary program/ activities</b>	<b>Tertiary program/ activities</b>
School campaigns against drugs	Facilitation of dialogues	Monitoring of the child
Implementation of a curfew for minors	between the complainant and the CICL	Feedbacking with parents
Increased visibility of barangay public safety officers (BPSO) in crowded places	Access to education of the CICL	
Appropriation of the law-mandated budget for BCPC	Counseling sessions	
	Seminars and workshops for the CICL	
	Barangay film showing	
	Seminars for the parents	
	Parent support meetings	
	Case management	

#### ***Primary Interventions***

Primary intervention refers to actions done by the local government, particularly the city government and the barangay council. These are developmental in nature, aiming to build structures that strengthen the community and address concerns related to CICL. Barangay-led primary interventions do not directly involve the child. The following are the interventions identified by the respondents that fall in this category.

1. Advocacy campaigns in schools—Two of the barangays primarily implemented these campaigns. The BCPC works closely with the school administration in the barangay, seeking their partnership to encourage parents to attend the campaign launch and its related activities. Alternatively, they may request the school's support in having students participate in the training sessions prepared by the BCPC for the campaign. A BCPC worker, who launched the anti-drugs campaign in the schools, has this story to tell,

"The school called us, so the barangay council went to the school through BCPC. We always partner with the schools for our anti-drug abuse and use seminar campaign. The barangay council has a project called *Operation Iwas Drogen*. We partner with the schools because, based on our analysis, the schools are an easy target for drug syndicates." **NO1-Line 35-38**

2. Curfew—All participating barangays enforce a curfew called *Operation Galugad*, which applies to minors across Quezon City and begins at 10 PM. The implementation is done since regular reporting to the DILG is required. One BCPC head explains,

“*Operation Galugad* does not just cover the drugs. Children who violate the curfew at 10 PM are also targeted. *Operation Galugad* starts at 10 PM. If they get caught, their names are blotted or recorded so that these children will get scared. I ensure that everything is documented. We submit the monthly report to DILG. DILG is very strict with the submission of reports.” **TS1-Line 51-57**

3. Barangay visibility—Focus on enhancing the presence and visibility of barangay special security officers in high-traffic areas where street gang conflicts, robberies, or snatching incidents are most likely to take place.
4. Budget appropriation—The legally mandated budget allocation for BCPC operations is considered a key mechanism for supporting preventive activities. Under Section 5 of Ordinance No. SP-1623, Series 2005, Quezon City requires each barangay to allocate at least 5% of its annual or supplemental budget to the BCPC. One barangay councilor explained,

“GAD has 5% and the BCPC has 5% of the IRA (Internal Revenue Allotment) of the barangay... There's an allotted budget for the BCPC. When handling children in the BCPC, we use it to provide them with clothes and toothpaste. Our barangay captain wants to implement good governance. As indicated in the law, what should be allotted in the budget should be followed.” **NO1- Line 208-209, 263-265**

### **Secondary Intervention**

Secondary interventions primarily focus on prevention efforts that enhance protective factors to support children's overall well-being and reduce the risk of delinquency. These initiatives involve direct engagement between the BCPC and the child. It is worth mentioning that not all children in contact with BCPC have a formal case lodged against them.

1. Parents' seminars— All the barangays identified that their BCPC conducts training sessions for the parents. The most identified topic is on positive discipline. The BCPC head narrates,

“We do hold seminars. We have seminars...in school. The parents are the target. We offer a Positive Discipline seminar just to enlighten ...that there are other ways to handle children aside from hurting them.” **TS1-Line 29-31**.

Another parenting seminar conducted by the barangays is the Parenting Effectiveness Service (PES) of DSWD. PES offers a training module designed to develop and expand the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of adults regarding parenting. Despite it usually being done in continuous sessions, BCPC workers disclose that they typically use only one or two sessions from the entire module, which they believe are needed by the parents. One barangay indicated the plan to implement the Empowerment and Reaffirmation of Paternal Abilities (ERPAT) program of the DSWD, a structured training module designed to highlight and strengthen fathers' parental roles, responsibilities, and competencies. However, when asked about previous experience in conducting the said program, the BCPC worker stated that it has not yet been implemented. The BCPC workers believe that parent education is crucial in protecting the children at risk. A BCPC worker affirms,

“The BCPC project is related to child protection. It is important to conduct a seminar for the parents. Sometimes, the decision of the parent concerning the child is faulty.” **PC1-Line 244-245**

2. Dialogues—A key responsibility of the BCPC is facilitating communication between the complainant and the CICL whenever possible. These dialogues are essential for promoting a restorative justice approach, as they engage not only the government and the offender but also the victims and the wider community. A BCPC staff member emphasized the importance of resolving cases at the barangay level to avoid formal legal proceedings, stating,

“Whenever there is a riot, parents are eager to pursue filing a case against their children at the barangay. However, we prefer to handle these situations in a way that aims for resolution within the barangay.” **NO2-Line 59-61**. Although BCPC workers prioritize the best interests of the child, they acknowledge that complainants and victims are equally important in the process. They must carefully navigate a balance to determine the most appropriate course of action. One BCPC worker shared,

“When such situations arise, the barangay (BCPC) is responsible for coordinating a meeting with the parents of the child. We engage in communication with the parents, and, if necessary, we also reach out to the complainant. We aim to support both parties, and we strive to ensure that the complainant is satisfied with how we address the situation. We need to avoid any perception of bias, especially when the complainant is not from our barangay.” **TS2-Line 345-350**

3. Case management—This pertains to the structured process that involves organizing, coordinating, and sustaining a network of services and activities to address the needs of

individuals or groups effectively (Wilkinson, 2020). It is interesting to note that one BCPC worker mentioned the term "case management," and it is regarded as one of the functions of the BCPC when handling the child. This BCPC worker defines case management as "*Pagsigurado na ang mga kailangan ng bata ay nabibigay ng iba't ibang opisina through BCPC*" (To assure that the needs of the child were provided by different offices through BCPC).

4. Schooling—Providing access to education has long been a core intervention activity of the BCPC. In two of the three barangays, the BCPC collaborates with nearby schools to enroll CICL in the Department of Education's Alternative Learning System (ALS). ALS is a non-formal, structured, and intentional learning program that serves as an alternative or supplement to formal education. It is specifically designed for out-of-school children, youth, and adults who have not completed basic education. Through ALS, the BCPC enables these children to work toward earning an elementary or high school diploma. One BCPC head explains,

"If they are not in school, we encourage them to join ALS. Since it's free of charge, the barangay can endorse them. Too much free time in their hands may lead them to do unlawful acts." **TS1-Line 91-92**. The belief that a child's access to and completion of education reflects a positive change in their behavior is widely held among BCPC workers in all three barangays.

However, the offering of ALS in one barangay is unique compared to the other two. Instead of having the CICL go to school on weekends, ALS students only need to go to the Barangay Hall, where an ALS teacher from the Quezon City Hall, affiliated with a public school, is assigned to the children. The Barangay Councilor who handles the ALS program in the barangay explains,

"Every barangay has the chance to identify constituents who require ALS support. If the barangay council chooses to adopt ALS as a project, it will be brought to the community. The initiative and support for ALS come from the barangay's education committee chair, as well as the SK, which is involved in youth development efforts." **PC8-Line 592-597**

According to BCPC workers, this setup—where ALS sessions are conducted inside the Barangay Hall—enables them to efficiently monitor the attendance of CICL members who have agreed to participate in the program.

5. Counseling—BCPC workers use this term to describe general conversations with CICL, which involve checking on the child's well-being, providing a safe space for them to express their emotions, and offering guidance or advice. One BCPC worker shares,

"Every time we evaluate the child, we inquire about their family's well-being. This helps us, as BCPC, understand the dynamics of the child's family and their feelings towards it, and enables us to pinpoint the underlying issues. Since we interact with the children daily, we can observe if they have any behavioral issues related to school or their studies. However, these can be addressed through conversation and offering words of encouragement." **NO2-Line 88-95**

6. Children's Seminars—The children are also invited to attend seminars and workshops organized by the barangay for the youth. A BCPC worker explains,

"We invite speakers from the Social Services Development Department (SSDD) who explain the importance of socializing and civility and teach techniques on diverting the energy from inapt activities." **PC1-Line 101-104**

7. Movie Watching—An activity offered by one barangay every Sunday, featuring a curated film screening. The CICL is asked to come on weekend afternoons to watch a movie together with the other children in the barangay. In some instances, the BCPC worker asks the CICL to facilitate and organize the processing of the movie with other children. The BCPC worker narrates,

"Every Sunday, we hold a film showing for the children. The CICL helps here by ensuring that the younger children are quiet. Sometimes they also lead in processing the movie with the children." **PC3-Line 93-95**

8. Parent Support Meeting -This refers to gatherings of parents organized by the BCPC. Notably, only one BCPC conducts this type of activity. Although it was not explicitly mentioned during interviews, the researcher observed that parents of CICL meet with the BCPC at least once every two months to discuss important concerns regarding their children. These meetings offer opportunities for parents to support one another by sharing advice and suggestions. While most attendees are mothers, several fathers also participate actively in the discussions.

### ***Tertiary Intervention***

Tertiary intervention refers to actions taken when a child is facing legal accusations. It can also involve activities mandated after the family court relieves the child of any legal responsibilities. Likewise, it pertains to activities that aim to restore the child's functioning state, repair the damages created or

resulting from the offense, and prevent reoffending. The barangays provide two activities identified as tertiary interventions. Both pertain to monitoring and occasional feedback.

1. Monitoring—This involves the direct, once-a-month supervision of the child, which includes home visits by the BCPC worker. A BCPC worker reported utilizing a social media and messaging application, particularly Facebook Messenger, in communicating with the parents. The BCPC worker narrates,

"I have a group chat with the parents. If the parent has encountered a problem with the child, they will usually message me. For example, the child stalls away. Or the child did not come home, and it's beyond the curfew. I get to know right away. And then I inform the BCPC worker on duty on that particular day." **NO2-Line 314-316.**

Still, part of the monitoring is a program wherein the barangay, through the BCPC, hosts an annual event to which former and current CICLs are invited for an out-of-town activity. A barangay councilor that heads the BCPC shares,

"We hold an event called Youth Week. We in the BCPC bring the CICL for an out-of-town event. We usually go to the eco-park. That's where we conduct mini sessions with them. Then we also facilitate games. Then we process the activities with them." **NO2-Line 171-172**

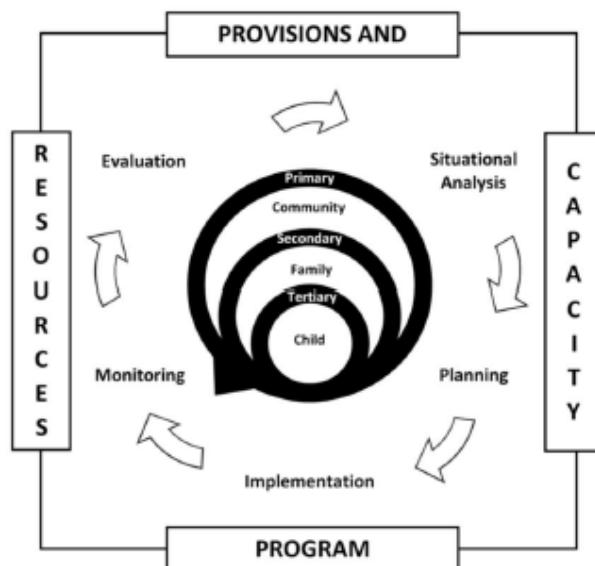
2. Feedbacking—This involves regular meetings between BCPC workers and parents to provide updates on the child's progress. These sessions are held monthly or whenever opportunities arise, aiming to guide the CICL and prevent reoffending.

## Discussion

The gathered information from three barangays demonstrates a multi-tiered approach to intervention at the community level, with a strong focus on developmental and preventive measures. This highlights the barangay's commitment to addressing concerns early and fostering a supportive environment for CICL. Nonetheless, the success of these interventions largely depends on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the BCPC workers.

### ***Existence of the Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Intervention***

The cases of each of the three barangays illustrates the implementation of the primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions as outlined in the Comprehensive Intervention Program (CIP) for CICL within a child-focused framework. These interventions are implemented through the programs that direct the child, the family, and the community. These existing interventions in the barangays support the observation that juvenile delinquency is a result of complex factors and events surrounding the child in their early years, primary among which is the failure of the family, school, and community to provide adequate nurturance and primary support for the child's physical, mental, and socio-emotional needs (L. Alampay & Banzon-Librojo, 2005; *Situational Analysis on Children in Conflict with the Law and the Juvenile Justice System*, 2020).



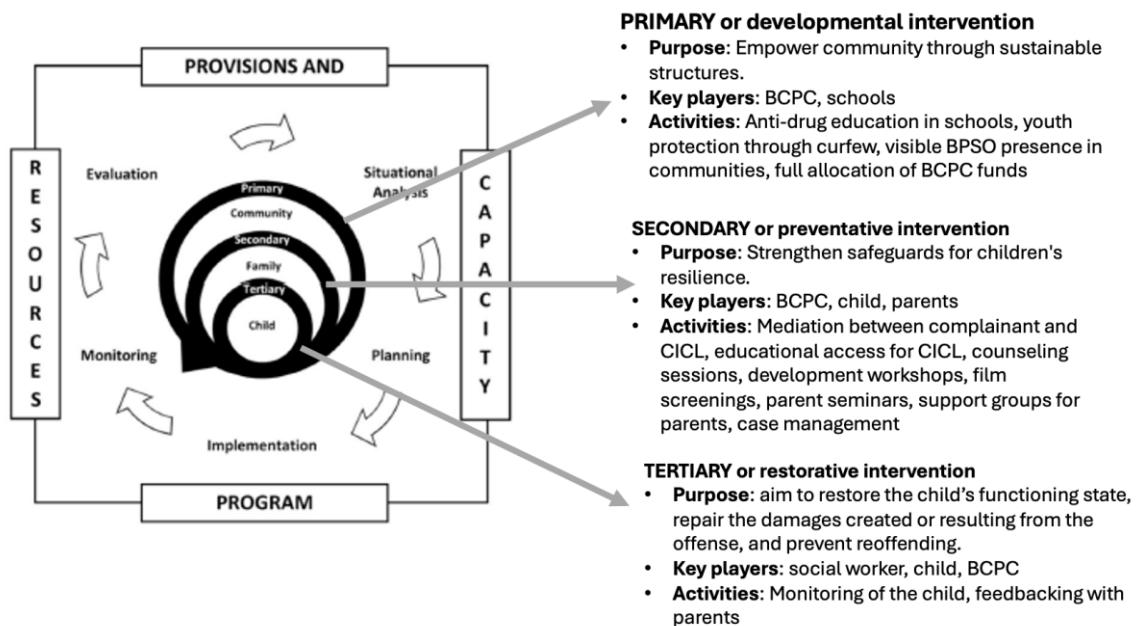
**Figure 1: Comprehensive Intervention Program (CIP) for CICL within a child-focused framework found in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 9344**

Primary interventions, led by the local government and barangay councils, focus on strengthening community structures to address CICL concerns, including curfew enforcement, BPSO presence, and budget allocation for BCPC, depending on barangay leaders' priorities. Secondary interventions involve direct engagement with children, aiming to prevent delinquency through protective measures such as mediation, case management, access to education, counseling, seminars, workshops, and parental support programs.

In the three barangays, the secondary interventions are in place and planned on an annual basis. For example, one barangay has a year-long campaign against drug use and abuse, during which activities are launched in elementary and high schools located within their community. Another barangay has eleven programs distributed throughout the year, which include educational assistance through ALS, synchronized reading for values education, and stress and anger management for the CICL.

When a barangay has limited secondary programs, the interventions for CICL tend to follow standardized procedures, focusing primarily on administrative steps. Examples of these secondary programs include counseling and referral services. Conversely, when a barangay implements a greater number of secondary programs consistently throughout the year, the interventions for CICL become more diverse, offering a broader range of support and engagement.

Tertiary interventions are activities provided when a case has been filed against the child. It can also pertain to activities ordered after the family court has released the child from any legal obligation. At the barangay level, the existing tertiary interventions include the monitoring of the CICL by the social worker and the BCPC worker, alongside coordination with parents through the BCPC.



**Figure 2: Summary of key findings on barangay-led intervention for CICL using the CIP of RA 9344**

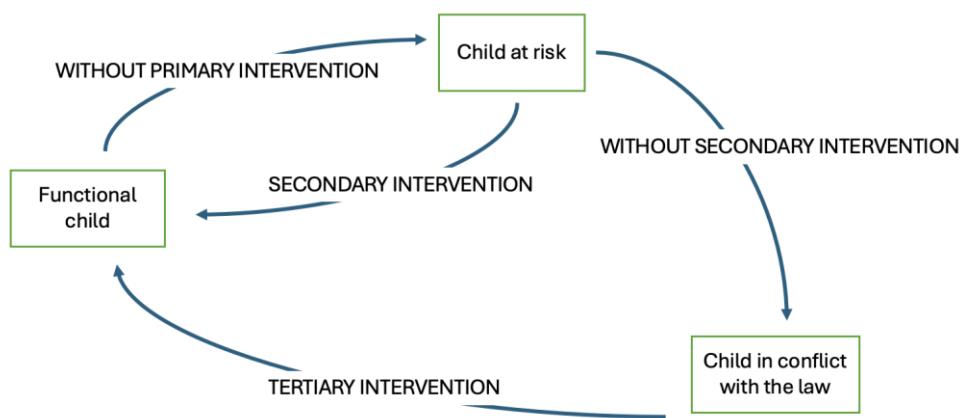
The figure above summarizes the key findings related to barangay-led interventions for CICL, utilizing the CIP based on Republic Act 9344. The figure highlights the significance of interventions and the roles of the stakeholders in preventing children from becoming CICL and restoring the well-being of those who are at risk.

#### **Barangay interventions are Mainly Primary and Secondary Interventions**

It is evident in the three case studies that the primary and secondary interventions are owned and initiated by the barangay through the BCPC. This means that the interventions are primarily developmental and preventive, rather than remedial. This also means that in most cases, the barangay,

through the BCPC, allows the facilitation of dialogue between the complainant and the CICL. This, in turn, reduces the likelihood that the CICL will undergo a formal court proceeding.

Figure 3 below depicts the process and significance of CIP in preventing children from becoming CICL and in restoring the functioning of those considered at risk, if the program is implemented effectively.



**Figure 3:** Scenarios show how the three-tiered intervention at the community level increases protective factors and decreases risk factors for children

The implementation of interventions for CICL at the barangay level appears to be program-focused rather than child-focused. This means that the barangay and the BCPC generally plan activities for the whole year and invite anyone whom they think will benefit from them. In comparison to a child-focused intervention, the assessment of the child will determine which activities or other services will best address the needs of the CICL. In this light, there is a strong need for a registered social worker to develop a case plan for the CICL, a professional who will utilize the basic steps in the goal-planning and problem-solving process. The social worker understands the duality of the role, which involves coordinating and providing direct services for the CICL.

#### ***Lack of Social Work-Compliant Case Management at the Barangay Level***

The presence of three levels of intervention at the barangay level demonstrates adherence to legal requirements, ensuring a foundational framework for addressing the needs of children. This reflects an effort to establish structured support within communities. This approach aligns with the Philippines' commitment to the 2001 ASEAN Declaration on the Commitments for Children, which calls for regional cooperation to promote the survival, development, protection, and participation of children as part of broader efforts to improve lives across the region. However, many of the identified interventions in this study have been applied through a broad, one-size-fits-all approach, where all the children are expected to benefit from the same set of strategies implemented by the BCPC.

This presents a significant concern, as CICL, while often sharing common characteristics and backgrounds (Abella, 2016; Agcaoili, 2025), still face diverse and complex challenges that require tailored responses. The lack of individualized intervention strategies may limit the effectiveness of support mechanisms, underscoring the need for more nuanced and adaptable approaches that consider the unique circumstances of each child.

Two of the three barangays mentioned the existence of case management for CICL in place. However, upon closer examination, social work-compliant case management is lacking. A gap in this practice at the barangay level is due to the lack of procedures to plan, seek, and monitor services from within and outside the BCPC (e.g., schools, non-governmental organizations) on behalf of clients. Case management enables the provision of individualized advice, counseling, and intervention activities to CICL, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the planned care for CICL.

The lack of social work-compliant case management practice is evident at the beginning of the helping process, as the presentation of the problem by the CICL referred to the BCPC is unclear. The barangays all have intake interviews, but in varying forms. The prescribed Intake and Profile Form by the IRR of RA 9344 is not implemented by all the BCPCs of the three barangays. This prescribed intake form would have helped record the child's concerns as well as document the initial predicament of the CICL. However, the prescribed form includes an assessment of the needs of CICL, which should

contain the problem definition but is currently absent. In this context, a registered social worker plays a crucial role as a helping professional, ensuring informed and deliberate actions are taken to enhance the existing system for CICL.

Challenges in social work case management for CICL are not unique to the Philippines but are evident across the ASEAN region, reflecting systemic gaps in training, coordination, and institutional capacity. In Myanmar, the lack of structured case management is compounded by limited social work expertise. Costello and Aung (2015) stress the need for targeted training to address the complex issues children face.

Thailand similarly identifies the lack of clear case management guidelines as a critical barrier. According to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR, 2023), the absence of standardized protocols can lead to delayed or inappropriate responses to children's needs, potentially exacerbating behavioral issues during crucial intervention windows.

In contrast, Singapore demonstrates a more integrated model by embedding social workers—referred to as Triage Officers—within police divisions. These officers assess risks and rehabilitation potential among youth offenders, facilitating timely decisions regarding diversion and support services (AICHR, 2023). This model exemplifies how structured, interagency case management enhances responsiveness and promotes rehabilitative outcomes.

Collectively, these examples underscore the importance of institutional clarity, professional training, and inter-agency coordination in strengthening case management systems for CICL across the ASEAN region.

### Conclusion

The cases of the three barangays demonstrate that a multi-tiered approach—developmental, preventive, and remedial—to restorative justice for CICL can be implemented at the community level. It is possible. And it is doable. The key to this is ensuring that the BCPC is functional and working. While these interventions demonstrate commitment to child welfare, they remain largely program-oriented rather than child-centered, resulting in notable gaps in individualized case management. As Algo (2024) defines, case management is a systematic and collaborative process that involves assessing client needs, formulating tailored interventions, coordinating multisectoral services, and continuously monitoring progress to ensure effective support. At its core, effective case management empowers the client, promotes interagency collaboration, and integrates services to achieve holistic and sustainable outcomes. However, these core principles were found to be lacking in the case management practices observed within the participating barangays.

Barangay interventions, despite their preventive intent, often depend on leadership priorities, resulting in inconsistencies in resource allocation and implementation. Without a structured, child-focused approach, efforts may become procedural rather than transformational, limiting their ability to address both CICL's individual needs and, in a larger effort, the systemic factors contributing to juvenile delinquency.

Considering these findings, an orientation to RA 9344's restorative justice framework should be included in the LGU and the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council's (JJWC) plan for capacitating the BCPC of different barangays. Lacking specialized training in the implementation and handling of CICL raises concerns about the consistency and depth of support provided to both BCPC workers and the children they serve. Workers at the barangay often rely on inherited practices or adopt procedures from external offices, such as police stations or partner social services. Hence, this study highlights the pressing need for the JJWC to provide structured capacity-building initiatives, ensuring that community-led interventions for CICL are fully aligned with restorative justice principles and CICL's specific needs.

The study emphasizes that the framework for preventing intervention programs for CICL is unevenly implemented across four areas: programs, resources, provisions, and capacity. Findings suggest that barangays tend to prioritize programs, which can result in unbalanced service delivery. Effective implementation, however, requires more than programs alone. It also depends on adequate capacity, sufficient resources, and clear provisions. In addition, the action–reflection–action process is essential in community organizing and in understanding the unique circumstances of the child, family, and community.

### Suggestions

Restorative justice in juvenile justice is a child-centered approach that helps a CICL take responsibility, repair harm, and reintegrate into the community through collaborative processes with family, victims, and local institutions. Both the barangay and the LGU should invest in sustainable restorative justice strategies by ensuring funding and policy support for individualized, child-focused

interventions. Since the BCPC plays a central role in implementing restorative justice, a mandated budget allocation for its operations must be enforced across all barangays. This will strengthen the continuity and effectiveness of CICL intervention programs. Restorative justice should not depend on the discretion of barangay officials. It must be treated as a legal and ethical obligation to constituents, including CICL and their families. At the same time, inter-agency coordination under the IRR of RA 9344 should be further strengthened.

Considering the persistent challenges faced by barangays and other institutions in enforcing RA 9344, it is crucial to review and update the law's provisions to ensure their practicality and alignment with restorative justice principles. Such revisions should emphasize prevention, ensure accessible rehabilitation when necessary, and uphold the protection of children's rights.

Equally important is the active involvement of registered social workers in barangay-level interventions. Their professional expertise ensures adherence to social work-compliant case management standards, including the proper use of prescribed intake and profile forms for accurate documentation, assessment, and individualized intervention planning. Beyond procedural compliance, local governments should employ licensed social workers to mentor and capacitate BCPC members, equipping them with the knowledge and skills required for effective restorative case planning and management. Social workers, as trained helping professionals, are best positioned to uphold restorative justice principles and strengthen the professional integrity of community-based interventions for CICL.

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